AN INVESTIGATION OF THE CHALLENGES OF IMPLEMENTING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN ONE KHAYELITSHA MAINSTREAM SCHOOL

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of

Magister Educationis

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MAY 2007

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the challenges of implementing inclusive education in one Khayelitsha mainstream school. The key objectives of this study are to determine which aspects of implementation have worked well in the school and which have not, while exploring the underlying reasons in each case. In addition, certain recommendations are developed that point to how practices could be put in place to facilitate an effective implementation strategy for the development of an inclusive education system. The literature review encompasses four focal points: conceptualisation of inclusive education, inclusive education in South Africa, policy implementation, and lessons learned from inclusive education implementation both internationally and in South Africa.

A qualitative research methodology is employed in this study. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with a sample of five teachers, five parents and five learners. This qualitative data was analysed using content analysis. The findings of the study show that there have been successes in the implementation of inclusive education in this school. These include the establishment of a Teacher Support Team (TST [1]). Through the TST learners and educators are supported in classrooms and parents are involved in some school activities. Concerning what did not work well, the study reveals that although the TST has been established, the team members claim that the school is not able to derive optimal benefits from it as a result of their other school commitments and workload. The TST members acknowledged that it is difficult for them to track the effectiveness of learning support they have identified as necessary for specific learners, as it is for them to sustain support for the teachers in classrooms. Other challenges that emerge from the study relate to teachers feeling unprepared or lacking in certain skills, limited parental involvement, language (especially as a medium of instruction), poverty and unemployment as well as a shortage of adequate learning and teaching resources.

It is envisaged that the elements explored in this research will inform the ongoing implementation of Education White Paper 6 and thereby contribute towards facilitating the successful implementation of inclusive education more broadly.

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[1] TST is referred to as Institutional Support Teams in Education White Paper 6

KEY WORDS

- Inclusive education
- Policy implementation
- Mainstream school
- Inclusive education policy
- Implementation challenges
- Teachers
- Learners
- Parents
- Khayelitsha

DECLARATION

I, Lineo Jane Matela, hereby declare that *An Investigation of the Challenges of Implementing Inclusive Education in one Khayelitsha Mainstream School* is my own work and that it has not previously been submitted at any university for a degree.

Where appropriate, the resources I have used and quoted have been properly acknowledged and referenced.

Signed:

Lineo Jane Matela

Date: May 2007

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I respect the power of God that helped me to persevere while everything seemed dark and impossible. I really thank Him for granting me the strength and for His Hand in opening the doors that I was not able to open.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the following people for the different roles they played in my life while I undertook this study:

- My two supervisors, Mrs Sindiswa Stofile and Professor Sandy Lazarus for their unlimited support and unconditional guidance during this research study.
- My husband Stephen and my two daughters Mamoqebelo and Ntombizodwa who have patiently and unselfishly borne with my absence throughout this period. You are a really loving family. I thank and love you all.
- My three sisters Maseisa, Pulane and Ntsebeng who from the little they have, decided to share everything with my children while I was away. They dearly played my late mother's role. I thank you.
- My father Mpokana Mabaleha, my parents-in-law Francis and Flory Matela, and my brothers who encouraged me by saying "We know you can make it!", and who gave me financial support for my education through high school and at tertiary level.
- My friend, 'Mataleli Sethinyane whose moral and financial assistance made my entry into UWC possible. The Qhobela's family, Mohapeloa's family, Moipone, 'Malla, Ma-glad and the whole congregation of Botha-Bothe who prayed for me.
- The principal, teachers, learners and parents of the school in which I carried out my study, who supported me whole-heartedly, and all the people who made this study possible.
- Over and above all, the Lesotho Government for its financial support. You all deserve a great Thank You!

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ACRONYMS

DANIDA: Danish International Development Assistance

DST: District Support Team

DoE: Department of Education

EENET: Enabling Education Network

EMDC: Education Management Development Centre

EWP6:   Education White Paper 6

HIV/AIDS: Human Immunodeficiency Virus /Acquired Immune Deficiency
             Syndrome

ILST: Institutional-Level Support Team

NCESS: National Committee for Education Support Services

NCSNET: National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training

SCOPE: South African-Finnish Co-operation Programme in the Education
             Sector

SIAS: Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support

TST: Teacher Support Team

UNESCO: United Nations Educational Scientific Cultural Organisation

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a brief history of education prior to the first democratic elections in South Africa in 1994. It also makes reference to the changes that followed which led to the implementation of an inclusive education system. After introducing the background and motivation guiding this study, I provide a brief overview incorporating an outline of the scope of its aims, the conceptual framework derived from relevant literature, the research methodology, the means of data-collection, as well as a discursive presentation of inclusive education as a discipline within the field of education.

During the apartheid era (1948-1994) education in South Africa was divided principally on the grounds of race, the effects of which were entrenched in discriminatory practices related to disability, class, nationality, religion, language of origin, social background, gender, and level of education (Lomofosky & Lazarus, 2001). National education was divided into eighteen different education departments, run parallel to one another while remaining under central government control. The 1994 democratic elections brought a change to this system of education in South Africa. These separate education departments were amalgamated into one national department with nine provincial education departments (Kallaway, 2002).

In 1997 the National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training (NCSNET) and the National Committee on Education Support Services (NCESS) were appointed by the Ministry of Education to investigate, and to make recommendations on, special needs and support services in South Africa. The two committees presented their reports to the minister in November 1997 and the Department of Education (DoE) published the final report in 1998 (NCSNET/NCESS, DoE, 1998).

The findings of the joint report of the NCSNET and NCESS were put forward to recommend that the South African Education and Training system promote the *Education For All* policy, that it foster the development of inclusive and supportive centres of learning to enable all learners to participate actively in the education process, and that it will offer all learners opportunities to develop their potential for becoming equally active members of society (DoE, 2001). The report makes reference to the principles, strategies and vision of the national Department of Education which emphasises 'education for all'. Significantly, it was as a result of the recommendations in this report by NCSNET/NCESS that feedback from key social partners and the public at large was received, and on the basis of these that the Education White Paper 6 was drafted and released in 2001 (DoE, 2001).

1.2 BACKGROUND TO AND MOTIVATION OF THE STUDY

Whilst the Department of Education has developed clear guidelines for the implementation of inclusive education, it is important to recognise that the different contexts determine the success of the implementation. As stated in DoE 2005, inclusive education as a framework aims to ensure that all stakeholders can participate meaningfully in teaching and learning processes, and in this way become valued and respected as equal members of the school community. This study focuses on the challenges relating to effective implementation of inclusive education in one mainstream school in Khayelitsha by exploring what the school has already achieved since the implementation process began and what difficulties were encountered. The study investigates the strengths experienced in these processes and the areas that may be improved or better developed. In addition, recommendations for further implementation are made which it is hoped may contribute towards continued endeavours to realise inclusive education more comprehensively.

The study builds on other research studies on inclusive education that have highlighted strengths and challenges. These include the DoE Danish International Development Assistance (DANIDA) funded project that took place in Kwazulu-Natal, Eastern Cape and North West provinces, and the South African-Finnish Co-operation Programme in the Education Sector (SCOPE) (Da Costa, 2003) that took place in Mpumalanga and Northern Cape. The focus chosen by these two projects was to

outline the lessons that could be derived from the experiences of stakeholders in the implementation of inclusive education, while their aim was to support the implementation of Education White Paper 6 in mainstream schools in South Africa. Findings, notably those of the SCOPE report (Da Costa, 2003), indicated that several challenges arose in the process of implementation of the policy in the pilot schools involved in these studies. That such challenges in the implementation of inclusive education could extend to schools beyond the scope of these studies seemed highly likely.

For the purposes of my research I chose one Western Cape school (hereinafter referred to as School X[1]). While School X is linguistically unique in that it is the only Sotho-speaking school in the broader Khayelisha area of the Western Cape, it is demographically representative of the area. Sotho is the first language of the learners at this school, but most have grown up in a Xhosa-speaking environment. While this in itself is not necessarily disadvantageous, the fact that the official languages in the Western Cape are English, Xhosa and Afrikaans means that available learning and teaching materials are written mainly in these three languages. Furthermore, the physical space learners operate in consists of old dilapidated, prefabricated buildings, and overcrowded classrooms. The central question emanating from my concern about this learning environment is: 'How successful has this school been in implementing inclusive education under such circumstances?'

School X has also embarked on implementing inclusive education. The school decided on the following four implementation activities:

- Providing access for all learners
- Establishing a Teachers' Support Team
- Supporting learners in the classrooms
- Involving Parents.

My investigative study on the implementation of inclusive education in School X must be read as one which seeks to position itself within the current debates outlined in the literature review. In the literature on the implementation of inclusive education

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[1] The school is referred to in this study as School X because of ethical consideration.

in South Africa, certain writers concur that one of the problems confronting the implementation of Education White Paper 6 may be located in the degree to which a teacher is able to cope with diverse learning needs. The teacher's understanding of diversity is crucial and so "…the most important problem that has to be overcome in this process is the training and empowerment of teachers to identify and effectively support learners who experience barriers to learning" (Prinsloo 2001: 344).

1.3 AIM OF THE STUDY

This study endeavours to investigate the challenges of implementing inclusive education in School X, a Khayelitsha mainstream school. It is hoped that this investigation will contribute towards the successful implementation of inclusive education at the school where the study was conducted. In addition, this study will have been useful more broadly if it provides insight into factors that may impact positively or negatively in the implementation of inclusive education.

The key question this study poses is: What are the challenges facing the implementation of inclusive education in the school?
Three specific sub-questions guiding the study are:

- What has worked well in the school, and why?
- What has not worked well, and why?
- What are the challenges of implementing inclusive education?

These three questions take into account the following perspectives:

- Learners' views
- Educators' views
- Parents' views.

1.4 LITERATURE FRAMEWORK

The framework for this study is based on the proposed framework for establishing an inclusive education and training system as proposed in Education White Paper 6 Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System (DoE, 2001). The Conceptual and Operational Guidelines for District-Based Support Teams (DoE, 2005) have also been consulted as they provide a framework for core functions and support-levels in the South African context.

My selection of texts from the literature was guided by the need to engage with various ways in which inclusion is conceptualised. Readings include work by different theorists who have entered the debate both nationally and internationally. The following sub-headings have been used to frame the literature review of this study:

- Conceptualisation of inclusive education
- Inclusive Education in South Africa
- Policy implementation
- Lessons learned from inclusive education implementation, internationally and in South Africa.

To highlight the significance of each of these areas engaged with in the context of this study, what follows is a brief summary on the substance encompassed by each.

1.4.1 Conceptualisation of inclusive education

Inclusive education is conceptualised differently in different contexts. According to Stainback and Stainback (1990), people, focus on different aspects when defining inclusive education. Some focus on human rights, participation and support, while others emphasise its potential to contribute towards the building of solid communities. However, these differences do not preclude the existence of levels of interpretation that form areas of commonality. That this may be so is strongly suggested in UNESCO (1994), where inclusive education is defined as a system that acknowledges and celebrates diversity arising from differences relating to nationality, religion, gender and language of origin, including social background, level of education,

achievement, economic status and disability. Chapter Two explores the conceptualisation of inclusive education, nationally and internationally more thoroughly.

1.4.2 Inclusive Education in South Africa

The policy paper in South Africa Education most pertinent to this investigative study is White Paper 6 on Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System (DoE, 2001). Central to the main areas of discussion I introduce in Chapter Two are the sections of this document that outline its vision, principles and key strategies regarding how the policy is to be put into practice, notably the following:

- Strengthening education support services

- Acceptance of out-of-school disabled children

- Expanding provision and access

- Governance

- Further education and training

- Information advocacy and mobilisation

- HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases.

1.4.3 Policy implementation

To facilitate policy implementation, the national Department of Education has developed a set of conceptual and operational guidelines (DoE, 2005) which will also be discussed in this study. Authors like Lomofsky and Lazarus (2001), Prinsloo (2001) and Weeks (2000) highlight some lessons learnt from the implementation of inclusive education in South Africa. These lessons will also be discussed in Chapter Two.

I have chosen to explore policy implementation in general at some length because the aim of the study is to investigate the implementation of a policy in a particular school. Here my interest is in the extent to which policy is clear and understandable to those who are expected to be its implementers. Under scrutiny is the articulation between well-planned procedures, people's responses, and factors that may contribute to policy failure, especially in developing countries. This entails an examination of different

approaches to policy implementation such as the top-down approach, the bottom-up approach and the interactive approach.

1.4.4 Implementation challenges internationally and in South Africa

In studies conducted in other countries such as India and Lesotho, evidence has been found that illustrates that the implementation of inclusive education has been successful in some ways, but reference is also made to challenges faced by those involved in the process. These studies also provide a broader picture of how and why some aspects of the implementation activities at schools worked well, while others did not. In India, for example, according to Singal & Rouse (2003) the government launched a movement in 2000 towards 'Education for all'. Its aim was to provide education for all children in the 6 to 14 age-range by 2010. In the Indian context inclusive education is used for the benefit of disabled children in mainstream schools. Inclusive education was therefore initially defined as the effort made to bring children with disabilities into mainstream education (Singal, 2003). Successes and constraints in implementing inclusive education in India will be discussed in Chapter Two.

In Lesotho, according to Khatleli, Mariga, Phachaka, and Stubbs (1995), the policy on inclusive education was developed in 1987. It gave the disabled people's organisations a powerful tool with which to lobby for access to education for disabled children who were not in school. However it is noteworthy that their conceptual understanding of inclusion was the bringing together of learners with disabilities in the same ordinary classes with their age mates. The Lesotho case will be more fully explored in the next chapter.

1.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology adopted in this study is qualitative research methodology as the orientation of this approach is to gain an understanding individuals' perceptions of the world through its emphasis on insight rather than statistical analysis (Bell, 1989). As case studies are commonly associated with qualitative research because they allow for an in-depth study of a setting (Bell, 1989), I elected to use a case study as the basis for accessing perceptions of the individuals who responded to my research question. Chapter Three explores this in further detail.

Purposeful sampling was used in this study. I selected people from whom I could learn the most. My judgement about the selection of the sample was influenced by the information I obtained from the School Management Team (SMT). The SMT provided the names of people who were participating in workshops during the Teacher Support Teams' training sessions conducted by the Department of Education in 2002. Learners who are on the Learners' Representative Council also formed part of the sample. The parents who are currently in the school's governing body (SGB) also participated in the study. My sample is therefore made up of five teachers, five learners and five parents.

Data collection took the form of a brief survey of the school environment and interviews for obtaining information from teachers, learners and parents based on their experiences of the implementation of inclusive education in the school. I decided to obtain the information through interviews as this would enable me to interact directly with the participants and to ask questions that would explore the subject in depth. The advantage of this approach is that it facilitates probing and clarity.

Data were analysed through a simple qualitative content analysis. The interviews were analysed by extracting the successes and challenges of each implementation activity. The findings related to each implementation activity were summarised under the three overall research questions: what worked, what did not work and what challenges arose in the implementation of the policy.

