

**AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES OF WORKSHOPS ON  
INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AS A STRATEGY FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT  
IN LEBOPO CIRCUIT IN THE LEBOWAKGOMO DISTRICT, LIMPOPO PROVINCE**

by

**MAKOFANE INNETH BABY**

**DISSERTATION**

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

**MASTERS OF EDUCATION**

in

**CURRICULUM STUDIES**

in the

**FACULTY OF HUMANITIES**

**(School of Education)**

At the

**UNIVERSITY OF LIMPOPO**

**SUPERVISOR: PROF. M.J THEMANE**

**CO-SUPEVISOR: DR K.S MALATJIE**

**2019**

## DECLARATION

I, Makofane Inneth Baby declare that “The teachers’ experiences of workshops on Inclusive Education as a strategy for professional development in Lebopo Circuit in the Lebowakgomo District, Limpopo province” is my own work and that all the sources that I have used and quoted have been acknowledged in the references, and that this work has not been submitted before for any degree at any other institution.

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Signature

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Date

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this work to:

My father and my mother (Mfana and Nombulelo Makofane) for their encouragement.

My three precious children (Brilliant, Khutso and Mogau) for their support and being my late-night companions.

My sister and friend Shiela Makofane for her support during difficult times, and other members of the family.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

From the depth of my heart and soul, I thank the Lord God for giving me protection and guidance throughout the steps that I took to complete this research.

The successful completion of this dissertation was made possible through the enthusiastic assistance and support of the following people, to whom I express my heartfelt gratitude:

My supervisor, Professor M.J Themane, for his guidance, patience, and valuable advices during every stage of this dissertation.

My Co-supervisor, Dr K.S Malatji for his encouragement and support.

Miss R Malatji for her assistance in editing this dissertation.

Mrs H Thobejane, for instilling hope in me when times seemed so tough.

Mr M.J Mehlape (Lebopo Circuit manager), for the noteworthy guidance he gave me when I needed to collect data.

My precious children, Brilliant, Khutso and Mogau for being patient in times when I had to be away from them for the study.

The educators in Lebopo Circuit who participated in this study, for their cooperative responses and valuable comments in this research.

My colleagues at Tsela Chueu Secondary School, Mrs Gole M.F, Mr Leputu P.M, Mr Kganyago M.S, Mr Ngoasheng M and Mr Thema W.M, for their support in this study.

All members of my family and others who contributed to the success of this study.

## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

EFL – English as a Foreign Language

EWP 6 – Education White Paper 6

FCUBE – Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education

ICTs – Information and Communication Technologies

KCT – Knowledge of Content and Teaching

NCSNET – National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training

OECD – Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

PCK – Pedagogical Content Knowledge

REAP – Rural Educatio Access Programme

UNESCO – United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation

UNICEF – United National Children’s Emergency Fund

ICDP - International Child Development Programme

## **ABSTRACT**

The teachers' workshops seem not to fulfil their designated purpose of equipping educators with proper knowledge of inclusive education. The workshops on inclusive education do not fulfil the purpose of professional development to teachers as one of the goals of the White Paper 6. The purpose of this study was to investigate the teachers' experiences regarding the workshops on inclusive education as a strategy for professional development in Lebopo Circuit in Lebowakgomo District, Limpopo province. The study followed a qualitative research approach, in which a case study design was applied. Eight teachers who attended inclusive education workshops were purposively selected from four schools in Lebopo Circuit. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews, observations and document analysis. The results of the study indicated that: workshops are impotent to equip educators with adequate knowledge regarding inclusive education; time allocation for conducting workshops is insufficient; there is lack of confidence among the workshop facilitators; and there is lack of support and follow-ups by the provincial Department of Education. The results therefore, imply that the workshops are not effective in equipping educators with knowledge on inclusive education, and they do not serve their purpose as a model of professional development for the teachers. The study suggests that further research should seek to develop the strategies that will improve the quality of workshops on inclusive education, time allocated for workshops, as well as to encourage support and follow-up by the Department of Education.

*Key words: Workshops, Inclusive Education, Professional development.*

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **BACKGROUND AND MOTIVATION OF THE STUDY**

#### **1.1 Introduction**

The implementation of inclusive education poses a challenge to the educators in Lebopo Circuit, Lebowakgomo District. This is despite the workshops that are being conducted on inclusive education. These workshops are conducted to equip the teachers with skills and knowledge necessary to accommodate learners with diverse learning needs in their classrooms. Janelle, Yvonne and Norissa (2014) claim that most educators still have different views regarding the practices of inclusive education in their classrooms.

Although the Education White Paper 6 (EWP 6,(2001) policy on inclusive education was legislated in the South African parliament approximately 20 years past, little has been done to develop educators for its implementation. Mitiku, Alemu and Mengsitu (2014) reveal that educators experience a multitude of challenges in implementing inclusive education in their classrooms. Forlin (2013) argues that teachers experience the following challenges with respect to inclusive education: (a) inadequate training (b) lack of skills, (c) lack of appropriate infrastructure, and (d) the nonexistence of adapted curricula in the classrooms.

Mittler (2014) further reveals that teachers lack an understanding of inclusive education, and that teachers are still sceptical of the implementation of inclusive education in the general classrooms internationally. Drawing from the international findings, Mittler (2014)'s investigation indicates that the inception of inclusive education was brought while educators were not prepared to implement the policy. Although Mittler (2014)'s study illustrates the responses of teachers internationally towards inclusive education, its findings can be linked with existing experiences in South Africa regarding inclusive education. Relatively, this study investigates the experiences of teachers at a local level.

This study investigates the effectiveness of inclusive education workshops on teachers' professional development in Lebopo Circuit. Little or no research has been conducted thus far to demonstrate the effectiveness of the workshops conducted by the Department of Education to prepare the teachers for inclusive education policy. It remains unknown whether the workshops are successful or not.

Roberts (2010) conducted a study on the experiences of both mainstream and specialised teachers, in terms of the mainstreaming of learners in South African schools. Her study

reveals that, South African educators are not yet ready to practice inclusivity in mainstream schools. Roberts (2010) advanced an argument that learners with special needs are excluded in the main classrooms, and this causes them to easily drop out of schools. Roberts (2010) further argues that, the fact that learners with special needs are neglected in the general classrooms, gives rise to the question of whether the teachers have relevant knowledge or not.

Gurumba (2009) claims that inclusion remains at the realm of theory and far from practices, where educators are still grappling with problems of policy implementation. Given this backdrop, it is therefore important for this study to explore the experiences of educators concerning the phenomenon in question. On the other hand, lack of understanding of what inclusive education implies, affects the attitudes of the educators. The concern of this study is premised the value of the inclusive education workshops in the training of teachers. That is, do teachers receive adequate information during the workshops on inclusive education? More importantly, what are the teachers' experiences of these workshops?

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

The main problem in this study is that inclusive education in secondary schools has not been fully implemented and sparsely reached. Most importantly, there is inadequate training of teachers on inclusive education in rural schools of Lebopo Circuit. The evidence concerning inadequate teacher training has been well compiled by researchers such as Janele, Yvonne and Norissa, (2014). These authors express concern regarding the poor quality of teachers' workshops in South Africa. They believe that the ineffectiveness of the workshops escalates the confusion among educators on how to implement inclusive education. Forlin (2013) reveals that teachers are faced with the following challenges which interfere with their implementation of inclusive education: (a) inadequate training; (b) lack of skills; (c) lack of appropriate infrastructure; (d) teacher confusion; (e) misconception; (f) fear and (g) negative attitude.

The current researcher knows only of one study that was conducted in Capricorn District by Maebana (2016) that addresses the qualities of workshops on inclusive education in Limpopo Province. Maebana (2016)'s study was concerned with the effects of workshops on the school management teams' competence in the implementation of inclusive

education. However, this study investigates the experiences of the educators regarding the inclusive education workshops in Lebopo Circuit.

### **1.3 Literature Review**

Creswell (2013) indicates that literature review is a summary of the existing scholarly knowledge and perspectives in linkage with any topic under investigation. In this study, the researcher will use scholarly journals, articles and books that are linked to the workshops on inclusive education as professional development to teachers.

#### **1.3.1 Workshops and in-service**

Inclusive education refers to a process of addressing the diverse needs of all learners by reducing barriers to, and within the learning environment (Timmons, 2016). Merriam (2016) defines workshops as the interactive sessions in which people, researchers and other participants share ideas on particular issues. Education White Paper 6 is a framework policy that outlines inclusive education (DoE, 2009).

In-service training is the training that full-time educators receive to enhance their knowledge on a new educational system or policy (Mukhopdhyay, Molosiwa & Moswela, 2009).

#### **1.3.2 The teachers' understanding of inclusive education**

Timmons (2016) avers that inclusive education policy was coined and implemented in Canada in the 1950s, to include children who were excluded and hidden from the society, because they were regarded as unteachable, evil creatures and possessed. Timmons (2016) further explains that even though Canada was the first country to introduce the inclusion policy, some of the teachers are still faced with a challenge of understanding how to implement it due to lack of knowledge of the policy. Although this study investigates the teachers' experiences regarding inclusive education workshops, it is of view that it shares a common ground with Timmons (2016)'s study which pursued to unveil teachers' understanding of inclusive education.

According to DoE (2009) the policy of Education White Paper no. 6 was introduced in South Africa to give the vision for the restructuring of the special needs sector. EWP 6 (2001) stipulates that teachers need to be well equipped with skills to disseminate inclusive education successfully. In addition, Mittler (2016) asserts that although the education department took an effort to introduce the inclusion policy, the implementation

of this policy is still hampered by the lack of teacher-skills and knowledge to address a wide range of learning needs.

### **1.3.3 The importance of empowering teachers on inclusive education**

Pateman and Black (2013) share the same view as Hart et al. (2015) when they elaborate that the empowerment of teachers is the process of using the policies and procedures designed to equip teachers with knowledge and skills required to implement inclusive education effectively in the classrooms. Pateman and Black (2013) claim that teachers who are provided with proper training, acquire more pedagogical capacities necessary to make inclusion work in the classrooms. The studies of Pateman and Black (2013) as well as those of Hart et al. (2004) portray a strong relevance to this study because they focus on the empowerment of educators on inclusive education. However, the studies of Pateman and Black (2013) and Hart et al. (2015) were conducted in urban schools, whereas this study is conducted in rural schools.

### **1.3.4 Teachers experience of inclusive workshops or training**

According to Maria (2013) teachers' experiences and knowledge regarding inclusive education are presented in different ways in the South African context. All communities attempt to develop inclusive educational systems to create an inclusive society. Maria (2013) maintains that there is a difference between what teachers believe, what they really know and how they feel about a phenomenon. Based on Maria's idea of teachers' experiences, teachers' perceptions about inclusive education may (positively or negatively) affect the manner in which they implement it in classrooms.