Table 1.5 outlines the research process that was followed in conducting this study

Table 1.5: Research process

Phases	Activity
1	Requesting permission from the Western Cape Education Department
2	Negotiations with the stakeholders
3	Piloting the interview schedule
4	Conducting the interviews
5	Data analysis
6	Report and thesis writing

In conducting this research, I complied with relevant ethical principles. The ethics will be thoroughly discussed in Chapter Three.

1.6 OVERVIEW OF THESIS

This thesis consists of five chapters. While an overview of the study is outlined in Chapter One followed by a rationale for the research, summaries of the literature review the research methodology and analysis, in Chapter Two the literature review serves as the basis for exploring the conceptualization of inclusive education in South Africa. It is used to launch a discussion on some of the effects of the implementation of inclusive education that have been documented nationally and internationally.

Chapter Three describes the research methodology and the research process adopted. The rationale for using qualitative research with a case study as its basis is examined more fully. This is followed by an exploration of the value of interviews as a means of data collection together with the method of sample selection in relation to issues of validity, reliability and generalisability. Here the ethical statement of this study is also elucidated.

In Chapter Four the research findings are presented and analysed within the framework of the research aims and overall research questions. The analysis is largely based on the four implementation activities with a focus on what worked well, and why. In addition, the kinds of challenges in implementing inclusive education are explored in general terms.

Chapter Five provides a summary of the study, outlining implications and proposing recommendations for further research into inclusive education in the school context. Finally, the limitations of this study are noted and the thesis concluded.
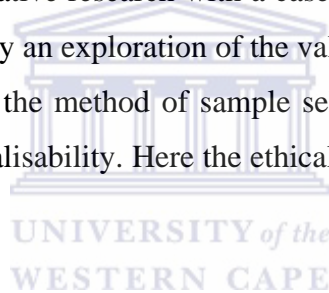
CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE FRAMEWORK

This chapter discusses literature relevant to the study. A section is devoted to each of the following:

2.1 Introduction

2.2 Conceptualisation of inclusive education

2.3 Inclusive education in South Africa

2.4 Policy implementation

2.5 Lessons learned from inclusive education implementation in other countries.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In the post-1994 period South African school communities experienced great changes in the organisation of schooling. One of the major changes in education involves a fundamental conceptual shift from *specialised education* to *inclusive education*. The implementation of this change has meant that "school communities have to deal with high levels of tension both in and out of the classroom as they endeavour to deliver the curriculum in ways that are relevant and meaningful to the diverse needs of their learners" (Creese, Daniels & Norwich 2000:18).

The Education White Paper 6 (EWP6) of the DoE (2001) is perceived as a post-apartheid landmark policy paper that severs ties with the past. It commits itself to the provision of educational opportunities, particularly for those learners who were experiencing, or who had experienced barriers to learning and development, some of whom had dropped out due to the inability of the education and training system to accommodate for their learning needs (DoE, 2001).

The focus of this chapter is threefold: to examine the concept of inclusive education in the literature under review, to review the EWP6 (DoE, 2001) statements on inclusive education and policy implementation, and to ascertain how inclusion is perceived in other countries.

2.2 CONCEPTUALISATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

On an international level, a movement towards inclusive education has been in progress for more than a decade. The 1990 world conference on Education for All in Jomtien, Thailand, pointed out that many children world-wide, including large numbers of those with disabilities, do not receive adequate education (Forum n.d.). At the Jomtien conference it was proclaimed that everyone - children, youth and adults - should have the benefit of educational opportunities that meet their basic learning needs.

The World Conference on Special Needs Education, organised by the Government of Spain in co-operation with UNESCO, held in Salamanca from 7-10 June 1994, reinforced this point by stating that a focus on inclusive education had the simultaneous effect of reaffirming the right to education of every individual. It also revisted the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights to renew the pledge made by the world community at the 1990 World Conference on Education for All, which was to ensure that right for all, regardless of individual differences.

> The 1994 world conference in Salamanca, Spain, re-affirmed the right to education of every individual, as enshrined in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and renewed the pledge made by the world community at the 1990 World Conference on Education for All in Jomtien, to guarantee rights for all regardless of individual differences. (Forum n.d.)

The Salamanca Statement that emanated from the conference encapsulates the basic philosophy of inclusive education systems as it is founded on principles, policy and practice in special needs education. Also, it was at this conference that the debate arose as to whether inclusive mainstream schools are the most effective settings for combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all (UNESCO, 1994).

Slee (as cited in Enabling Education Network [EENET], 2004) contends that at present inclusive education is showing signs of losing its initial meaning. He argues that:

> Inclusive education is showing signs of jetlag; it is losing its freshness and is being used to mean too many different things. At its point of origin inclusive education was essentially a radical idea that rebelled against medical and psychological explanation of educational difficulties. (EENET 2004:1)

It is stated further in this article that to make progress in the implementation of inclusive education, practitioners have to be very clear about what inclusive education means. Confusion around the meaning of inclusive education is also discussed by Swart and Pettipher (2005:3) who argue that people can become easily confused "if individuals do not possess an in-depth understanding of its meaning and examine closely the underlying values it is based on."

Inclusion has evolved as a global education movement to challenge exclusionary policies and practices in education. It has become a favoured approach in addressing barriers to learning for all learners in the mainstream schools in many countries (UNESCO, 1999). South Africa is no exception. The Education White Paper 6 policy (DoE, 2001) is evidence of such commitment in the South African context.

Different theorists view inclusive education in similar ways, for instance, Ainscow and Booth (2003:13) provide the following description of inclusive education:

> Inclusion in education involves the process of increasing the participation of learners and reducing their exclusion from the culture, curricular and communities of local schools. Its main concern is to restructure the practices in schools so that they respond to the diversity of learners in their community. Inclusion involves the identification and minimising of barriers to learning and participation and the maximising of resources to support learning participation.

According to Cheminals (2001), inclusion is about creating a sense of belonging for all teachers, pupils and young people. Making a school inclusive is not something one teacher can do alone. It is the whole community's responsibility. Eleweke and Rhodda (2002) see inclusive education as a call for a respect of differences.

> Inclusive education is the practice of providing a child with disabilities with his/her education within the general education classroom, with the supports and accommodation needed by that student. This inclusion typically takes place at the student's neighbourhood school… (National Information Centre for Children and Youth with Disabilities 1995:3).

Baker and Sigmond (1995, as cited in Frederickson & Cline, 2002) define inclusive education, or view inclusion as a 'place'- a seat in an age-appropriate mainstream classroom where a child can have access to and participate fully in the curriculum. They further define inclusion as a provision of services to students with disabilities, including those with severe impairments. This should take place in the neighbourhood school, with an age-appropriate general education class. In this scenario, the necessary support services and supplementary aids need to be put in place to ensure the child's success.

Their definition emphasises the necessity of support services and supplementary aids as crucial to the project of developing inclusive schools. All the stakeholders in inclusive education, that is, teachers, parents, learners and communities as a whole, require support to equip them to contribute towards the successful implementation of this initiative.

Engelbrecht (1999, as cited in Swart et al. 2002:176) defines inclusion as the "shared value of accommodating all learners in a unified system of education, empowering them to become caring, competent and contributing citizens in an inclusive, changing and diverse society".
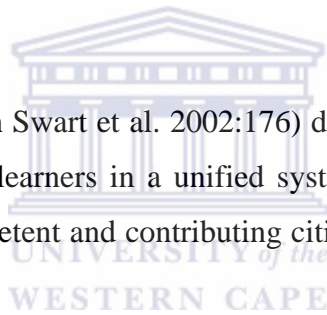
In a report by UNESCO (2006), it has been noted that inclusive schools are based on the basic principle that all pupils in a given school community should learn together, as far as is practicable, regardless of their handicaps or difficulties. Schools should recognise and take into account the diverse needs of their pupils to adapt to the different styles and rhythms of teaching, and provide quality education through the appropriate use of resources, school organisation and study plans. In such ways partnerships with the community can be developed.

Rustemier (2002) defines inclusive education as a continuing process of breaking down barriers to learning, and of promoting participation for all children and young people. Ainscow (2004) views inclusion as a process that has to be seen as a never-ending search for better ways of responding to diversity. He claims that inclusion is about learning how to live with differences and learning how to learn from

differences. He therefore refers to inclusion as the *presence, participation* and *achievement* of all students.

Elaborating on this, he explains *presence* as constituting a place where children are educated and where reliability and punctuality of attendance are monitored. *Participation* refers to the quality of their experiences while they are there, and *achievement* relates to the achievement of the outcomes of learning across the curriculum, not strictly test or examination results.

O'Hanlon (2003) describes inclusion more broadly. She views it as an existing politically correct belief in a context where there is a clear progression towards democracy - in educational organisations and institutions nationally and internationally. She indicates that inclusion is based on the basic human need to embrace diverse human cultures and religious and ethnic differences. She sees it as a process of creating, through educational practice, diverse participation in all aspects of social and educational life.

Lomofsky and Lazarus (2001:306) define inclusion as follows:

> Inclusion means that all teachers are responsible for the education of all children and the curriculum must be adapted to cope with diversity… as a result this implies that all pupils have the right to attend the neighbourhood school, which is important for social reasons.

In South Africa, the White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001) defines inclusive education as the recognition that all children and youth can learn as long as they are provided with the support they need. It is a means of enabling educational structures, systems and learning methodologies to meet learners' needs. Again the emphasis is on creating the awareness that, as human beings, we all need each other despite our differences, and that this co-dependency should be fostered and practised in schools. O'Hanlon is in broad agreement with this view by suggesting that herein lies the potential for establishing inclusive communities at a later stage (O'Hanlon, 2003).

As indicated in Engelbrecht and Green (2001), the best way to bring together societies in countries where societies are somewhat diverse and are marked by deep divisions,

is by creating a single education system. But flexibility needs to be built into that system in order for it to respond to a diverse range of learners' needs.

In summary, inclusive education has different meanings in different contexts. People emphasise different things when defining inclusion. Some focus on position statement of the human rights, participation and support while others stress that it is a means to building solid communities. However, what emerges is that commonalities exist across various contexts. Inclusive education is defined as a system that acknowledges and celebrates diversity that may be related to nationality, religion, gender and language of origin, including social background, level of education, achievement, economic status and disability (UNESCO, 1994). It is defined worldwide as a means to move away from segregationist approaches to education. The basic purpose of educating all learners in the regular classroom and in their neighbourhood schools is to give each of them an "opportunity to learn, live and work with his peers in natural, integrated education and community settings" (Stainback & Stainback 1990:5).

Other initiatives emerging from the varying definitions of inclusive education include curricular restructuring and resources allocation. As stated in the National Association of School Psychologists (1997) inclusive education describes the process by which a school attempts to respond to all pupils as individuals by reconsidering and restructuring its curricular organisation and by providing and allocating resources that will enhance equality of opportunity. Through this process, the school builds its capacity to accept all pupils from the local community who apply and in so doing, reduces the need to exclude any pupils.

2.3 INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

2.3.1 Policy on Inclusive Education

This section summarises the Education White Paper 6 as it is the policy on Special Needs Education and Building an Inclusive Education and Training System (DoE, 2001). The first part of this section will provide a summary on the differences between inclusive education and the former special education system as described in the policy paper. The second part will give a brief overview of the vision, principles

and strategies that the government intends introducing with regard to developing inclusive education in South Africa.

During the apartheid era one of the general divisions created was between schools for learners with disabilities and schools for learners without disabilities. In the arena of 'schools for learners with disabilities', policy during that time made provision for fully-resourced special schools for white disabled learners, whilst the few schools that existed for black disabled learners were under-resourced. Due to the limited number of special schools and the structure of the policy, it is estimated that only 20% of learners with disabilities were accommodated in special schools (DoE, 2001). Education White Paper 6 came as a landmark policy paper that cut ties with the past, as its purpose was to accommodate for all learners in schools. What follows is a description of the policy vision, its key principles and main strategies designed to promote the building of inclusive education in South Africa, as promulgated in Education White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001; Lomofsky & Lazarus, 2001).

Vision:

The vision of the policy entails a commitment to build:

> An education system that promotes education for all and fosters the development of inclusive and supportive centres of learning that enable all learners to participate actively in the education process so that they can develop and extend their potential and participate as equal members of society (NCSNET/NCESS, DoE 1997:10).

Key Principles:

The key principles for the implementation of inclusive education embraced in the EWP6 include the following statements:

- The protection of human rights, values and social justice: the right to basic education and quality education for all is a recent phenomenon legislated through the South Africa School Act (DoE, 1996).
- A unitary system: integration of all support services into the general system and the facilitation of access to a common curriculum through availability of resources to enable full participation of all learners.

- Non-discrimination, non racism and non-sexism: all schools should be open to all children of school-going age including those with disabilities and other special needs.

- Democracy: all stakeholders should be encouraged to become involved in the development of an inclusive education and training system, (in) structures (that) ensure accountability.

- Redress of educational inequalities: the first priority should be given to marginalised youth, and support services should be allocated to those most in need.

- Cost effectiveness: provision (of) education and support should be affordable, effective, implementable and sustainable.

Key Strategies:

The key strategies that follow are stated in the EWP6 (DoE 2001:30-34) and arise from the principles outlined there.

Strengthening education support services

The ministry regards education support services as key in the process of reducing barriers to learning within all education and training systems. This approach points to the conversion of special schools into resource centres that become integrated into district-based support teams.

Acceptance of out-of-school disabled children

By 2021 the ministry aims to have enrolled approximately 280,000 disabled children and youth of compulsory school-going age who have not yet been accommodated in the school system.

Expanding provision and access

Thirty special schools will be converted into resource centres in thirty designated school districts. Within the thirty school districts full service schools will be provided with the necessary physical resources, knowledgeable staff and professionals who will concentrate on the development of practices in schools to accommodate for the full range of learning needs.

Governance

This involves using a process of orientation to introduce the inclusion model to governing bodies, management and professional staff within mainstream education.

Further education and training

The ministry aims to extend to the Further Education and Training sector the provision of education for learners with disabilities, with the purpose of sustaining education for those with impaired intellectual development.

Information, advocacy and mobilisation

Awareness-raising regarding inclusive practice is seen as fundamental to the establishment of an inclusive society that incorporates an inclusive education and training system. "Uncovering negative stereotypes, advocating unconditional acceptance and winning support for the policies in the White Paper will be essential to the establishment of the inclusive education and training system" (DoE 2001:33).

HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases

The effect of HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases on the education system will be analysed on an ongoing basis. The ministry will work closely with the Departments of Health, Public Service Administration and Social Development to establish care programmes to which they may refer learners in need.

In August 2003 the Department of Education published draft guidelines - later finalised in 2005 (DoE, 2005) - for the implementation of inclusive education. The guidelines pave the way for the implementation process and provide direction on how the policy should be put into practice. They also assign responsibilities and outline procedures to guide those involved in inclusive education policy implementation.