### **1.3.5 The value of workshops on inclusive education**

Lewin, Keith and Stewart (2017) state that the value of the workshops and training for teacher professional development have a great effect on the implementation of inclusive education. Lewin, Keith and Stewart (2017)'s study implies that quality workshops can help teachers to achieve positive outcomes with respect to inclusive education if conducted effectively. In-depth scholarly detailed discussions on how workshops can transform the practices of inclusivity in schools will be drawn in chapter two of this study.

## **1.4 Role of theory in the study**

### **1.4.1 Introduction of the theory**

Merriam (2016) defines a theoretical framework as a scaffolding or road map of the study. The study adopted the theory of Lee Shulman (1986) of Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK). Shulman (1986) explains Pedagogical Content Knowledge as the type of knowledge that relates knowledge that is unique to teachers (which is based on the manner in which teachers relate to pedagogical knowledge or what teachers know about teaching), to their subject matter knowledge (what teachers know about what they teach).

He further indicates that the teachers' acquisition of knowledge influences their application of the knowledge to education. In addition, he further proposes that teachers should be exposed to a constructivist orientation, which he explains as a component that teachers should have for a proper initial and continuous training.

This theory is relevant and explains how teachers experience inclusive workshops. By using the three types of knowledge, the researcher will be able to scaffold her experiences.

## **1.5 The purpose of the study**

The purpose of this study is to investigate the teachers' experiences of workshops on inclusive education as a strategy for professional development at Lebowakgomo District in Limpopo Province.

### **1.5.1 Research questions**

- a) What are the teachers' experiences of workshops on the training of inclusive education?
- b) What is the nature of the workshops that are disseminated to educators in rural secondary schools?
- c) How do these workshops contribute to the teachers understanding of inclusive education?
- d) How sufficient is time allocated for the workshops?
- e) Do you think the facilitators have adequate knowledge of inclusive education?

- f) How do the workshops assist the educators in rural secondary schools to understand issues of inclusive education?
- g) How relevant and useful are the activities that workshop facilitators administer during the inclusive education workshops?
- h) What measures could be implemented to improve the standard and value of the inclusive education workshops in rural secondary schools?
- i) How can the Department of Education assist the teachers in rural secondary schools to implement inclusive education?

## **1.6 Research methodology**

This study employs a qualitative research approach. The researcher deems qualitative approach as relevant for this study because it enabled the researcher to obtain an in-depth understanding of the teachers' experiences regarding the workshops on inclusive education.

### **1.6.1 Research design**

Within the qualitative approach, the researcher uses a case study design. Yin (2003) defines a case study as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly defined. This study uses a case study design, because it is more appropriate and relevant since the study is about teachers' experiences of workshops on inclusive education, which is a current debated phenomenon in authentic situations, especially in South Africa. This study uses the case of teacher training in the form of workshops on inclusive education in the secondary schools of Lebopo Circuit.

### **1.6.2 Sampling**

With respect to the needs that the purpose of this study yearns to achieve, purposive sampling is considered as relevant for this study, and is thus applied to sample participants in this study. According to Collins et al. (2015) purposive sampling is a non-probability sample that is selected based on the characteristics of a population in relation to the objectives of the study. Lebopo Circuit comprise of 13 secondary schools in rural areas, with an overall population of 156 teachers. This study purposefully selects a sample of 10 teachers from 5 secondary schools as respondents or the participants. The



teachers were sampled based on their years of teaching experience in secondary school in rural areas (i.e. 10 to 15 years of teaching experience) as well as on their experiences of attending inclusive education workshops. This sampling criterion ensures that the teachers provide relevant information. The five selected schools are convenient because they are accessible to the researcher and they are cost-effective to investigate because the proximity between them is affordable for the researcher.

### **1.6.3 Data collection**

Data collection refers to the process of gathering and measuring data on variables of interest, in an established systematic fashion that enables one to answer stated research questions, test hypothesis, and evaluates outcomes (Merriam, 2013). Merriam (2013) further explains that there are various instruments of data collection in qualitative studies i.e. inter alia, observation, interviews, document review, and the use of audio or visual materials. A qualitative data-collection instrument is used in this study, namely: interviews. An integration of this instrument is relevant and convenient for collecting qualitative data in relation to the purpose of this study.

### **1.6.4 Data analysis**

Bodgan and Biklen (2013) describe qualitative data analysis as scrutinising the data, organising information, breaking the data into manageable units, coding the data, synthesising data and searching for patterns. In this study, data is analysed through the descriptive data analysis. The data from the interviews is categorized and organized into critical themes to examine the meanings that emerge from the collected data, and it will thence be interpreted to draw conclusions.

### **1.6.5 Quality criteria**

Trustworthiness is defined as the extent to which the findings give a true reflection of the data collected (Babbie, 2013). The results are based on real issues that are experienced by teachers when they attend workshops on inclusive education. The researcher ensures the trustworthiness of this study by adhering to; dependability, transferability, conformability and credibility.

#### **1.6.5.1 Dependability**

According to Bistch (2013) dependability is analogous to reliability. It denotes the consistency of observing the same findings under similar circumstances. The aim of establishing dependability in a study is to lay emphasis on the provision of detailed

account for the continuous changes in the context within which the research occurs. This implies that the researcher is responsible for describing the changes that took place in the setting and how these changes affect how the research is approached. In this study the researcher followed the right process of transparency, communicability and coherence to arrange data in a format that is understandable and acceptable by other researchers.