As stated in Lazarus, Daniels and Nel (2006:8), in order to facilitate policy implementation, the national Department of Education developed a set of Conceptual and Operational Guidelines (2005). These include the following documents:

- Draft National Strategy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS) (DoE 1)

- Guidelines for Inclusive Learning Programmes (DoE 2)

- Conceptual and Operational Guidelines for District-Based Support Teams (DoE 3)

- Conceptual and Operational Guidelines for Special Schools as Resource Centres (DoE 4)

- Conceptual and Operational Guidelines for Full-Service Schools (DoE 5).

Lazarus et al. comment:

> The National Strategy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support document attempts to patch up the process of identifying, assessing and enrolling learners in special schools. The Guidelines for Inclusive Learning Programmes offers guidelines on how to use the National Curriculum Statement for the purposes of responding to particular learning needs. The Conceptual and Operational Guidelines for District-Based Support Teams provides detail on the composition and function of these teams. The Conceptual and Operational Guidelines for Special Schools as Resource Centres guides special schools towards a new conceptual framework by challenging their roles in the previous dispensation and suggesting procedures in line with the changes in the education landscape. Lastly, the Conceptual and Operational Guidelines for Full-Service Schools defines a 'full-service' school as a mainstream school that supplies the full range of support, including levels of support ranging from low to very intensive. (Lazarus, Daniels and Nel 2006:8)

According to the Operational Guidelines for District-Based Support Teams (DoE, 2005), the District-Based Support Teams have been specifically assigned to activate the inclusive education implementation process, to provide integrated support to education institutions and to support the development of effective teaching and learning. The team is responsible for providing support to educators to enable them to learn and grow continually, so that they create effective and supportive teaching environments for their learners. The team also focuses on developing relevant

learning support materials for those learners who cannot cope with the curriculum, while introducing educators to assessment approaches suitable for individual learner needs.

The key principles that guide the functioning of district-based support teams, as stated in the guidelines on full service schools, (DoE, 2005) are as follows:

- The support provided by the District-Based Support Teams to the institutions should be flexible in such a way that the support is affected and influenced by local needs and resources.
- With regard to equity and redress, the District-Based Support Team should be able to provide support for all learners and institutions, taking cognizance of differences with regard to past disadvantage and existing socio-economic conditions.
- In developing a community-based approach, the Department has committed itself to identifying support systems available inside and outside of schools, and by including them in the provision of support for the education institutions.
- Professional specialists will play an important role in this team as they will be working in accordance with the local needs.

As stated in the EWP6 (DoE, 2001) schools are required to establish Institutional-Level Support Teams (ILST). The teams' primary functions are "to put in place properly co-ordinated learner and educator support services" (Education White Paper 6, DoE 2001:48). Some of the services teams are expected to render to the whole school are:

- To support learning and teaching processes by identifying learners who experience barriers to learning and addressing their needs
- To identify the institutional needs and, in conjunction with the District-Based Support Teams, to address them.

2.3.2 Implementation challenges in South Africa

Lomofsky and Lazarus (2001) have identified the following challenges to the implementation of inclusive education in South Africa:

- The school buildings are inaccessible and unsafe for learners with physical disabilities.
- The existing curriculum is inflexible and does not cater for the needs of all learners.
- There is lack of resources such as toilets, sanitation, access to electricity and water, especially in rural areas.
- There is a general lack of support provision that can support teaching and learning in the schools.

With regard to addressing teachers' negative attitudes towards disability and their resistance towards change, Lomofsky and Lazarus (2001) indicate that the success of the implementation process will be hindered if teachers cannot accept learners as they are, regardless of their disabilities. Inclusive classroom environments and learners' interactions also play an important role in the implementation process. If this is not properly managed and the classroom environment does not take into consideration different learners' needs, only a few learners will benefit.

Prinsloo (2001) argues that in a developing country such as South Africa where unemployment and poverty are rife and where government and community structures are inhibited by an unstable economy, it can be expected that the provision of quality education for all learners, especially those who experience barriers to learning and development, would be a difficult task. In terms of the review of the new curriculum and based on the collaborative effort of various stakeholders, South African schools need to be restructured. Swart et al. (2002) argue that real change requires a long term commitment, and that unless teachers' attitudes towards inclusion are transformed, the inclusion policy implementation will not succeed. These authors have therefore urged that teachers' attitudes should be considered as crucial in implementing the inclusion policy because many factors related to their attitudes would contribute to the successes and failures of implementing the policy.

Weeks (2000:23) claims that:

> Community-based involvement in this regard is essential, with members of the community becoming involved in actualizing the full potential of learners. Special schools, with their skilled and experienced staff, have to offer assistance and support to the teaching staff at mainstream schools. Teachers need to be trained in pre- and in-service programs to focus on the strengths of learners and to regard the different cultural and ethnic backgrounds of learners as having the potential to stimulate a richer learning environment. They also need to understand the diverse needs of the learners in their classrooms, to identify their problems and to be able to give support to all their learners in order for them to learn and develop optimally.

The latter quote places more emphasis on teacher training as a discipline. The necessity of training the teachers to think and work in a new frame of reference concentrates the focus on what may be the single greatest problem facing the new education dispensation. This concerns the disturbing number of teachers in South Africa who are confused and insecure due to a series of radical changes that have transformed their working environment (Weeks, 2000).

According to Sethosa (2001), teachers are not familiar with the principles of Outcomes-Based Education. He claims that teachers find it difficult to seek and find their own learning material (relevant to each child's culture, interest and level of development). They struggle to involve parents and communities in the learning process, and on both a personal and a professional level, they themselves feel inadequately prepared to deal with so much diversity amongst the large numbers of learners in their classrooms. Consequently, being required to include learners who experience barriers to learning in their classrooms is perceived as additional stress.

Prinsloo (2001) states that in spite of many attempts by the Department of Education to train and support teachers, most still experience a sense of powerlessness - a sense of not being in control of their situation. Feelings of inferiority and fear of breaking laws that protect learners' rights have resulted in a decrease in motivation and enthusiasm to meet the needs of all the children in their classrooms.

In the DoE (2003) study that was conducted in three provinces of South Africa, the final report clearly ascribed the successes of inclusive education to the following factors: access, school community relationship, reflection and action concerning

barriers to learning and working together. This report demonstrated that if neglected, these factors can pose serious challenges to the implementation of inclusive education.

Access

Access in these terms refers to the inclusion of all learners of school-going age in their neighbourhood schools. If learners do not have access to educational facilities in their community this is an indicator that inclusive education is lacking. Given that it is possible to identify and address learning barriers already at the early childhood development level, caregivers and parents alike would be aware of their responsibility to ensure that their children received proper schooling.

School-Community Relationship

When the neighbouring community knows that the school is used by their own children, they have a sense of ownership. For that reason they become actively involved in its maintenance. Both the parents and the school work together closely, so the school is in a position to recognise when there is a need to empower parents and can then take responsibility to do so. If the school and the community are not working together, knowledge of the resources available in the school and in the community is restricted and community action or participation on the part of either becomes limited.

Barriers to learning

Some of the barriers to learning experienced by learners are extrinsic. External factors such as challenges in the home become easier to address when they are raised in collaborative efforts between the school and the caregivers.

While the White Paper 6 on inclusive education policy stipulates that a realistic time frame of twenty years is proposed for the implementation of inclusive education system in South Africa, the realization of this goal will depend on how well the implementation process has been structured. Implementation projects such as DANIDA (DoE, 2003) and SCOPE (Da Costa, 2003) have been piloted in different provinces. Both these projects aimed at providing support to the implementation of Education White Paper 6 in South Africa mainstream schools. Recommendations were made on how the findings could be applied to assist in the implementation of the

policy nationally. It has been noted in these studies that successful implementation of inclusive education is dependent on the extent to which the community has been involved, and the extent to which the impact of broader social issues on effective teaching and learning are recognised and addressed. The following section will discuss policy implementation and its challenges.

2.4 POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

This section describes different approaches to policy implementation. According to Recesso (2004), policy implementation can be described as one of the stages in the policy process. It is generally regarded as a set of activities that are geared towards the achievement of policy objectives. In other words, it is a process of putting policy into practice. As stated in Recesso (2004), in implementing policies it is important to acknowledge that no single approach would fit all contexts. There are different ways of implementing policy and each has its advantages and disadvantages. This section will briefly outline certain approaches, including those of a top-down, bottom-up and interactive nature.

In the top-down approach, according to Recesso (2004), policy is implemented as stated on the policy paper. The policy objectives and goals are carried out by implementers as imposed by the policy makers without considering the underlying factors at grassroots level. The approach therefore assumes that "the policy makers have control, that they can affect the implementation process and that their decisions have some bearing on local actors" (Recesso 2004:6). The disadvantage of this approach is that it does not consider the local environment and that it is therefore likely to fail because the implementers have their own views of the policy. Their views may lead to either implementation or non-implementation of the policy (McLaughlin, 1997).

The bottom-up approach is the opposite of the top-down approach. This approach considers the local environment when implementing the policy. It does not assume that all organisations are the same and that they are necessarily interested in implementing the policy (Recesso, 1999). According to Honig, (2004), in the bottom-

up approach the information about the policy is brought into the organisation and the organisation then decides what to incorporate into its rules and routines.

Bottom-up and top-down approaches can be integrated in implementing the policy to form what is called an interactive approach. In this approach, although the implementers implement the policy according to how it has been developed, they also consider the circumstances of their context. To put the policy into practice they look at what they have in relation to resources and all other necessary strategies. The policy is therefore implemented on the basis of how best the implementers can achieve the aims and objectives of the policy, while not being constrained by how the policy makers have developed it (Recesso, 2004).

According to Jansen (2002) a policy can be defined as guidelines, or a plan of action or a statement of ideas proposed or adopted by governments to address certain issues. In reality policy cannot be implemented as it is stated on a paper. For the policy to be implemented successfully, a number of factors need to be considered. For example, implementers' commitment to follow the guidelines, as well as coordinated development between the policy makers and the stakeholders in institutions, are of utmost importance. Failures in implementation are influenced by factors such as uncoordinated or poor implementation strategies (Jansen, 2002).

Jansen (2002) has pointed out that factors contributing to education policy failures in developing countries include lack of resources, the inadequacy of teacher training, the weak design of implementation strategies and problems of policy coherence. An absence of resources to support implementation of policy is an extrinsic factor that hinders the policy implementation process. Resources include both physical and human resources. Motala and Pampallis (2001) have proposed that for the successful implementation of policies to occur, an examination of the implementation process itself must be done in relation to the very policies from which it is derived, while the relationship between policies and their implementation must be analysed simultaneously.

In South Africa policy implementation is done at four levels, namely the national Department, the nine provincial departments, district offices and educational

institutions, including schools. Policies are nationally constructed while provinces work as arms of the national Department to administer the national duties provincially. The provinces put the national guidelines into practice through their respective district offices. The districts work directly with the schools. Part of the difficulty of making something happen across levels of government and through institutions is that policy makers cannot mandate what happens on the ground. This is what McLaughlin (1987) contends.

McLaughlin (1987) also states that policy success critically depends on two broad factors, namely local capacity and will. Will in this sense is highlighted as a major challenge as it includes issues such as attitudes, motivation, and beliefs that underlie an implementer's response to a policy's goals or strategies. Concerning capacity, the author indicates that although this can also be regarded as a challenging factor in policy implementation, it is easier to deal with because it can be addressed more concretely.

Elmore and Mazmanian (1980, as cited in McLaughlin 1987:174) describe policy implementation challenges as follows:

> The first challenges of implementation generally are to learn the rules of the game. What is supposed to be done? What are the legal requirements determining program activities? Clear goals, well-specified statutes, and effective authority are important external policy variables at the initial stage. Generally, it is only after these compliances' concerns have been understood that implementers can move on to address issues of program development or the quality of implementation.

It is therefore fundamental that people involved in the implementation of the policy know about the policy and are able to come up with effective recommendations. What really matters is how people respond to the policy, whether they are willing to put into practice what is expected of them, or whether they develop a negative attitude even before they can start working with it. Here I am specifically referring to all people who are responsible for the implementation of inclusive education in schools. The success of policy implementation is also influenced by well-planned procedures and the extent to which the policy is clear and understandable to the implementers.

2.5 IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN OTHER COUNTRIES

This section explores views from literature relevant to the successes and challenges experienced in the process of implementing inclusive education in mainstream schools in India and Lesotho. The countries highlighted are some of the developing countries that have implemented inclusive education. I chose them as the study is done in South Africa which is also a developing country.

2.5.1 India

In their article, Singal & Rouse (2003:3) describe the implementation of inclusive education in schools in India as follows:

> Moving beyond terminological nuances, it is pertinent to highlight that whilst the national average gross enrolment in schools is over 90%, fewer than 5% of children with disabilities are in school. In such a scenario, inclusive education is not a choice; it is rather the only option in a developing country like India, where there is a large demand but limited resources. To educate the 95% of children with disabilities who currently do not attend school, the building of new special schools would be too expensive, even if it were the preferred route. In other words, if education for all is to be achieved, inclusion is the only option and this will only be achieved through capacity building in existing mainstream schools.

According to the authors, the Indian government launched the movement towards 'education for all' in 2000. The aim was to provide education for all children in the 6 to 14 age group by 2010. In the Indian context inclusive education is used for the benefit of disabled children in mainstream schools. Inclusive education was therefore initially defined in terms of an effort to bring children with disabilities into mainstream education. Singal & Rouse (2003) note that in India, children with special educational needs are defined as children with physical disabilities.

What follows is a list based on the Singal & Rouse (2003) article, which highlights the successes and challenges experienced in implementing inclusive education in India. Some of the successes recorded include the following:

- All learners are included in mainstream education and some children have already been moved from special schools to be included in mainstream schools.
- Some head teachers of private schools that usually charge high fees organised sponsorship for financially deprived children as part of an effort to support inclusion of all learners in their schools.

Although successes occurred, challenges were also experienced. Some of these included the following:

- Teachers confused inclusion with integration and used the concept interchangeably.
- As teachers had not been included in decision-making processes on inclusive education, they were unprepared for learners with special educational needs.
- School curricula are inflexible and examination-oriented.
- Class sizes are large.
- There are vast amounts of syllabus to be covered, compounded by the task of maintaining discipline.
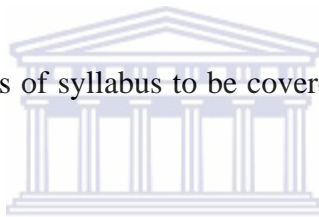
Rao (2002), in his article entitled "Inclusive education in the Indian context", states that the act of making an ordinary school an inclusive school is the most challenging task because the school has to play a major role in making provision for children with special educational needs. Adopting an inclusive approach may prove to be the most challenging task as it is a task calling for deep reflection and discussion of two fundamental questions:

1. What is the overall role of education?
2. What is it we want children to learn in school?

According to Rao (2002), having answered these questions, the school will find that it needs to reform its whole system from a traditional examination-oriented approach to an inclusive child-oriented approach. This may result in great confusion amongst stakeholders if preparations are not done in advance. Changing the curriculum to meet all learners' needs requires a thorough understanding of an inclusive education system (Rao, 2002).