#### **1.6.5.2 Transferability**

Transferability refers to the extent that results of the study can be applicable to similar situations (Bistch, 2013). From the qualitative approach, transferability dismantles the common practice among (juvenile or novice) researchers of generalisation. In this study, the researcher enhances transferability by describing the research context and by also highlighting the assumptions that are related to the study.

#### **1.6.5.3 Confirmability**

Confirmability deals with the issues of biasness and prejudice of the research. Guba (2011) states that the researcher can maximize neutrality by using a team of researchers who have experience in qualitative research methods, rather than using a single researcher. The researcher keeps records of the reactions and responses of the interview interactions to minimize bias about the experiences of teachers regarding workshops on inclusive education.

#### **1.6.5.4 Credibility**

McMillan and Schumacher (2010) assert that credibility is achieved when the researcher conducts in-depth interviews with the participants who volunteer to participate in the study. The interviews enable the researcher to gather sufficient information concerning the participants' views which the researcher analyses in later chapters. Thus, from an interpretive perspective, understanding is co-created and there is no objective truth or reality to which the results of a study can be compared. Therefore, this study establishes credibility by assuring that there is an inclusion of all the people who read this report. That means the researcher uses an understandable language to ensure that the viewers read to: gain feedback on the data, interpret the findings and conclusions of this study by themselves. Lincoln and Guba (2011) consider the awareness of the targeted readers of the study as a critical technique for establishing credibility.

## **1.7 Significance of the study**

The researcher hopes that the findings of this study will be useful to the Limpopo Education Departments for policy reviews regarding workshops on inclusive education. The researcher also hopes to help to address the inhibiting factors that hold back a successful implementation of inclusive education in schools and in education curricula.

## **1.8 Ethical Considerations**

It is vital for the researcher to establish ethical consideration strategies when conducting a study within a school context. Professional ethical practices are crucial because they protect both the researcher and the participants with consideration of individual rights and preferences (De Vos, 2009). The researcher applied for ethical clearance which was obtained from the Turfloop Research and Ethics Committee (TREC) prior the commencement of the data collection process. This study adhered to the following ethical considerations:

### **1.8.1 Informed consent**

The researcher informed the participants that they can withdraw from participating at any stage during the research process should they need to withdraw without any form of penalty or execution. The study sustains respect to the human rights and dignity, and also considers the importance of protecting the participants from any form of harm.

### **1.8.2 Permission**

The researcher wrote a letter to request for permission from the Department of Education to conduct the study at the selected schools within Lebopo Circuit.

### **1.8.3 Voluntary participation**

The researcher informed that their participation is highly appreciated and that it is voluntary. The participants were further informed that they have the right to participate to the extent that they wish to do without any remuneration or any form of penalty or offence.

### **1.8.4 Research integrity**

Mouton (2011) states that the researcher should attempt to comply with high standards of research regarding the limitations of the findings as well as of the methodological constraints indicated, accurately representing areas and degrees of expertise, and reporting the findings to avoid misinterpretation of results. The researcher maintained integrity by ensuring compliance with the standards with limitation of findings.

### **1.8.5 Confidentiality and anonymity**

Confidentiality is a priority in this study because it addresses shortfalls that may jeopardise the anonymity of the respondents. The researcher ensured that information shared by the participants is treated with respect and their right to privacy is also valued. Hence, to ensure confidentiality, the researcher does not disclose the personal information of the participants in the research report.

### **1.8.6 Feedback**

The researcher ensured that participants are provided with feedback through their principals in the form of a complete written document.

## **1.9 Conclusion**

This chapter discussed; the background and motivation of the study, the problem statement, research questions, literature review, theoretical framework, research design and methodology, ethical considerations, and the significance of the study. The aim of this chapter was to draw a background of the roots of this study and to discuss what gaps this study yearns to bridge. This chapter also drew discussions on how relevant the approaches and techniques that were applied in data collection and analysis yield pertinent data regarding the phenomenon in question. The next chapter presents the literature review.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Literature Review**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents a critical review of literature that is pertinent to the study. Creswell (2013) argues that literature review means locating and contextualising (in summarizing and citing) the arguments and findings of previous studies in relation to a particular topic. This is important because previous research lay sturdy foundations for the construction of new investigations. Marshall and Rossman (2011) explain literature review as a conversation between the researcher and the literature. This chapter presents the review of related literature on inclusive education under the following subheadings: Perceptions of the teachers about the inclusive education workshops, content imparted to teachers who attended workshops, the question of whether the workshops add value to the educators' understanding of inclusive education and recommendations on the role of the Department of Education on inclusive education. South Africa is one of the developing countries which experiences shortfalls regarding teacher-training or workshops on the implementation of inclusive education. This study seeks to divulge how teachers perceive the workshops provided on inclusive education.

#### **2.2 Theoretical Framework**

According to Merriam (2016) theoretical framework is the underlying structure of a study. Theoretical framework helps to justify the research study and inform the rest of the design to: assess and refine research goals; develop realistic and relevant research questions; select appropriate methods and identify potential validity threats to the conclusions (Maxwell 2012). The study adopts the theory of Lee Shulman (1986) of Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK).

Shulman (1986) explicates pedagogical content knowledge as the type of knowledge that relates the teachers' pedagogic understanding (which is what teachers know about teaching), to their subject matter knowledge (which is what teachers know about what they teach). He further indicates that the teachers' acquisition of knowledge is a crucial determinant of their success in the application of the knowledge to education. Shulman (1986) furthermore, proposes that teachers should be exposed to a constructivist orientation which prioritises equipping teachers with adequate skills through proper initial and continuous training, because it will sharpen their pedagogic knowledge.

### **2.3 Application of the theory**

#### Pedagogical content knowledge and its categories

Shulman (1986) asserts that teaching knowledge is the basic component of pedagogical content knowledge. Shulman (1986) additionally states that the pedagogical content knowledge is modified by the teacher's reflection on teaching and the teachers' knowledge of representations, illustrations or useful examples of the content to be taught. Shulman (1986) elucidates the pedagogical content knowledge under the following elements:

**Pedagogical knowledge:** Shulman's idea of pedagogical knowledge connotes the knowledge that the educator has acquired about organisation of a school content curriculum and its subsequent constructivist conceptions of the content. Pedagogic knowledge also implies that the educator is conversant with the learning theories that guide the teachers on how to teach relevant subjects in classroom.

**Content knowledge:** Shulman's idea of content knowledge explains the constructivist orientation in that, the teacher's concepts of learning the content are associated with his or her belief about how learning occurs. This implies that the teacher has the skills and capabilities to break the abstract contents into teachable and understandable contents. Shulman (1986) asserts that the teacher's levels of subject knowledge are crucial determinants of how effective the teacher will convey the knowledge to the learners. Teachers should acquire adequate pedagogical knowledge to deliver the content knowledge appropriately. Pompea and Constance (2017), indicate that both the pedagogical knowledge and content knowledge are the most important elements to reach success in the teaching fraternity.

Yenilmez and Ata (2013) propose that teachers should be conversant with the following three Pedagogical knowledge categories: Knowledge of Curriculum (KC), Knowledge of Content and Students (KCS) and Knowledge of Content and Teaching (KCT). Knowledge of Curriculum refers to the teacher's familiarity with the existing school curriculum and task organization. The teacher recognises suitable content sequences and designs of teaching, and thus links the suitable sequences with the demands of the school curriculum. Knowledge of Content and Students refers to the teacher's acquaintance of the students' content thinking, especially with the common mistakes they commit or present. The teacher recognises students' common mistakes in specific areas of the

content and knows that students find certain topics difficult. This also includes the teacher's awareness that some representations may be more or less appropriate for the learners. Knowledge of Content and Students portrays the notion that the teacher's knowledge of the content can (positively or negatively) affect the students' opportunities to learn and to gain achievement. Knowledge of Content and Teaching refers to the process that the teacher undertakes to apply the content knowledge through teaching and practice. In relation to this study, the teacher will be applying the knowledge of inclusive education into the classroom.

#### **2.4 Meaning of inclusive education**

Inclusive education is a process of strengthening the capacity of the education system to reach out to all learners. It is also valued and understood as the key strategy to achieve education for all (Bernard, 2012). As an overall principle, it should guide all education policies and practices with the consideration that education is a basic human right and the foundation for a more just and equal society. Inclusive education has been internationally recognised as a philosophy for attaining equity, justice and quality education for all children, especially those who have been excluded from mainstream education because of disability, ethnicity, gender or other characteristics (Bernard, 2012). While inclusive education has been implemented successfully in some countries, other countries are still in the process of achieving this goal.

Bryant, Smith, and Bryant (2008); Lipsky and Gartner (1997); Rogers (1993) in Salend, (2011) state that in Vietnam and other developing countries, governments recognise the importance of inclusive education in promoting social justice and equity. One conundrum that Vietnam and other countries are faced with, is ensuring that human resource development supports these important initiatives. However, inclusive education in these countries is still a work in progress. In South Africa, the government of national unity that came into power in 1994, implements numerous of developments to improve the standards of education in this country. One of the major changes was the implementation of inclusive education, which is an educational strategy that encourages equality to all learners.

It was strongly recommended by the National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training (NCSNET,2010) and the National Committee on Education Support Services (Department of Education, 2005) that all schools practice inclusive education

that gratifies the needs of all learners irrespective of their race, colour and disability. These bodies were appointed by the then Minister of Education, Dr Bhengu to inspect all aspects of special education and support in the country. The bodies revealed that special education and support were provided to a small percentage of learners with disabilities, majority of which were within special schools and classes. Even so, the bodies further disclose that, services in such special schools or classes were provided based on race. The best inclusive resource materials were reserved for the white people. Therefore, the bodies recommended that the education and training system should promote education for all. This justifies the introduction and implementation of inclusive education policies in South Africa.

## **2.5 The understanding of inclusive education**

The DoE (2009) has embarked on a radical motion to restructure the South African education system. It aims to remove barriers to learning and to include children with disabilities into mainstream schooling. According to this framework, learners who face educational difficulties must be included into mainstream schools, but there is scant research on the feasibility and practical implementation of this notion. The implementation of this policy is however hampered by the lack of teachers' skills and knowledge of applying the curriculum to address a wide range of learning needs (Mittler, 2017). The policy emphasises that teachers need to understand what inclusive education implies. They should know for instance, that inclusive education requires that all learners, irrespective of their differences, be accepted in schools that are in their neighbourhoods to enable them to interactively learn through and with each other (Ashley, 2009). The implication is that learners who have been previously placed in special schools would have equal educational opportunities as those who were previously marginalised. The implementation of inclusive education is meant to enable teachers in all education phases to deal with learners from historically, racially and linguistically diverse backgrounds. The teachers are thus expected to have adequate capacity to teach learners who have a wide range of educational needs.