In summary, in India inclusive education is conceptualised as an act of incorporating learners with disabilities in ordinary schools and making the curriculum child-centred or learning-centred. According to Rao (2002), when there is no partnership between parents and schools, a learning gap is created because children learn not only in the classroom but also at home. As a result the policy on inclusion and mainstreaming can easily become "mainstream dumping".

2.5.2 Lesotho

Khatleli, Mariga, Phachaka, and Stubbs (1995) discuss the progress of inclusive education in Lesotho as follows. A progressive policy on the inclusion of disabled children into primary schools was developed in Lesotho in 1987. This has provided the disabled people's organisations with a powerful tool with which to lobby for access to education for the disabled children who are not in school. The inclusive education programme in Lesotho began with a six-month national feasibility study involving over 300 primary schools. This involved lengthy discussions with teachers about the national policy and the identification of children with learning needs already in the schools. The study revealed that 17% of existing children had some sort of impairment which affected their learning. The programme therefore began by tackling the existing problems. In the long-term this has helped to reduce the very high drop-out and repeater rates in the pilot schools (Khatleli et al., 1995).

As mentioned in the discussion about conceptualisation of inclusive education, different people conceptualise inclusion differently. According to the account given by Khatleli et al. (1995:7), inclusive education in Lesotho is conceptualised as a "tool with which to lobby for access to education for disabled children".

Phachaka (1998) reports that the major constraints that influenced the implementation of inclusive education in Lesotho were as follows:
- inadequate resources
- high turnover of key staff in the ministry of education as well as amongst teachers who had received training
- shortage of appropriately qualified personnel to supervise the programme

- inaccessibility of most schools due to difficult terrain
- costs: assistive devices e.g. wheel chairs, hearing aids, etc. are very expensive and difficult for parents to purchase as parents lack funds, support and state assistance.

Despite constraints such as these, successes were achieved. At present the programme has gained national recognition from different stakeholders such as professionals, parents, policy makers and NGOs. Attitudes have changed, and teachers have developed confidence, knowledge and skills which help them to become better teachers of all children. The government has granted permission for the special education course content to be included in the Lesotho College of Education (Phachaka, 1998).

Class sizes in Lesotho are large, with ratios of 1 teacher to 100 children, but teachers continue to find ways of meeting each child's individual educational needs. The following strategies enable them to do this:

- peer support: seating disabled children next to pupils who could help them and encouraging learners to work together and to help each other
- appropriate seating: seating children with seeing and hearing impairments near the front of the class in closer proximity to the chalkboard and the teacher's voice
- adapting the curriculum: teachers adapt the curriculum to suit each learner's needs resulting in differentiated lessons designed to accommodate a variety of learners' needs
- encouragement: encouraging siblings at home to support a learner experiencing barriers to learning, and promoting positive attitudes
- group work: given time constraints, it is easier to work with small groups in a big class than to work with each individual learner; teachers can arrange groups in such a way as to have easy access to particular learners in their respective groups; where learners are not clear about something they are able to help each other while the teacher is working with another group.

In Lesotho, the implementation of inclusive education has been practically piloted in 300 schools. The inclusion programme has gained favour nationally. The programme leaders have had discussions with teachers about the national policy and the identification of learners who have particular learning needs. Although strengths have been highlighted, there are also constraints. These constraints include inadequate teaching and learning resources, a shortage of human resources, a lack of funds and the relocation of trained teachers from education departments.

2.6 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This chapter discussed the conceptualisation of inclusive education, inclusive education in South Africa, policy implementation and some lessons learnt from other developing countries. Within the discussion on the conceptualisation of inclusive education, the philosophy and definitions of inclusive education were explored. Under inclusive education in South Africa, a brief discussion of the shift from special education to inclusion of learners was presented. Education White Paper 6 policy was analysed in an examination of its vision, what the policy sets down as achievable by 2021, as well as the content of its key implementation strategies. Lessons learned from approaches adopted in Lesotho and India regarding the implementation of inclusive education were outlined and successes and constraints experienced by the two countries were also noted. Finally, some lessons from the South African context were also engaged with. The next chapter discusses the research methodology employed in this study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This study is concerned with the implementation of inclusive education in South Africa. This chapter presents the research methodology used in conducting the study. The qualitative research methodology and case study approach that were employed will be discussed, as will the research aims, the purpose of the research, and the interviews as research techniques utilised for data collection. In this chapter an overview of the sampling, validity, reliability and generability segment of the study will be presented. Finally the ethical statement underpinning the protection of the participants will conclude the discussion on research methodology.

3.2 RESEARCH SIGNIFICANCE AND AIMS

3.2.1 Research aims and purpose

My research aim was to investigate the challenges arising from the implementation of inclusive education in one mainstream school. The three questions that guided the study were:

- What facet of the inclusive education system has worked well in the school, and why?
- What has not worked well, and why?
- What were the key challenges of implementing inclusive education?

In identifying the factors that can impact positively and negatively on the successful implementation of inclusive education in schools, it is envisaged that this study will contribute to the implementation process.

3.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.3.1 Qualitative Research Methodology

The approach that was adopted for this study was a qualitative research method, an approach often used by researchers conducting case studies. As indicated by Bell (1989), researchers using qualitative research methodology concentrate mainly on understanding individuals' perceptions of the world and seek insight rather than statistical analysis.

Hitchcock and Hughes (1991) define qualitative research as an approach that enables researchers to learn, first-hand, about the social world they are investigating, by means of involvement and participation and by focusing on what individuals say and do. Denzil and Lincoln (2003) maintain that qualitative research is mainly a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive practices that render the world visible. The approach enables the researcher to interpret what is observed in a way that makes sense to other people.

As stated in Babbie and Mouton (2001:270), "qualitative research is especially appropriate to the study of those attitudes and behaviours best understood within their natural setting as opposed to the somewhat artificial setting." Some of the positive characteristics of qualitative research as indicated in Babbie and Mouton (2001:279) are that "it allows a detailed encounter with the object of study. It is open to the various sources of data. It is also flexible, meaning that it allows the researcher to adapt and make changes to the study where and when necessary."

In Merriam (1998) it is indicated that qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed. The researcher is the primary instrument for the data collection and analysis; it usually involves fieldwork, and it primarily employs an inductive research strategy. The product of qualitative study is richly descriptive.

Although qualitative research methodology was favoured in carrying out this study, I am aware of its limitations. Firstly, it cannot be statistically tested because the

information is in words only and not in numbers. Secondly, if the researcher wants to give some numerical interpretations, the approach is forced to be intermarried with the quantitative research approach (Neuman, 2003).

Another disadvantage of qualitative research methodology as stated in Huberman, Mathews and Miles (1994) is that it is time-consuming. This is because, to pursue more valid and reliable studies, multiple research approaches should be applied in one study. Coding and analysis are also energy-absorbing (Huberman, Mathews and Miles, 1994). The researcher can be overwhelmed with the flood of different ideas and perceptions from interviewees, especially when a researcher has to transcribe and sometimes to translate the interviews. Finally, words may be more unmanageable than numbers.

3.3.2 Case study

I conducted a single site case study. The choice of a case study in this particular school was guided by the fact that the school has already implemented inclusive education. The buildings of School X are old, dilapidated prefabricated structures with overcrowded classrooms and a huge ratio of learners to classroom facilitators.

A case study in the qualitative research approach allows for an in-depth study of a setting. In a single setting various research methods can be applied, for example, focus group discussions, interviews, observations and questionnaires (Merriam, 1998).

Merriam (1998:34) describes a case study as follows:

> Case studies in education, for example, can focus on individual students to diagnose learning problems. More commonly though, case study research in education is conducted so that specific issues and problems of practice can be identified and explained.

In accordance with such a view, my study was conducted to diagnose the challenges of implementation at school level and to identify practical problems encountered. It involves an attempt to unearth the problems so that they can be addressed.

As stated in Bell (1989), one of the advantages of a case study is that it allows for a detailed investigation of a setting from which valuable insights can be gained. It enables the building of relationships with the stakeholders and the cultivation of good rapport that may enrich the study. By contrast, working with people who regard the researcher as a stranger may result in the withholding of information.

Meanwhile, the disadvantages of a case study, as stated in Merriam (1998), include the following points:

- The researcher may base their selection of the sample on assumptions which may lead to a biased study because she/he may select only those participants who may be in agreement with him/her.
- The findings in a case study cannot be generalised. This means that they cannot be applied to another setting.
- Participants who may have personal issues against the researcher may purposely delay or hinder the study.

3.4 DATA COLLECTION
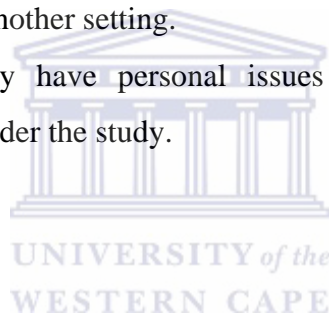
This section discusses the sampling methods, participants and the selection of the data collection methods used in this study.

3.4.1 The participants

Neuman (2003) explains that purposive (purposeful) sampling is an acceptable kind of sampling for special situations. Its main purpose is to gain a deeper understanding of the researched issue, rather than to make generalisations about a larger population. According to Frankel & Wallen (1993), in purposive sampling researchers use their personal judgments to select a sample, situating themselves upon the previous knowledge of a population in conjunction with the specific purpose of the research.

> Purposeful sampling is based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which most can be learned. To begin purposive sampling you must first determine what

selection criteria are essential in choosing the people and sites to be studied. (Merriam 1998:88)

Purposive sampling was used in this study because of the nature of the study which is a single setting case study. According to Frankel & Wallen (1993), in purposeful sampling researchers do not simply study whoever is available but use their judgement to select a sample, which is based on prior information and which will provide the data they need. The limitations of this form of sampling include a researcher's judgement that may not be correct in estimating the representative quality of the sample. In fact the judgement is based entirely on assumptions.

In this study, I selected people in the school from whom I could learn the most in terms of the research aims. This research involved interviews with a sample of fifteen people. Within this number five were teachers, five parents and five learners from the Senior Phase. Table 3.4 outlines how participants are referred to in this study.
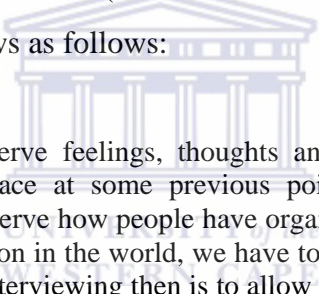
Table 3.4: Participants

Participants	No. of participants	Description of codes
Parents	5	Parent 1,2,3,4,5
Teachers	5	Teacher 1,2,3,4,5
Learners	5	Learner 1,2,3,4,5

3.4.2 Interviews

According to Frankel & Wallen (1993), there are four types of interviews, namely, structured, semi-structured, informal and retrospective interviews. The authors describe structured and semi-structured interviews as verbal questionnaires. These are formal and are designed in a way to elicit specific answers from the respondents. These kinds of interviews are planned in advance. In this study, semi structured interviews were used to elicit information regarding the challenges of implementing inclusive education in the schools. Questions are written in a sequenced and logical order and neither the interviewer nor the interviewee has much freedom for modification (O'Hanlon, 2003). Its advantage is that it saves a great deal of time at the analysis stage and the researcher is sure that all topics are covered. The problem

with this approach is that the interviewer decides on questions which may turn out to be not very significant ones (Bell, 1989).

Informal and unstructured interviews are conducted with minimal control. The interviewee is encouraged to express his or her responses as freely and fully as he or she chooses: "An informal interview still requires careful planning to ensure the establishment of rapport from the outset which is necessary to get the best results" (O'Hanlon 2003:79). "Unstructured interviews centred round the topic may, in skilled hands, produce a wealth of valuable data but such interviews require a great deal of expertise to control and a great deal of time to analyse" (Bell 1989:73). As a result, an unskilled or inexperienced interviewer may end up in interesting conversations that may produce useful insights but research interviews require more than interesting conversations as such approaches may lead to failure in acquiring necessary information (O'Hanlon, 2003). Patton (1990:196 as cited in Merriam, 1998) describes the importance of the interviews as follows:

> Because we cannot observe feelings, thoughts and intentions we cannot observe behaviours that took place at some previous point in time, we cannot observe situations, we cannot observe how people have organised the world and the meanings they attach to what goes on in the world, we have to ask people questions about these things. The purpose of interviewing then is to allow us to enter into the other person's perspective.

"The main purpose of the interviews is to obtain a special kind of information; the researcher wants to find out what is in and on someone else's mind" (Merriam, 1998: 95).

To find answers to my research question I decided to obtain the information through interviews because the interviews enable the researcher to interact directly with the participants and to ask questions that will allow for exploring the problem in depth. An advantage of this approach was that whenever I needed clarity I was able to get it immediately in the course of the conversation.

Semi-structured interviews were adopted in conducting this study. In the semi-structured interviews the researcher is sure that all the topics will be covered (Merriam, 1998). My aim with this study was mainly to determine what worked well

in the activities of a school that had undertaken to implement inclusive education; what did not work well and what challenges had to be confronted. So to obtain the information I needed for all the sub-questions, this approach was considered most suitable.

Although interviews are a rich source for obtaining information from participants, I am aware of their limitations, for example, the fact that interviewee responses at the time of the interviews can be influenced by circumstances such as the interviewee's health status or mood, yielding responses that might affect the quality of data obtained (Merriam, 1998). Also, a biased study may emerge, influenced by factors such as the researcher's choice of a sample from which he/she hopes to get relevant information. The selected sample may turn out to be an inadequate source of relevant information. For example, this sample might be from a group of people who share many of their perceptions of the circumstances in which they operate.

3.4.3 Data collection process

Arrangements were made for the interviews and consent obtained from parents to allow their children to participate in the study. The consent forms were signed and the ethics of the research was explained. The initial plan was to interview learners from all the Phases, but during the pilot phase of the interviews, I was unable to obtain enough information from the learners in the Foundation and Intermediate Phases. I therefore had to change the sample and interviewed learners in the Senior Phase only. They were members of the Learners' Representative Council (LRC). The interviews in this study were conducted in two phases. The first phase focused on general information about the school. An informal survey on classroom arrangements was also done. This will be thoroughly discussed in Chapter Four. The second phase of interviews focused on obtaining information that answered the specific research questions. An interview schedule was used for this purpose (refer to appendices IV, V and VI).

3.5 DATA ANALYSIS

According to Merriam (1998), data analysis is the process of systematically searching and arranging the interview transcripts, field notes, and other materials a researcher

accumulates to increase her own understanding of them and to enable her to present what she has discovered to others. Analysis involves working with the data, organising it, breaking it into manageable units, synthesising it, searching for patterns, discovering what is important and what is to be learned, and deciding what to tell others (Bogden & Bilken, 1982 as cited in Merriam, 1998).

In analysing the interviews I read the interview transcripts and compared the findings by looking for patterns in the data. The findings were sorted by putting the same information under one category. At the end of the process the comparison lists were brought together to construct the final list that served as the research findings (Merriam, 1998; Neuman, 2003; and Huberman, Mathew and Miles, 1994).

In this study the interviews were analysed and the findings were presented under the three overall research questions: what worked well, what did not work well and what the challenges were in the implementation of inclusive education at school.

3.6 THE VALIDITY, RELIABILITY AND GENERALIZABILITY OF THE STUDY
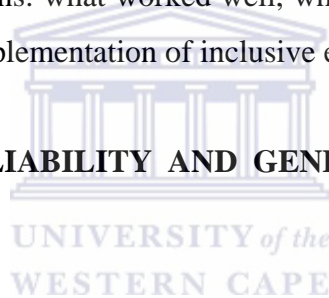
Firestone (1989) explores how the qualitative paradigm employs different styles to convince clients of their trustworthiness, and explains validity as a means of dealing with the question of how research findings match reality - how similar the findings are to reality. Do the findings capture what is really there? Are investigators observing or measuring what they think they are measuring? Warner (1991 as cited in Huberman et al. 1994:278), speaks of validity as "the idea that the events and settings studied are unmodified by the researcher's presence and actions". The question about validity is truth-value. Do the findings of the study make sense and are they credible to the studied group and readers? Is the sampling theoretically diverse enough to encourage broader applicability?

For the validity of the instrument in this study I consulted my research supervisors before conducting my research. I conducted the interviews to follow up the findings that were not clear. I also shared the transcripts of the interviews with the participants

to verify the accuracy of the information. The raw data was also shared with the supervisors.

"Reliability in qualitative research refers to the degree of consistency with which instances are assigned to the same category by different observers or by the same observer on different occasions" (Silverman 2001:225). Reliability refers to the extent to which research findings can be replicated. The connection between reliability and internal validity, from a traditional perspective, rests on some of the assumption that a study is more valid if repeated observations in the same study or replications of the entire study have produced the same findings (Merriam, 1998). In this study interviews were done in two phases to maintain the reliability and validity.

According to Merriam (1998), the research is of no significance if no one knows about it. The research is based on the available information, which means there must be literature that addresses the topic of the study in some way. The research is done to inform the existing knowledge about what has been recently researched. Some results can be generalised, meaning that the findings of one study can be applied to other areas. This study will not be generalised however. It is a case study which cannot be generalised. The policy implementation process will however be informed.

3.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

According to Neuman (2003), it is crucial for the researcher to explain to the participants who he/she is, what he/she wants and why he/she is collecting data in that particular setting. In addition, a researcher cannot leave the research setting without giving the results to the participants.

In this study I made the interviewees aware that participating in the research is voluntary. The interviewee had the right to withdraw from the study whenever he/she wanted to, without being afraid of being penalised. The interviewee also retained the right to withdraw the information he/she had provided. The protection of the participants from harm, the assurance of the confidentiality of research data, and the question of deception of subjects were also highlighted as very important ethical principles, as is also outlined in (Frankel & Wallen, 1993).

Agreement was reached by prior arrangement for the tape-recording of information. Although I used audio-recording in the interviews conducted in this study, I was aware of the disadvantages pertaining to this process. Respondents are often uncomfortable when they know their remarks will be recorded word-for-word. They may only say things in a socially acceptable way. Although a researcher can get a more detailed and accurate record, it is likely to be distorted by the very process of obtaining it (Frankel & Wallen, 1993).

The protection of the anonymity of the participants was considered crucial in this study. For the children interviewed, parents signed the consent forms on their behalf, for their protection during the research process.

To comply with these ethical principles I met each interviewee individually and discussed with them the aim of the research and their rights as participants in this study, as discussed in the foregoing section. Teachers and parents were given consent forms before the interviews started to sign as an agreement between themselves and the interviewer. In the case of learners, letters and consent forms were sent to their parents requesting permission for their children to participate in the study. The signed letters and consent forms were returned to me. The interviewees were asked to allow me to use the tape recorder and were allowed the freedom to let it be stopped if they did not feel at ease with it at any time. Finally, it was explained to the interviewees that they will be granted access to the transcripts and to the research findings if they wish to see these.

3.8 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This chapter covered the overall research aim, practical aims and the purpose of the study. Research methodology, data collection methods and data analysis strategies that were adopted in conducting this study were presented. The qualitative research method was also defined and its characteristics, advantages and disadvantages were explained. The case study was discussed in relation to its advantages and disadvantages. The interview as the main data collection technique was described in conjunction with its function in this study; the reasons for having adopted it in this study were explained. Finally, the ethical considerations and how the researcher complied with them were discussed. The following chapter presents and discusses the research findi

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents and discusses the research findings. As stated in the aforementioned chapters, the aim of this research study is to investigate the challenges of implementing inclusive education in one Khayelitsha mainstream school, referred to in this study as School X. The study poses this question: 'What are the challenges that are facing the implementation of inclusive education in this mainstream school?'

Three specific sub-questions that have guided the study are:

- What has worked well in the school, and why?
- What has not worked well, and why?
- What are the challenges of implementing inclusive education?

In this chapter the background of the school is described. The research findings are then presented under the three main thesis sub-questions as directed by the research question, and are then presented in relation to the implementation activities of the school. This means that the researcher examined what worked well in each of the activities, what did not work well, and what the challenges were. Although the analyses were done in relation to the implementation activities, some other crucial themes also emerged and are therefore also discussed.

As indicated in Chapter Three, the interviews were conducted in two phases. The first phase focused mainly on the general background of the school, including some questions about the implementation of inclusive education at the school. The second phase focused on the factors that facilitated and hindered effective implementation of inclusive education in the school, and only key informants who were members of the Teachers Support Team (TST) at the school participated in this phase. The role of Teacher Support Teams (TSTs) will be introduced more fully later in this chapter.

Table 4.1 presents the overview of the analysis framework.

Table 4.1 Overview of the analysis framework

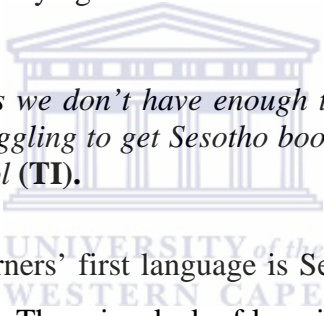| What worked well	What did not work well	What the challenges were: key emergent themes
Providing access for all	Providing access for all	Language, socio-economic status and buildings
Establishing TST	Establishing TST	Unskilled teachers, overcrowded classes, ineffective TST, lack of parental involvement, conceptualisation of inclusive education, language
Classroom support	Classroom support	Lack of resources, including learning and teaching resources
Parental involvement	Parental involvement	Poverty/socio-economic status

4.2 BACKGROUND

As described in Chapter Two, many implementation initiatives relating to inclusive education have taken place in South Africa. Projects such as DANIDA - in Kwazulu-Natal, Eastern Cape and North West; and SCOPE – in Mpumalanga and Northern Cape – are evidence of some these initiatives. These two projects attempted to explore the experiences of stakeholders in the implementation of inclusive education. The aim of the two projects was to support the implementation of Education White Paper 6 in mainstream schools in South Africa. The findings in both projects indicate that there were challenges in the implementation of the policy in the pilot schools. As indicated in the SCOPE report (Da Costa, 2003), it is evident from the work done through the pilot project that the implementation of inclusive education in schools has to contend with many challenges.

Like many other schools in the Western Cape, School X began implementing inclusive education in 2002. To this end the school appears to have adopted an interactive implementation approach. The interactive approach is a combination of bottom-up and top-down approaches. This means that the school used Education White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001) to guide its implementation activities *and* the context of the school determined the activities and how to operationalise them. There was a top-

down approach because the school derived its implementation activities from the national policy (DoE, 2001) and from the Conceptual Guidelines (DoE, 2003). There was also a bottom-up approach because the school implemented the policy according to its local needs.

Khayelitsha is one of the largest African townships in the Western Cape and its population comprises predominantly disadvantaged communities. Most of the mainstream schools in this area are therefore under-resourced, as is also the case with School X. Most learners in this school are from informal settlements in the surrounding area. The school buildings are dilapidated prefabricated structures. In some classes the teacher-pupil ratio is 1:88. The total enrolment of the school is 900 learners from Grade R to Grade 9, and there are 21 teachers. It is the only Sotho-speaking school in the area, a factor which introduces its own particular challenges. One teacher referred to this by saying:

> *For learning materials we don't have enough teaching and learning support materials. We are struggling to get Sesotho books because in our area we are the only Sesotho School* **(TI).**

In this school, though the learners' first language is Sesotho, they have grown up in Xhosa-speaking environments. There is a lack of learning materials as most materials are in Xhosa, English and Afrikaans. The buildings of the school are unfit for schooling. The classes are overcrowded. One learner said the following with regard to overcrowded classes:

> *Overcrowded classes make it difficult for us to hear what the teacher is saying, and we are unable to concentrate on school work. It is noisy because teachers are not able to reach the other corners of the class as there is no way between the desks* **(L1).**

Some classes are overcrowded and the chair size is not suitable for learners. One parent said:

> *What I have noticed is that there is a shortage of chairs. Older learners are using Grade R learners' chairs and the desks are big, as a result learners end up writing standing on their feet (P2).*

Table 4.2 shows the status of the learning environment in this school. The information was obtained through class visits by the researcher.

Table 4.2: Summary of classrooms organization (2004)

Grades	No. of learners	No. of chairs	No. of desks	Arrangement	Furniture size (according to researcher's observations)
1a	46	45	22	Groups	Suitable
1b	38	35	18	Groups	Suitable
2	88	88	34	Rows	Suitable
3	77	77	30	Rows	Suitable
4a	38	32	30	Rows	Some chairs are very small
4b	38	35	18	Rows	Some chairs are very small
5	76	60	19	Rows	Some chairs are very small
6	77	69	31	Rows	Some chairs are very small
7a	56	53	35	Rows	Some chairs are very small
7b	56	55	35	Rows	Some chairs are very small

The official languages in the Western Cape are three: English, Xhosa and Afrikaans. The available learning and teaching materials are therefore mostly written in these three provincially recognised languages.

One Teacher Support Team member reported that to implement inclusive education, the school had committed itself to the following implementation activities:

- Providing access for all learners
- Establishing a Teachers' Support Team
- Supporting learners in the classroom
- Involving Parents.

The school made a decision to provide access to all learners. The school's understanding such provision is reflected in its admission policy where it is stated that

the school will not deny access to learners within the neighborhood who are not Sotho-speaking but who want to study at the school. One teacher said the following:

> *We do not deny access to learners who want to study in our school but at the same time we give first preference to the Sotho-speaking learners, with an understanding that with other languages, there are many schools for them around the area.*

A Teacher Support Team (TST) was established at the school in 2002. One of the key strategies of White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001) is to strengthen education support services. Within the institutions the Ministry requires schools to establish Institutional-level Support Teams; in this study these are referred to as TSTs. The policy stipulates that:

> The primary functions of these teams will be to put in place properly coordinated learner and educator support services. These services will support the learning and teaching process by identifying and addressing learner, educator and institutional needs. And where appropriate, these teams will be strengthened by expertise from the local communities, district support teams and higher education institutions (DoE 2001:29).

The first step taken by School X to support learners and teachers was to establish the TST. This is the team of teachers at the school who are responsible for offering learners support in relation to their learning, emotional and social needs. The team also works closely with other teachers to support them in teaching learners experiencing barriers to learning. Workshops were held by the EMDC for the teachers to assist them in identifying and addressing various learners' needs. The EMDC also trained the TST coordinator on how to run the team. One teacher stated that the TST started to function in 2002 after they had been trained. He said:

> *The TST started as far back as 1996, but it started to function well in 2002. The coordinator and his assistant attended the series of monthly workshops that were run by our EMDC in one of the schools around the area... It was during these meetings that we were trained on how the TST should operate at schools* **(T5)**.

The TST is made up of four action groups, namely, the Literacy action group, the Numeracy action group, the HIV/AIDS action group and the Social, Behavioural and Emotional action group. Each of the groups has its own responsibilities and is guided by the relevant policies.

T4 described the TST as follows:

> *TST is divided into four action groups: Namely literacy group, Numeracy group, Behavioral and emotional group and HIV/AIDS group, and the conveners of those groups, together with the three Heads of Departments, the principal and the learning support educator form the TST committee.*

When asked how the action groups operate, this was the response:

> *Each group has its own responsibilities. There is a Literacy group; this group deals with problems arising from literacy at school. It is built up of teachers teaching languages. Numeracy group is built up of teachers teaching mathematics and it deals with issues arising from mathematics. Social, Behavioural and Emotional group deals with social issues in general. The last one is the HIV/AIDS group that concentrates on issues related to HIV/AIDS at school. Each group has its own policy (***T4***).*

In establishing the TST the school aligned itself with the stipulation of Education White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001) on the establishment and the functions of the teams. The school chose its committee in line with the direction given by NCSNET/NCESS (DoE, 1997) in its recommendations 14 and 15 which deal with education support services and partnerships. The section on the functions of the teams, as outlined in the DoE (2005), provides the framework for how a team is to operate. To support learners in the classroom, the school decided that teachers would identify learners' needs and barriers to learning in their classrooms, and when unable to address these, they would refer them to the TST.

As Education White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001) stipulated that education programmes should be put in place to inform and educate parents about inclusive education, the school decided to involve parents by calling meetings to inform them about the learners' progress in school work. One teacher said:

> *We write letters to parents every time we want to give them the learners' progress reports and for other school activities that need parents' attention. We also give learners homework and tell them to seek help from their parents... (***T4***).*

In response to a question to the parents on what it is they see themselves doing to help the school to support learners, one parent said:

> *Nothing! Nothing indeed. Me as a person, I just feel pity for the teachers and learners and just end there because I don't know how I can help. If maybe we can be guided, it would be better* **(P1).**

In summary, the school began its implementation of inclusive education in 2002 after the TST training by the EMDC. Based on its plan of action, the school decided to commit itself to the four implementation activities mentioned earlier. The school's plan to provide 'access for all' is based mainly on adapting lessons to meet the different levels of learner needs through the support of the TST. The admission of all learners who want to be part of the school has also been considered and acknowledged in the school's admission policy. To establish a TST, teachers obtained guidance and training from the EMDC. All teachers at the school participate in different action groups in the TST. They have volunteered to be in the groups whose implementation activity they feel most comfortable with. The groups are responsible for addressing different barriers to learning but as stated earlier, there is also a steering committee that is made up of conveners of the action groups, the heads of departments, the principal and the learning support educator.

The committee's responsibility is to oversee the whole team's operation and to make decisions about the learners' referrals to other professionals. To involve parents at the school, teachers inform parents about learners' progress through meetings. In providing classroom support, the curriculum is made flexible and accessible to all learners by adapting it to suit a spectrum of learners' needs.