Hallahan, Kaufman and Pullen (2012) argue that the truly effective inclusive education requires both the general education teacher and special education teacher to be trained to work together with common purpose. Their study revealed that to provide effective special education, the general education educators and special education educators must be trained to contrive inclusive education and effective learning environment despite the



challenges that they may encounter. This illustrates that teachers need proper training to understand how to implement inclusive education in their schools, particularly how to include learners with special needs in the general classroom context. Hallahan, Kaufman and Pullen (2012) revealed that most teachers in the mainstream schools are unable to teach nor engage learners with learning deficits in their classes, and this fuels negative perceptions on inclusive education.

Wilderman and Nomdo (2018) claim that inclusive education is slow and partial in developing countries including South Africa. Stofile and Green (2018) and Engelbrecht (2018) argue that there are numerous factors that hold the education system back from fulfilling its role regarding inclusive education. That includes: (a), lack proper material for teachers, (b) lack of skills and (c) lack of support from the support structures to teachers. Teacher programme seems not to adequately address the teachers' needs. This results in stress for educators and lack of progress for learners with learning difficulties (Chataika et al, 2012). Thus, to a deeper extent, it is observable that the success of inclusive education largely depends on the teachers' readiness in terms of the skills and knowledge acquired during training or workshops.

Shapiro (2013) explains that the success of inclusive education in schools depends on how teachers view learners with disabilities in the general classrooms, and how they promote a positive learning environment. In addition, Brodtkin (2003) as cited in Shapiro (2013) argues that teachers need to develop positive attitudes towards all learners. Shapiro (2013) further cautions that when learners with disabilities become victims of cruelty and neglect, they will have low self-esteem in both their academic and social lives. However, when learners are provided with necessary support, they gain self-esteem both socially and academically. Shapiro (2013) encourages teachers to create learning environments that promote positive peer interactions and learning. This could teach learners to accept all individuals and respect their individual rights irrespective of their differences. Brodtkin (2012) avers that most learners with learning difficulties depend on teachers for support, respect and love. As a result, when teachers treat them separately, they then act separately to show their differences from other learners. This in turn affects their personal, social and emotional being, and results in isolation in classrooms.

A study of Robertson, Chamberlain and Kasari (2015) examined the relationship between general education teachers and included students with autism. The results highlighted

that teachers were generally positive on developing relationships with students with autism. The motivation and attitude of the teacher is another factor to be examined. Nevertheless, if teachers have positive attitudes towards inclusion, it does not mean that they will be confident. A recent study reports that American teachers consider themselves to be less capable to serve the needs of autistic students (Spears, Tollefson & Simpson, 2016). Thus far, the existing literature has reflected on the key considerations in inclusive education and in teaching of children with disabilities in the regular classrooms. However, when there is increased interest in providing effective education for all, the most significant document that should drive the implementation of inclusive education is the policy of inclusive education (EWP 6).

Acedo (2018) claims that a greater part of the success of inclusive education policies relies heavily on: teachers' positive approaches towards inclusion; strong professional skills; high quality pre-service education and in-service training as well as networking with other teachers. According to Peters (2012) the teachers' proactive adjustment to the classroom creates a sense of belonging for their learners with disability. Teachers' skills in adaptation include, but are not limited to, adapting the relevant curriculum do not only include the correct classroom set up, but also include adapting the curriculum (Parsons et al., 2011).

## **2.6 Teacher workshops or training on inclusive education**

Teacher-training refers to the process of using the policies and procedures designed to equip prospective teachers with knowledge, attitudes, behaviours and skills that they need to perform their tasks effectively in the classrooms (Michell, 2011). This can be achieved through teacher workshops and teacher training. This implies that teachers must be trained or provided with workshops that will equip them with relevant knowledge and skills of implementing inclusivity. This may help them to develop teaching materials that will enable them to teach in diverse classrooms and to develop positive perceptions about inclusive education. UNESCO (2015) claims that teachers should be provided with training and workshops that will give them pedagogical experiences that would enable them to make inclusion work in the classroom settings. UNESCO (2015) further claims that there should be training for all education professionals, including the policy designers and workshop facilitators to empower them to implement inclusive education in schools.

Bagree and Lewis (2013) assert that teacher training varies between countries, but it seems to be inadequate in most countries. The training does not prepare teachers to teach in diverse classrooms, and does not provide appropriate knowledge, skills, and attitudes that enable them to support learners with learning barriers in diversity classrooms. Bagree and Lewis (2013) explain that teachers need appropriate ongoing training and workshops that will give them adequate support from relevant education specialists.

Similar to Bagree and Lewis (2013), Hull (2014) argues that training should provide assistance with differentiated instructions to help teachers to modify and adapt curricula to meet different learners' needs. Teachers who do not receive adequate training or workshops on inclusive education tend to develop negative perceptions towards inclusive education (Van Reusen and Barker, 2012). Bagree and Lewis (2013) and Van Reusen and Barker (2012) also investigated the factors that impact on teachers' perceptions on inclusive education workshops. Their studies are however different from the current study in that, they conducted internationally, while the current study is conducted in the rural areas of South Africa within Limpopo Province.