4.3. WHAT WORKED WELL, AND WHY?

In this section the findings that identify what worked well are discussed. The interview questions focused on the implementation activities. These include provision of access to all learners, establishment of TST, support of learners in the classroom and parental involvement. The presentation of the findings is discussed on the basis of these implementation activities.

In general, the participants' conceptualisations of inclusive education showed that they have an idea of what inclusive education is. Most teachers have an understanding of why all learners have to learn together in their neighbourhood school, and in the same general class without any form of segregation. The quote that follows captures how certain participants from each group perceive inclusive education. One teacher had the following to say:

> *Inclusive education includes all learners who have barriers or disabilities in the same class. In an inclusive school there is no discrimination. All learners are there, the so-called normal and the ones who experience barriers to learning and those who are disabled – they all learn together in the same class that is what I call inclusive education* **(TI).**

Learners had a common understanding of inclusive education. As one learner said:

> *Inclusive education means teaching learners with different abilities in one school without any form of discrimination* **(L4).**

In a group of five parents, four conceptualized inclusive education in the same way. For example, one of them said:

> *Inclusive education means including learners from different backgrounds, cultures, abilities, and religions and making them learn in the same place while at the same time respecting each others culture without undermining it* **(P2).**

In general the participants' conceptualisation of inclusive education suggests that they have a common understanding of what it entails. Teachers, learners and parents recognise the reason why all learners have to learn together at their neighborhood school, and in the same general class, without any form of segregation. This is important because as contended by Swart and Pettipher (2005:3): "[If] individuals do not possess an in-depth understanding of its *(inclusive education[2])* meaning and examine closely the underlying values it is based on, they can become easily confused."

4.3.1 Providing access for all

Insofar as the provision of 'access to all' is concerned, all teachers felt that the school is doing its best to make the curriculum accessible to all learners. This is done by

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[2] Paraphrased and contextually included.

giving support to learners in classes. Providing access for all, according to the Education White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001), means that no learner should be denied the opportunity to attend the neighborhood school of the parents' choice. The admission policy of School X does not deny learners access to school. One teacher had the following to say:

> *We do not deny access to learners who want to study in our school but at the same time we give the first preference to the Sotho-speaking learners with an understanding that with other languages there are many schools for them around the area* **(T5)**.

The first preference is given to Sotho-speaking learners because the school decided to adopt Sotho as the language of learning and teaching. According to the South African Schools Act (1996), school governing bodies of public schools have the authority to determine the language policy of a school. Schools have a choice in determining the language they want to use as the language of teaching and learning.

4.3.2 Establishment of Teacher Support Teams

When responding to the question of the roles of the TST at school, all teachers said that the TST provides support to both the educators and the learners. One teacher responded as follows:

> *The two major roles of the team are: firstly, to provide support to educators by suggesting possible teaching and learning strategies, those that teachers can apply to render support to the learners experiencing barriers to learning in their classrooms. Secondly, to render support to learners with social problems and to refer them to relevant places and organizations where they can be assisted depending on the need, for example, to social workers, speech therapists, school doctors/nurses and psychologists* **(T4).**

The Department of Education, through its District Support Teams, has trained the members of the TST to support teachers who cope with learners in their classes who experience barriers to learning. The Teachers Support Team has been trained to assess the learners in order to determine how they can be supported or where they can be referred to for further support. Wade (2002), O'Hanlon (2003), Stainback and Stainback (1990), and Weeks (2000) emphasize that teachers should work cooperatively with the TST members to support learners and teachers.

All teachers agreed that the TST is functioning. **T5** said the following:

> *The roles of the TST are: to give support to teachers on how they can help learners who are struggling academically in classes. The focus is on Literacy and Numeracy. (It is also on) referring learners who need to be referred to other professionals such as psychologists, social workers, other organizations etc. to render support to learners who are affected and infected with HIV/AIDS and to give emotional support to learners who are in need of it.*

This shows that the school has achieved its goal of establishing the team. As stated in Prinsloo (2001:66), it does not matter whether the school is a "special school, full service school or ordinary school, it should establish a school-based support team which is responsible for the provision of learning support together with the teachers involved in a particular learner's teaching and learning." One of the teachers reported that the members of the team hold meetings and discuss how the learners referred to them can be helped. (Creese et al. 2000; DoE, 2005; and Jordan, 1994) indicate that support includes ongoing support of educators so as to assist them to respond to learners' needs.

4.3.3 Classroom Support

The school's commitment to the provision of support to learners in the classrooms has also worked well according to one teacher. She indicated that:

> *Each TST action group works out its strategies on how learners in classrooms can be given support. The curriculum aspects are attended to in such a way that the curriculum is made flexible, by varying the lessons, to be able to meet each learner's needs. The assessment is also continuously done; we are not only assessing learners through failing and passing of tests and end of term/year examinations. Concerning the social aspects, the school does things like identifying learners who come to school without having taken food and a feeding scheme has been put in place which provides learners with bread and jam or peanut butter everyday* **(T4).**

This implementation activity has therefore been achieved through the support of the TST to teachers in the school. The TST recommends the strategies that could be used to address learning barriers. All the interviewees indicated that learners are given support in classes. Putnam (1998 as cited in Landsberg, 2005) is of the opinion that learners who experience barriers to learning require individualised and cooperative support.

Pijl and Meier (1997:09 as cited in Swart et al. 2002) maintain that "inclusive education can only be successful if teachers…have sufficient support and resources to teach all learners". Giangreco and Doyle (2002) also emphasise that "qualified general education teachers with inclusive attitudes and appropriate supports can successfully teach students with disabilities, including those with severe disabilities". According to these authors, sufficient or appropriate support for teachers is the key to successful inclusive education implementation.

4.3.4 Parental Involvement

According to Karp (2000) inclusive education cannot be effective unless educators, parents and students combine their resources and efforts. Welch (2000) also emphasises that inclusion is more likely to succeed when teachers and parents collaborate. All teachers in this study claimed that they involve parents in school activities such as discussions about learners' progress of school work. They explained that to invite parents, they send them letters. Some teachers indicated that some parents are cooperative. One of the teachers said: *"We always invite parents to school by writing letters to them and others are really participating..."* Some parents also indicated that they do not experience problems in taking part in school activities as one parent said: *"No, we don't experience problems, even the school governing body informs us of the activities happening at the school"* **(P2).** This suggests that some parents are involved in school activities.

In summary, the findings in this category suggest that the participants have an idea of what inclusive education entails, and that the TST has been established at the school. It also confirms that the team is functioning. Through the functioning of the TST, learners and educators are supported in classrooms and the parents are also involved in some school activities. Despite these successes, interviewees also highlighted aspects that did not work well. I will now examine these factors in the following section.

4.4 WHAT DID NOT WORK WELL, AND WHY?

In this section the discussion that follows is based on an analysis of what did not work well in the provision of 'access for all', in the establishing of the TST, in the processes of supporting learners in classrooms, and in the involvement of parents.

4.4.1 Providing access for all

In the EWP6 (DoE, 2001) access has been described as a means to provide out-of-school disabled learners with an opportunity to learn in their neighborhood schools alongside their non-disabled peers.

In this study all teachers emphasised that it is difficult for them to provide access for all because of the limited physical space available for learning and teaching. One teacher had the following to say:

> *With regard to this question, it is difficult for us to accept all learners because of our building structures are not accommodative to all learners. Apart from the buildings we do not have any other problem in accepting all learners. Even our school motto indicates that we do not discriminate against learners (on the basis of) race, ethnicity, language of origin and religion* **(T4).**

Teachers pointed out that as a result of this problem the school gives the first preference to Sotho-speaking learners. This limits inclusive practices at the school. As one teacher said:

> *We do not deny access to learners who want to study in our school. At the same time we give first preference to the Sotho-speaking learners due to the limited space of learning, with an understanding that with other languages there are many schools for them around the area* **(T3).**

Learners had the same opinions about the provision of access for all. Four of them said that the space in which learning takes place is too small and that the structure of the buildings is not suitable for accommodating all the learners. One of them said: "*the way our school is structured is not suitable for blind and wheelchair- using learners*" **(L2).**

Another learner indicated that the school needs to employ more skilled teachers.

*There are no problems I just think that if the school can employ trained teachers it will be fine and again if the new buildings can be built (**L5**).*

The parents also stressed that the buildings constitute the main hindrance in the school's provision of access for all learners. One parent had the following to say:

*The structure of the school is not suitable for some of the learners. If only the department can build us the school, it will be possible to accommodate all learners for example as a wheelchair-using person, to get into the office, I had to be helped by two strong men. I can't just smoothly drive myself in, because there are no ramps. Again this is the only Sotho-speaking school around the area and it already has big numbers of a Sotho-only speaking community so it is not easy for it to accommodate learners from other ethnic groups because classes are already overcrowded (**P3**).*

4.4.2 Establishment of the TST

All teachers confirmed that the Institutional-level Support Team (previously introduced as TST) has been established at School X. However, it is not functioning optimally. The team members indicated that due to workload, they are not able to follow through with what they have initiated to address the problems they encounter at school. Due to time constraints and other commitments, teachers are not able to meet as scheduled. The plan regarding meetings was that the committee members of the team would meet twice a month. Teachers claimed that due to other commitments they are not able to meet as planned. As one teacher said:

*Meetings were planned to be held twice a month but it does not happen as planned due to other commitments that we find ourselves in. We have our own classes that we need to take care of, so sometimes we have to spend lots of time planning for them and having phase meetings that hinder us from participating fully in TST meetings. Again, the moderations and assessment preparations take much of our time (**T3**).*

4.4.3 Classroom support

TST members indicated that due to workload they are not able to do proper follow-up work after having made recommendations to teachers on how to offer support to their learners in classrooms. One teacher had the following to say:

*…Due to this workload we are not able to do proper follow up to see that teachers are giving learners support as we suggested as the TST (**T1**).*

Parents also indicated that they are not able to assist their children with their school work. They said they do not know what to do, and one parent claimed that she does not feel confident enough to assist her child.

> *I don't think I am capable of helping learners with school work, because I am not confident enough with the current way of teaching and learning. It is different from our way of learning while we were still at school* **(P4).**

In my conversation with the participants, there was no clear indication of the involvement of any other parties in the provision of support for learners in classes. Only teachers and the TST seemed to be responsible for classroom support therefore.

4.4.4 Parental involvement

Although some teachers and parents claimed that parents are involved in school activities, lack of parental recognition and involvement was indicated as a barrier to the implementation process. Of five parents, three pointed out that their cooperation with teachers was not optimal. Some parents blamed teachers for not involving them in their children's education and for failing to make them aware of issues such as the inclusive education policy implementation at school. The parents claimed that at home they find it difficult to help their own children who are experiencing barriers to learning because they themselves have not been given these skills. Parents felt they were uninformed because the curriculum has changed from what they knew when they were at school. They also indicated that no proper training or information session was held for them to make them aware of the government strategy for implementing inclusive education in the school. There appears to be no clear collaboration between the team and the parents. One parent had the following to say:

> *There should be parent-teachers' meetings regularly to promote collaborative work between the two parties for the good of the learner. As parents we are not consulted and are not made aware of issues like this one. We are not even sure of whether the school can be regarded as an inclusive school or not. We need guidance on how we can help teachers to support our children. In our days the education system was completely different from this one. Sometimes when my child seeks for help I feel embarrassed because the way they are doing thing is not like the way we used to do them* **(P4).**

Teachers also complained about parents who do not cooperate when teachers requested assistance with their children. As one teacher said:

> *We usually write letters to parents but in most cases when we want to talk to the parents of learners who are struggling with their school work, they do not come. I think the reason is just that they are feeling bad about their children who are not performing well* **(T5).**

In summary, the findings under this category show that the limited space of learning and the structure of the buildings make it difficult for the school to provide access for all the learners. The TST members also claim that they are not able to work optimally as a result of other commitments and workload. In supporting learners and teachers in classrooms, the TST indicated that it is difficult for them to follow-up on what they had suggested to teachers for learning support due to their workload. The parents' involvement in school is not adequate due to the parents' and teachers' responses. Parents commented that they are not being involved adequately and teachers are also not satisfied with how parents respond to the invitations to meetings at school.

4.5 WHAT CHALLENGES DOES THE SCHOOL FACE IN IMPLEMENTING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION?

In this section the challenges of implementing inclusive education in the school are discussed under the implementation activities, where applicable. In response to the question about challenges in relation to the successful implementation of inclusive education at school, the participants highlighted different issues that hinder them from functioning optimally in their implementation activities as follows. Other general challenges that emerged are also discussed.

4.5.1 Providing access for all
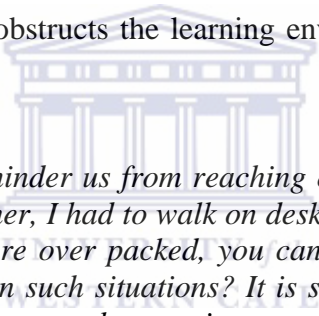
As indicated in the previous section, all the participants pointed out that it is difficult to accommodate all learners who want to study at school. The main reason given was that there are not enough classrooms for all the learners and that this leads to overcrowded classes. One parent's comment illustrates this:

> *The buildings are our primary challenge; if the prefabricated structures can be demolished and proper buildings are built, it will allow smooth implementation of inclusive education"* **(P2).**

One learner said: *"The buildings will not allow us to accommodate other learners; the structure of the school is unsafe"* **(L4).**

Overcrowded classes were identified as one of the challenges hindering the school's provision of access for all. This was mentioned by almost all participants as a challenge the school is facing. It is seen as a learning barrier and an implementation challenge because it has hindered the school from providing access to all learners and hindered teachers from attending to each learner in their classrooms. Other studies have shown that children in overcrowded classrooms cannot learn basic skills such as reading, as well as children in smaller or manageably-sized classes. Students in both large and small classes need quality time with teachers, but in most cases in large classes it is not easy to have that quality time. As a result the learners' academic skills suffer (Swart & Pettipher, 2005).

Overcrowding of classrooms obstructs the learning environment in a school. One of the teachers commented that:

> *Overcrowded classes hinder us from reaching each individual child. In some classes as a male teacher, I had to walk on desks to reach other corners of the classes because they are over packed, you can't move in between the desks. How would one cope in such situations? It is so difficult you get into a class and by merely looking at that setting you automatically get tired and frustrated* **(T3).**

4.5.2 Establishment of the TST

Of the five teachers in this study, four of them noted that although they were given support by the District Support Team who provided the training for them to establish a TST, the follow-up was inadequate, and this has resulted in an ineffective implementation of what they have been trained for. One teacher claimed that:

> *…inadequate follow up of the officials from EMDC after they trained our TST members are the challenges we are sitting with and facing, in the implementation of inclusive education in our school* **(T4).**

This is therefore an additional challenge the school is facing in the implementation of inclusive education.

The Department of Education Directorate: Inclusive Education Conceptual and Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of Inclusive Education: Full Service Schools (2005:21), in discussing the importance of support that is received from the local support providers, states that:

> Support is about enhancing learning through interaction with various support providers. This process can be supported within institutions through open communication. It is recognized that all stakeholders have important contributions to make in service provision. They also have skills and knowledge that is useful to other stakeholders. In order to utilize the expertise to the fullest, support needs to be seen in terms of an interactive cluster. The primary function of site-based support teams is to co-ordinate educator and learner support within the institution by identifying institutional, educator and learner needs and strengths. Site-based support teams are encouraged to strengthen their capacity by tapping into expertise from the community.

This quote underscores the reason why teachers have to work together with all the stakeholders in implementing the policy. It also clarifies why the follow-up by educational officials is important. Teachers Support Teams' work should also network with both the school and the community. This is not working well in the case of the School X. One teacher said:

> …*What we are doing now, we only sit as a TST committee when there are learners that have been referred to us. I think we need to do more than that. If we can have our own TST committee policy, that will also guide us on how we should incorporate the community around us in school activities in a proper manner. It will be fine because at present it is not effectively happening* (**T5).**

4.5.3 Parental involvement

The issue of the lack of parental involvement in school activities emerged as a contentious issue amongst the participants. Some parents in this study blamed teachers for not involving them in their children's progress. As one parent said:

> *There should be parent-teacher meetings regularly to promote collaborative work between the two parties for the good of the learners. At the moment teachers do not really involve us in sessions where we can sit together and find ways in which learners can be helped* (**P3).**

Teachers claimed that parents are not cooperative; that they do not respond to the teachers' invitations. One teacher had the following to say:

We give learners homework and tell them to seek help from their parents. We also write letters to parents every time we want to give them the learners' progress reports, and for other school activities that need parents' attention, but some parents are not cooperative **(T2).**

Such responses from the participants suggests that these two parties are not working together effectively towards the common goal of giving support to learners at school. Engelbrecht, Oswald and Forlin (2006) and Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana (2002) regard professional and community collaboration as essential in creating conditions conducive to the establishment of inclusive education. Welsch (2002) states clearly that inclusion is more likely to succeed when teachers, administrators, parents and staff collaborate. Landsberg (2005) maintains that effective teaching in inclusive classrooms is motivated by working with, and involving parents. Villa and Thousand (1992) posit that collaboration is generally conceived of as sharing planning, teaching and evaluating responsibilities.

In summary, the respondents in this study indicated that the major challenges to policy implementation they encounter are the existing barriers to learning in schools. The barriers to learning therefore, also become the barriers to implementing the policy. The following barriers to learning were identified as critical components of the challenges impeding the implementation process at the school: unskilled teachers, language, poverty and unemployment, and the shortage of learning and teaching resources. Other issues referred to, though not common among the participants, were negative attitudes of teachers towards inclusive education, a lack of transport for learners to and from school which affects their participation in extra-mural activities, learners' neglect of their school work, and some learners' disrespectful behaviour.

The discussion that follows focuses on how the barriers to learning align with the challenges to the implementation of inclusive education at school.

4.5.4 Unskilled teachers

Teachers in this study confessed that they do not feel competent enough to work with learners experiencing barriers to learning. One teacher said:

I need to be equipped with some skills to cope with those learners. As long as I can be trained I will not have a problem **(T5).**

Some learners complained about certain teaching strategies used by their teachers as one of them said:

> *I don't understand what teachers are saying because of the methods of teaching they use in classes. I really struggle to understand their work.* **(L5).**

Such concerns have been raised by various authors, for instance, in Da Costa (2003), DoE (2003), Prinsloo (2001) and Swart et al. (2002) who all argue that teachers are the primary driving force of inclusive education implementation. Swart et al. (2002:177) emphasize this by saying that "there is overwhelming evidence that teachers are the key force in determining the quality of inclusion…they can play a crucial role in transforming schools or bring no change at all."

4.5.5 Lack of resources

All teachers, learners and parents indicated that resources were lacking in School X. One teacher (**T5**) added that the few resources they do have cannot be retained safely as the school does not have a store-room. According to many of the participants, there are no proper physical facilities and there is a shortage of learning and teaching material at school.

Jansen (2002) points out that factors that have contributed to education policy failures in developing countries include the lack of resources, the inadequacy of teacher training, the weak design of implementation strategies and the problems of policy coherence. EWP6 (DoE 2001:28) talks of strengthening education support services and recognises support to be one of the key strategies in reducing barriers to learning: "The ministry believes that the key to reducing barriers to learning within all education and training lies in strengthened educational support services."

However, according to Da Costa (2003), there is evidence from developing contexts, and in particular, from rural communities, that inclusion is not only about resources, and that needs always outnumber available resources. Also, "[i]t is more important to look into the effective use of what is already available and to identify existing under-utilised resources than to wait for what is not available" (2003:23). The DoE (2003) too, admits that a lack of adequate resources is a challenge in the implementation of inclusive education in South Africa, but that according to the evidence from their pilot

project, "inclusive education could be used as a tool to address these very challenges" (DoE 2003:121).

Lack of learning and teaching support materials was also highlighted as posing a serious challenge, especially printed materials such as books and other resources. One participant commented that:

> *The school is only for the minority group in the province. Most of the available resources are written in Xhosa, English and Afrikaans. We as a Sotho- speaking school suffer* **(T1)**.

When teachers need to give learners extra support in Sotho, they need to spend time translating or designing suitable materials for the learners. This also renders the language issue as a barrier and a challenge in the implementation of inclusive education as discussed in the section that follows.

4.5.6 Language

Language was mentioned by parents, teachers and learners as a challenge that can thwart the implementation of inclusive education in this school. It is not only a barrier but a challenge because learners are not exposed to printed materials in their own language. As mentioned earlier, most of the available reading materials are written in English, Afrikaans and Xhosa. It is therefore not easy for parents to support their children at home due to the limited number of books available in Sesotho at school. This issue also relates to what has been suggested in DoE (2005:11) that, "parents should be encouraged to participate in interventions regarding language".

The medium of instruction in the Foundation Phase is Sotho, but because of their language backgrounds, not all the learners in this Phase understand Sotho. The parents of these learners come from different ethnic groups. For example, in some cases a learner's mother is a Xhosa-speaker and his father, a Sotho-speaker, wants his child to learn Sotho while the learner spends most of the time with his mother who speaks Xhosa. Teachers therefore have to use both Xhosa and Sotho when teaching. Even the Sotho-speaking learners experience problems because the environment they are growing up in is predominantly Xhosa-speaking. They are still not fluent in Sotho and their vocabulary is limited. They can communicate better in Xhosa, but are still not

confident enough to express themselves in that language, so they mix the two languages. As one teacher said:

> *Our main challenge is the language barrier. Our school is a Sotho-speaking school and the language that is spoken here is Sesotho but the learners do not only speak Sotho, they mix Sotho and Xhosa because they grew up in a predominantly Xhosa speaking environment* **(T1).**

Dednam (2005:144), when speaking about the relationship between a spoken language and the read and written language, says:

> Reading and written language are two advanced forms of spoken language and therefore most learners who experience problems in spoken language also experience problems in reading and written language. These problems hamper the learners' progress at school….

4.5.7 Buildings

The buildings of School X were cited by all the participants as presenting a challenge to the implementation process. One parent had the following to say concerning this matter:

> *The buildings are a major challenge, if the prefabricated structures can be demolished and proper buildings be built, it will allow smooth implementation of inclusive education* **(P5).**

Structurally, the buildings are in a bad state. Insofar as safety hazards are concerned, the school does not meet facility safety requirements and consequently does not provide a safe learning environment for students. The buildings need to be refurbished because, apart from being old and dilapidated, the buildings are inaccessible for the wheelchair-using community. Classrooms are not big enough for the numbers of learners and this leads to overcrowded classes. The classrooms do not comprise the only such challenge in this learning environment; other basic infrastructural resources such as the toilets are also in bad condition.

4.5.8 Poverty

Poverty has been highlighted as one of the factors contributing to the challenges of implementing inclusive education at the school. In cases where parents are unable to pay school fees, learners are affected. This affects the implementation of inclusive

education in various ways. As stated in Conceptual and Operational Guidelines for inclusive learning programmes (DoE 2, 2005:14), the inability of parents to pay school fees might lead to:

- poor reading and print background (learners have not had pre-school exposure to literacy and print in general); parents of such learners have often had limited education opportunities;
- a lack of exposure to numerical concepts;
- sensory deprivation, resulting from a lack of opportunities to explore the environment and the wider world during early childhood.

As one parent in this study stated, *Poverty is the major challenge* (**P2**). High unemployment rates in the area affect parental involvement in school activities. Parents and teachers claimed that due to financial constraints, most parents are not able to participate fully in school activities. Another issue that was raised relates to learners who go to Grade One without having attended Reception Classes, due to a lack of finances. Teachers are of the opinion that the early childhood development of learners who lose out on Reception Classes is compromised. This omission also leads to delays in the processes of early childhood identification and intervention in addressing barriers to learning. Alant and Harty (2005) describe early childhood intervention as a process of addressing issues to prevent children at risk from developing difficulties. So if children are not able to attend school, they remain at risk. Another teacher also mentioned this and said the following:

> *…one of our problems resulted from learners who come to Grade One without having been in Reception Class as a result of unemployment and poverty in the area* (**T3**).

4.5.9 Conceptualisation of Inclusive Education

One other challenge that emerged during the study relates to the conceptualisation of inclusive education. Engelbrecht et al. (2006) point out that it is impossible for schools to implement inclusive education effectively while there is no shared philosophy about inclusive schools in school communities. In this case study, amongst the stakeholders there was no clear differentiation between inclusion and integration of learners with disabilities.

Parents, teachers and learners continually returned to the point that their school cannot accommodate all learners because there are no trained teachers to deal with those learners. One teacher remarked that the attention required by learners with disabilities is an issue that will make inclusive education impossible in schools. He said:

> *For me, I don't like inclusive education because this school needs to be renovated and again you must remember that an inclusive school must accommodate both mentally and physically disabled learners. So these children need time. I once visited a school with physically disabled learners, and what I noticed there is that they are given too much attention. If this will have to happen in my school there will be no time for too much attention for them. Teachers will be rushing to cover the syllabus and pushing the studies before the moderation time comes. So it is very difficult to be inclusive under such circumstances* **(T I).**

As stated in Lungu (2001), it is common in the education implementation process to take for granted that the implementers can implement a policy without having been equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge needed to carry out the process. Lungu (2001:92) took this point further by saying that:

> Stakeholders' input presupposes that participants have the knowledge, skills and interests to engage effectively in policy debates… But …others, among them parents from certain socioeconomic backgrounds, do not.

Although inclusive education has been implemented in the school in this study, it shows signs of being unacceptable to some stakeholders because they do not have a full understanding of what it entails. The first steps of the implementation process should therefore focus on the awareness of the concept of inclusive education.

4.6 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The findings in this chapter were presented under the three main research questions, and relevant literature was integrated where possible. The findings are discussed in relation to the four implementation activities. The findings based on responses to the first question, 'What worked well and why?', were presented so as to reflect what worked well in establishing the Institutional-Level Support Team, what worked well in providing support for learners in their classes, in providing 'access for all', and finally, in the process of involving parents in school activities. The same procedure was followed when presenting the findings on what did not work well and why.

The challenges of implementing inclusive education were then discussed. Interestingly, the challenges of implementing inclusive education were identified to be the barriers to learning already existent in this school. These include:

- overcrowded classes

- an ineffective TST

- lack of parental recognition

- unskilled teachers

- lack of resources

- Language

- Buildings

- Poverty/Socio-economic status

- Conceptualisation of inclusive education.

The next chapter will summarise the findings, offer recommendations on the findings, and identify implications for further research.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter draws on the findings discussed in Chapter Four. The summary of the findings was done in respect of the research question and the aims of the study. The results of this study were synthesized from the interviews and the observations. In this chapter conclusions are presented regarding what School X can do to improve its current position in dealing with processes of implementation towards establishing inclusive educational practices.

The major aim of the study as stated in Chapters One, Three and Four was to investigate the challenges of implementing inclusive education in one Khayelitsha mainstream school. The specific sub-questions that guided the study were:

- What has worked well in the school, and why?
- What has not worked well, and why?
- What are the challenges of implementing inclusive education?

5. 2 THE CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This section provides a summary of the challenges faced at School X in implementing inclusive education within the framework of the four implementation activities. It is followed by recommendations for effective implementation that have flowed from this research.

Largely due to conditions at the school, teachers, parents and learners reported that it is difficult for the school to implement their 'access for all' policy by accommodating all the learners who might want to study at the school. Since Sesotho has been adopted by the school as a medium of instruction, this obliges the school to give first preference to Sotho-speaking learners because there is no other school that caters for them in the area. Against this background it is clear that in reality, the admission

procedure of the school limits its adoption of the inclusion philosophy. This implies that the school's intention to provide access for all, as stated in its admission policy, has not worked well. The White Paper 6 (DoE 2001) states clearly that no learner should be denied access to a school in their neighbourhood, yet in this case School X is bound to deny access to certain learners on the grounds of language and spatial constraints.

It is the view shared by various participants, that the school does not have classrooms with the physical capacity to accommodate additional learners. The structure of the school building is not suited to all learners' needs. According to the parents, an inadequate school building constitutes a significant reason for the school's restrictions on the admission of learners from the immediate neighbourhood. The school buildings are repeatedly identified by almost all the participants as a major contributing challenge that impedes the implementation of inclusive education at school. Parents, learners and teachers view these flawed structures as being unconducive to learning. Their views are supported by Jansen (2002) who points out that one of the factors that has contributed to education policy failures in developing countries includes the lack of resources. Engelbrecht et al. (2006) have also reported that it is not easy for schools to implement inclusive education if the school building itself is not structurally sound.

The Department of Education has already promised to provide new buildings for School X in the year 2008. I would therefore recommend that once the school occupies its new buildings, it should reconsider provision of 'access for all' learners as proposed in EWP6 (DoE 2001).

Although a TST has been established at School X, it is not functioning optimally. This can be attributed to the fact that the members of the team have classes of their own to which they have to attend. In addition they have other commitments at school such as their involvement in Departmental or Phase Committees, which requires of them that they attend meetings. This makes it difficult for them to function effectively as TST members and to make time for the TST meetings scheduled to take place twice every month. These participants in the study report that the burden of their teaching workload results in their inability to follow up learner referrals with colleagues after having submitted related recommendations. This challenge involves effective

functioning and appears to have been present since the team's establishment in 2002, implying that the team should reflect on its practice and improve where it can do so.

To this end I recommend that the TST conduct an evaluation of its work which should incorporate reflection on the past and planning for the future. The school should restructure its approach to strategic planning. It should consider doing its strategic planning with all the committees at school, including the TST. The dates for TST meetings should not be tampered with. If members are unable to attend a TST meeting they should make a point of finding ways to compensate for their absence. The members should also avail themselves for longer hours when the need arises, and the school may explore ways of rewarding such efforts.