Magg and Katsiyannis (2010) revealed that there is a complex nature of classrooms and the increasing demands on teachers who often have little or no specialised training in working with exceptional learners. Magg and Katsiyannis (2010) recommended that structures should be made available to provide necessary assistance and guidance for teachers to make changes in their instructional practices. Munby, Lock, Hutchinson, Whitehead and Martin (2017) concur with Magg and Katsiyannis (2010) when they claim that the teacher-training programs should increasingly call on to train teachers who are able to respond competently to the challenges of inclusive classrooms. This is because there is an increasing diversity among learners in today's classrooms. Munby et al. (2009) further argue that an effective response to classroom diversity is to provide teachers with efficient training and ongoing teacher workshops.

Jenkins, Pateman and Black (2013) embraced a similar idea of Magg and Katsiyannis (2010) that there should be amendments in the national teacher-training programs for both regular and special education teachers. Jenkins, Pateman and Black (2013) further assert that if there can be a modification of the training systems, teachers would become

recognised as the most important stakeholders to make inclusive education successful. The teachers will adapt quickly and therefore develop positive perceptions of inclusion.

Mukhopadhyay, Molosiwa, and Moswela (2015) conducted a study on teachers' trainee level of preparedness for inclusive education in Botswana. One amongst the aims of this study was to explore the influence of teachers' attitudes towards teacher-training programs on inclusion and their perceived preparedness in inclusive education settings. Mukhopadhyay, Molosiwa, and Moswela (2015)'s study reveals that the government of Botswana has realised the exclusion of learners with learning difficulties as they are isolated by being put in special schools. They further illustrate that the government commissioned a consultancy to review the special education provision in 1992. The consultancy report reveals that there is acute shortage of special teachers and lack of adequate teacher training facilities within the country. The government then introduced the Revised National Policy on Education, which recommends that all teachers should have elements of special education in their pre-service training. Therefore, those who did not receive training should receive in-service training. This is the Botswana government's endeavour to provide equal opportunities for all learners in the education policies.

Hamill, Jantzen and Bargehuff (2011) argue that equal educational opportunities for all learners can be achieved if teachers receive quality training and are motivated to develop positive perception of inclusive education. The similarities of both the reviewed study and the current study are that both studies are conducted using the qualitative research methodology and that they are concerned with reshaping the teacher-training programs. However, the present study sinks deeper to examine how teachers perceive the conducted workshops on inclusive education.

Hargreaves (2013) argues that the success of inclusive education depends on what the teachers think (attitude), what the teachers believe (perception) and what the teachers do (practice). Hargreaves (2013) on the other hand, asserts that the teacher trainers should have the competencies that enable them to equip the teachers with relevant skills to deliver the policy of inclusive education with confidence. Hargreaves (2013) stresses that teacher-training plays a paramount role in ensuring that inclusive education is successfully implemented and practiced in schools.

Fakudze (2012) indicates that there is a lack of a systematic evaluation of the levels of teachers' knowledge and competencies regarding inclusive education. Fakudze also

revealed that Swaziland does not have continuous teacher development programmes or workshops, but it has inclusive education subject inspectors. The subject inspectors only visit schools to observe teachers and not to provide support. These kinds of settings hamper the success of the implementation of inclusive education and they trigger the negative perceptions of teachers. Pijl and Meier (2014) argue that inclusive education can be successful if teachers develop attitudes acceptable to all learners.

Sucuolu (2017) argues that teachers in Istanbul are facing difficulties in implementing inclusive education and struggle to generate solutions to overcome the difficulties. Therefore, the teachers develop negative perceptions about the implementation process due to low morale. Teachers argue that they do not receive sufficient support from the responsible education departments regarding issues of inclusivity in schools. They do not know whether what they do in practice is right or wrong. The teachers explained that all the problems can be solved through continuous teacher training and workshops. Teachers also need to get a professional support from inclusive education specialists. Sucuolu (2017) further explains that the proper usage of materials for inclusive education eases the perception at all levels. Teachers should be trained to select and prepare appropriate materials to make their teaching process easy and the learning process concrete. This means that teachers should be able to practice and revise their lesson plans to increase the participation of all learners in class (Sucuolu, 2017). He further elaborates that teachers would be knowledgeable if they are provided with guidance and training with regard to what is expected from them during the implementation process.

## **2.5 Perceptions of teachers on inclusive education workshops**

Teachers' perceptions, knowledge and behaviours regarding inclusive education are presented in different ways in today's world (Maria, 2013). All nations try to develop inclusive educational systems to create inclusive societies. Despite this, there are major differences between what teachers believe and know about inclusive education. The difference can be drawn on what teachers know and how they project themselves in the classrooms in pursuit of inclusive education and good examples of education practice. At the national level, there are good practice examples such as those of Vrasmas and Ghergut (2009). In order to achieve the goal of inclusion, there should be measures to develop positive attitudes for people who are willing to implement inclusive education (Vrasmas & Ghergut, 2009).

Maria (2013) conducted a study in Europe and raised the fact that there should be a provision of support socially, economically and in educational background. This can be implemented with the help of concerned stakeholders in education departments and in a close relationship with families and local communities. It will be done because inclusive education is a huge challenge for the educational systems of all nations over the world, including Europe. This is a process that implies not only the integration of children with disabilities in mainstream schools, but also the curricula adjustment to satisfy the needs of every child, regardless of his or her psychological development, physical development, social background, ethnic background or family background. In order to achieve the inclusion objectives, it is necessary to accomplish an educational reform and a sharing network which can provide good practice examples for all the teachers who work with children with special educational needs and wants to develop an inclusive environment (Maria, 2013).