The responses to the roles of the TST also suggest that teachers perceive the team mainly as experts to whom they can refer their learners. Roles of the TST were not clearly defined by the participants. It is stated in Stainback and Stainback (1998) that the TST and teachers should work cooperatively to make inclusive education a success in schools. I therefore recommend that the TST work very closely with all the teachers. Teachers should continuously inform the team of learners who need to be supported, and not wait for referral times.

Regarding parent involvement at school, some parents indicated that they are not able to support their children because they are not competent to do so. Parents also indicated that no contact sessions existed in which teachers sat together with parents to equip them to support learners experiencing barriers to learning. Parents felt uninformed and unable to help their children with their school work. Invitations from teachers to parents to receive reports on the learners' progress did not substitute for this.

My recommendation is that for effective implementation to take place, more emphasis should be placed on the involvement of parents in the process of assisting learners who experience barriers to learning at school. I recommend that more parent-teacher-learner workshops be set up, and that adequate training and capacity-building programmes be run at the school to inform parents and to generate discussion on what inclusion really means. Stakeholders need to gain access to a broader understanding

of an inclusive education system, one that reaches beyond the notion of inclusive education as simply entailing the incorporation of learners with disabilities into general classrooms. A cooperative relationship between the school and the community it serves should be developed and sustained.

Engelbrecht et al. (2006) and Thabana (2004), in their research in the schools of the Western Cape, have reported that the majority of stakeholders' conceptualisation of inclusive education needs investigation. Although this point has been made briefly in the study, I strongly recommend that stakeholders undergo a thorough introduction to the concept of inclusion and that research be conducted to identify areas in which an understanding of the concept may be reinforced. Regarding parents' concerns that they were not informed about inclusive education, I recommend that the school invite the District Support Team to hold workshops for the parents to make them aware of the Department of Education's plan to implement inclusive education in schools.

Both parents and learners should be considered in the implementation of the policy. These groups should be informed and invited to participate fully in policy implementation. Parents should be seen as true partners. Their contribution could be considered in developing learning programs for students along with the teachers who participate in the learner's classroom experience on a more regular basis. They could also take responsibility for creating an environment in the home that supports education.

Although overcrowded classes have been highlighted as a challenge hindering the implementation process, some authors such as Khatleli et al. (1995) argue that class sizes in Lesotho are large, with ratios of 1 teacher to 100 children, yet amidst these challenges teachers still find ways of meeting each child's individual educational needs. On the basis of this insight, big class sizes need not necessarily be seen as a stumbling block to the inclusion of learners experiencing barriers to learning in general schools. This is also highlighted in the SCOPE report (DoE 2003) where it is noted that the insecurity experienced by teachers who are currently asked to engage in inclusive practice in overcrowded classes, is linked to a past dependency encouraged by the previous, segregated education system (specialized education and mainstreaming) where specialists in special schools were expected to deal with small

groups of learners, in richly resourced environments. Mainstream educators are expected to deal with learners with a diverse range of needs in overcrowded classes, without adequate skills or resources. This is why they identify overcrowding as a challenge. Overcrowded classes become a challenge if there is no proper support in place for teachers. I therefore recommend that teachers be equipped and supported to adapt the curriculum to suit each learner's level of learning. If a teacher knows what to do, overcrowded classes would not be a major problem.

Learning and teaching support resources have been a point of concern for the stakeholders in this case study. Both teachers and learners within the school reported that they do not have enough books, most notably books in Sesotho. This was attributed to the fact that the school is the only one in the area in which the medium of instruction is Sesotho. As explained in previous chapters, most of the available learning and teaching resources are in the three official languages of the Western Cape. Concerning this problem of the availability of appropriate learning and teaching resources, I recommend that the EMDC requisition Sesotho materials from other provinces where Sesotho is the medium of instruction until the Western Cape is able to supply this school with academic material in Sesotho.

Teachers participating in this study reported that they do not feel competent enough to work with learners experiencing barriers to learning. They indicated that they require further training to enable them to work inclusively with all learners in their classrooms. This resonates with the perspective provided by certain learners that it is sometimes difficult to understand what their teachers are saying due to the teaching strategies their teachers employ. Authors such as Swart *et al.* (2002) confirm that teachers need to be equipped in order for them to be able to be inclusive in the teaching strategies they select. I therefore recommend that the school invite the EMDC to support teachers by suggesting effective strategies for teaching learners experiencing barriers to learning.

5.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

As indicated earlier, a study of this nature carries certain limitations. What follows is a list outlining the limitations encountered in the course of conducting this particular research.

- The study cannot be generalised because it is a case study and therefore context-specific. This study is a reflection of the work done in one particular context in Khayelitsha, and can therefore only be applicable to a similar setting.

- The sample also limits the study. The purposeful sampling does not allow the study to be generalised because the problems at School X might not be identical to the problems faced by other schools in the same geographic vicinity.

- Due to time constraints not all the participants had second round interviews. Only the members of the TST were interviewed thus.

- Engaging the involvement of parents in the study proved quite difficult as the initial sample was unable to participate for various reasons. Some were not familiar with the inclusion policy, while others were not able to come to school at that arranged time due to other involvements. Consequently I had to interview the SGB members only. The same problem was encountered with the learners. The initial plan was to interview learners from all phases (Foundation Phase to Senior Phase), but I could not get the information I was looking for from the younger learners. As a result I interviewed the members of the Learners' Representative Council only.

- The interviews were conducted in English while the interviewer and the participants are Sotho-speaking. Having to clarify everything became time-consuming and for this reason participants tended to make fewer comments than had been anticipated.

- The policy implementation is in its early stages in this school and the participants were not well-informed about Education White Paper 6 on the Inclusive Education and Training policy. It was evident that although the school was implementing the policy, they were not fully acquainted with its

contents. Only certain aspects of the policy were considered in the implementation activities, and in most cases the implementation activities were based mainly on the school's understanding of inclusive education.

5.4 IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Central to the motivation behind this study is an interest in the kinds of strategies that can direct the implementation of policy related to inclusive education. The implications for further research listed in this section relate to the need for support systems for those who are viewed as key agents in the process of implementing the policy of inclusion in the context of School X.

- TST members, who form the backbone of learning and teaching support at school, reported that they are not able to function effectively because of their workload. Research has shown that for the school to operate as an inclusive school, the TST should operate effectively. I therefore recommend that research be conducted on how team members can manage their time effectively in a context that enables them to do their work satisfactorily while fulfilling both classroom and TST roles.
- In particular, attention should be focussed on collaboration between the school and the parents. Research should be conducted to determine what kinds of potential exist for the school to work effectively with the community in which it is situated, and to utilise the resources of the community for the good of the learners.

5.5 CONCLUSION

Inclusive education has been implemented at School X, the school at which this case study was conducted. A good start has been initiated, and more effective strategic planning would provide for more effective implementation. The overiding impression gained in this study is that if teachers, parents and learners can work cooperatively, they could be the best instruments in the endeavour to make inclusive education a success in the school.

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AN INVESTIGATION OF THE CHALLENGES OF IMPLEMENTING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN ONE KHAYELITSHA MAINSTREAM SCHOOL

Dear Educator

You have been purposefully selected to participate in a study that I will be conducting in your child's school. I am a student at the University of the Western Cape and I am doing the above mentioned study whose aim is to inform the implementation process of the challenges that might hinder the process in your child's school and together with the school find possible ways through which we can overcome these challenges.

If you agree you will be asked to participate in a semi-structured interview of about an hour after school to avoid inconveniencing your school work. Transport home will be taken care of.

The study based at the University of the Western Cape, adheres to ethical guidelines of the University of the Western Cape and the Western Cape Education Department.

Below is the interview agreement and if you agree or disagree please sign in the appropriate space provided.

> Acting ethically in research ensures that the participants are treated with respect and sensitivity beyond what may be required by law (Patton 2002:09).

Against this background and according to Neuman (2003) who states that a researcher can not get data and just leave without giving something (e.g. results) in return. I outlined the ethical statement below as an assurance to the participants that they will be treated with respect, confidentiality and privacy.

1. The interviewees agree to voluntarily take part in a study for about an hour specifically focusing on the challenges that impede the successful implementation of inclusive education in their school. Basically looking at what worked well, what did not work well and why?

2. We agreed with the interviewees that they are free to withdraw themselves and the information they provide from the study whenever they want to without any fear of being penalized and that they are not bound to provide information that they are not willing to give.

3. The interviews will be recorded unless the concerned parties decide something else during or after the interview.

4. The participants are assured that they will be treated with respect and assured of confidentiality and anonymity, unless they themselves want to be known.

5. The participants will have access on the notes taken during the interviews and the research findings.

We settled upon this agreement and the interviewee is willing to participate in this study. In case of learners, parents sign on their behalf.

-------------------------------------   Date --------------------------
Interviewee's signature
(Agree)

-------------------------------------   Date --------------------------
Interviewee's signature
(Disagree)

**AN INVESTIGATION OF THE CHALLENGES OF IMPLEMENTING
INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN ONE KHAYELITSHA MAINSTREAM
SCHOOL**

Dear Parent

You have been purposefully selected to participate in a study that I will be conducting in your child's school. I am a student at the University of the Western Cape and I am doing the above-mentioned study whose aim is to inform the implementation process of the challenges that might hinder the process of inclusive education in your child's school. And together with the school try and find the possible ways through which we can overcome these challenges.

If you agree you will be asked to participate in a semi-structured interview of about an hour after school to avoid inconveniencing school work. Transport home will be taken care of.

The study based at the University of the Western Cape, adheres to the ethical guidelines of the University and the Western Cape Education Department.

Below is the interview agreement and if you agree or disagree please sign on an appropriate space provided.

> Acting ethically in research ensures that the participants are treated with respect and sensitivity beyond what may be required by law (Patton 2002:09).

Against this background and according to Neuman (2003) who states that a researcher can not get data and just leave without giving something (e.g. results) in return, I outlined the ethical statement below as an assurance to the participants that they will be treated with respect, confidentiality and privacy.

1. The interviewees agree to voluntarily take part in a study for about an hour specifically focusing on the challenges that impede the successful implementation of inclusive education in a school. Basically looking at what worked well, what did not work well and why?

2. We agreed with the interviewees that they are free to withdraw themselves and the information they provide from the study whenever they want to without any fear of being penalized and that they are not bound to provide information that they do not want to give.

3. The interviews will be recorded unless the concerned parties decide something else during or after the interview.

4. The participants are assured that they will be treated with respect and assured of confidentiality and anonymity.

5. The participants will have access on the notes taken during the interviews and the research findings.

We settled upon this agreement and the interviewee is willing to participate in this study. In case of learners, parents sign on their behalf.

-------------------------------------   Date --------------------------
Interviewee's signature
(Agree)

-------------------------------------   Date --------------------------
Interviewee's signature
(Disagree)

APPENDIX III

AN INVESTIGATION OF THE CHALLENGES OF IMPLEMENTING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN ONE KHAYELITSHA MAINSTREAM SCHOOL

Dear Parent

I kindly request you to grant permission for your child to participate in a study that I will be conducting in your child's school. I am a student at the University of the Western Cape and I am doing the above-mentioned study to inform the implementation process of the challenges that might hinder the process of inclusive education in your child's school, and together with the school try and find possible ways through which we can overcome these challenges.

If you agree the child will be asked to participate in a semi-structured interview of about 30-45 minutes after school to avoid interfering with school work. Transport home will be taken care of.
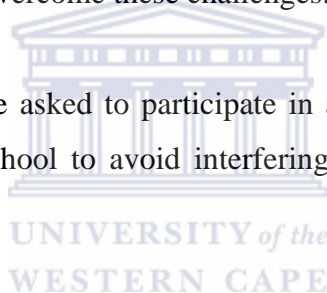
The study based at the University of the Western Cape, has been adhered to the ethical guidelines of the University and that of the Western Cape Education Department as well as the children's research rights as stated in (Berk 1992:62)

Below is the interview agreement and if you agree or disagree please sign in the appropriate space provided.

> Acting ethically in research ensures that the participants are treated with respect and sensitivity beyond what may be required by law (Patton 2002:09).

Against this background and according to Neuman (2003) who states that a researcher can not get data and just leave without giving something (e.g. results) in return, I outlined the ethical statement below as an assurance to the participants that they will be treated with respect, confidentiality and privacy.

- The interviewees agree to voluntarily take part in a study for about an hour specifically focusing on the challenges that impede the successful implementation of inclusive education in a school. Basically looking at what worked well, what did not work well and why?

- We agreed with the interviewees that they are free to withdraw themselves and the information they provide from the study whenever they want to without any fear of being penalized and that they are not bound to provide information that they are not willing to give.

- The interviews will be recorded unless the concerned parties decide something else during or after the interview.

- The participants are assured that they will be treated with respect and are assured confidentiality and anonymity, unless they themselves want to be known.

- The participants will have access to the notes taken during the interviews and the research findings.

We settled upon this agreement and the interviewee is willing to participate in this study. In case of learners, parents sign on their behalf.

--------------------------------------   Date --------------------------

Interviewee's signature
(Agree)

--------------------------------------   Date --------------------------

Interviewee's signature
(Disagree)

AN INVESTIGATION OF THE CHALLENGES OF IMPLEMENTING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN ONE KHAYELITSHA MAINSTREAM SCHOOL

Learners' interview

1. What has worked well in relation to the following and why?

    Providing access for all learners

    Supporting learners in the classroom

    Involving parents

2. What has not worked well in relation to the following and why?

    Providing access for all learners

    Supporting learners in the classroom

    Involving parents

3. What are the challenges in relation to the following?

    Providing access for all learners

    Supporting learners in the classroom

    Involving parents

AN INVESTIGATION OF THE CHALLENGES OF IMPLEMENTING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN ONE KHAYELITSHA MAINSTREAM SCHOOL

Parents' interview:

1. What has worked well in relation to the following and why?

    Providing access for all learners

    Establishing a TST

    Supporting learners in the classroom

    Involving parents

2. What has not worked well in relation to the following and why?

    Providing access for all learners

    Establishing a TST

    Supporting learners in the classroom

    Involving parents

3. What are the challenges in relation to the following?

    Providing access for all learners

    Establishing a TST

    Supporting learners in the classroom

    Involving parents

APPENDIX VI

AN INVESTIGATION OF THE CHALLENGES OF IMPLEMENTING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN ONE KHAYELITSHA MAINSTREAM SCHOOL

Teachers' interview

1. What has worked well in relation to the following and why?

    Providing access for all learners

    Establishing a TST

    Supporting learners in the classroom

    Involving parents

2. What has not worked well in relation to the following and why?

    Providing access for all learners

    Establishing a TST

    Supporting learners in the classroom

    Involving parents

3. What are the challenges in relation to the following?

    Providing access for all learners

    Establishing a TST

    Supporting learners in the classroom

    Involving parents