Roberts (2016) conducted a study on the perceptions of both mainstream and specialised teachers, in terms of the mainstreaming of learners in South African schools. The results of the study revealed that South African context is not yet ready for practicing inclusivity in mainstream schools. Roberts (2016) advanced an argument that learners with special needs are neglected in the main classrooms and therefore drop out of schools at last. In addition, learners with special needs are not taken care of in the general classrooms and there is little emphasis on their safety. It was further noted that mainstream teachers are still in need of practical training in inclusive education. This denotes that workshops on inclusive education are not often provided to teachers. Pijl and Meier (2014) aver that inclusive education can only be successful if teachers develop acceptable perceptions or attitudes to all learners.

Maria (2013) argues that confusion between inclusive education and integrated education leads to negative perceptions for teachers in mainstream schools. She further revealed some factors that contribute to difficulties that teachers encounter in implementing inclusive education such as: insufficient or lack of continuous training of teachers, limited time, the rejection of learners with special needs by their fellow learners, stereotypes and prejudice towards learners with special needs. The most important solution found by the participants in this research is an efficient initial or continuous training of teachers that gives them guides on how they should build knowledge about inclusive education, as well as how to apply and implement it in their classrooms. Many of the findings from abroad

demonstrate that the levels of learner-achievement in the mainstream schools and Special Education Needs have increased (Villa et al., 2008). Thus, the acceptance of the concept of equality in education will be achieved with a more significant improvement compared to only running inclusive classroom (Hang & Rabren, 2009).

Mambo (2011) revealed that the following challenges are faced by teachers: (i) teachers are not fully aware of inclusive education policy and practice, (ii) poor implementation of inclusive education policy is caused by lack of appropriate training and professional development, (iii) inclusive education needs to be funded separately by all levels of government. Mambo (2011)'s study shows that teachers are still faced with challenges when implementing inclusive education, of which the current study seeks to address.

Swart, Engelbrecht and Eloff (2015) revealed that teachers have negative attitudes towards training, because they feel that they do not acquire the knowledge or skills that will enable them to appropriately address diversity in their classrooms. This indicates that teachers are not satisfied with the information that they receive in the workshops. It is possible that the teachers are not well equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge that will enable them to implement or address diversity in their classrooms. On the other hand, Avramidis, Bayliss and Burden (2010) revealed that the teachers' attitudes in Europe affect the implementation of inclusive education. When teachers have negative attitudes towards a phenomenon, its implementation in classrooms or schools never succeeds. They also revealed some of the factors which influence on teachers' attitudes toward inclusion. These factors are: (a) those related to teachers such as gender, age, teaching experience, and training; (b) those related to children such as the severity of the child's disability; and (c) those related to environment such as the availability of personnel and financial support.

Furthermore, Norwich (2013) argues that teachers' perceptions and attitudes are critical in ensuring the success of inclusive practices because teachers' acceptance of the policy of inclusion is likely to affect their commitment to the implementation process. Norwich (2013)'s study revealed that most teachers still have negative attitudes towards integration in inclusive education. Avramidis & Norwich's study (2010), argue that much still needs to be done to develop the teachers' attitudes on inclusion of the learners with special needs. This study develops measures that will help the Department of Education to develop better strategies to stimulate positive attitudes in teachers on inclusive

education. In the beginning stages of inclusion, negative attitudes often exist among many general educators because of lack of knowledge and training to work with disabled students (Perko & McLaughlin, 2013). Positive teacher attitudes were often paired with concerns about the integration of students who were severely disabled. General education teachers were more in favour of inclusion when a student did not require additional on the part of the teacher. Teachers were resistant to more demands posed on them and positive attitude that was expected did not materialise.

Parasuram (2016) concurs that teachers' acceptance and attitude towards training on inclusive policy, is likely to affect their commitment to implement the policy. Beattie, Anderson, and Antonakm (2011) and Subban & Sharma (2018) reveal that positive attitudes can bring successful implementation, while negative attitudes could inhibit implementation process. This may also affect social participation and academic achievement of students with special needs in the classroom. These researchers argue that the success of teacher-trainings and workshops on inclusive education is determined by the acceptance and the attitudes of the teachers.

The teacher's attitude is important in determining the success of special education programs (Stoler, 2012). However, few studies have been conducted on how teachers feel about inclusion (Jobe et al., 2016). A research was conducted in Colorado where one district was used to investigate 276 educators' attitudes toward inclusion (Pearman, Huang, Barnhart & Mellblom, 2015). The results indicated that males had significantly more negative attitudes about inclusion than female educators. The difference between general classroom teachers and special education teachers was also found. The special educators in Colorado had more positive attitudes toward inclusion. Overall, survey results indicated resistance toward inclusion among teachers. This study looked at teacher attitudes and was conducted with 182 secondary teachers from nine high schools in Suban, (Stoler, 2012 & Van Reusen et al., 2013). The results portrayed that teachers with different levels of education differ in their attitudes. More negative attitudes occurred among those who have higher levels of education. However, the study also indicated that the more teachers completed training on special education or inclusion, the more they developed positive attitudes on inclusive education. The teachers' low self-efficacy affects their perceptions, judgments, and actions or behaviours in the classroom. Bradshaw and Mundia (2016) argue that numerous educators hold positive attitudes about diversity in the classroom yet they have low teacher self-efficacy for inclusion.



Mdikana, Ntshangane and Mayekiso (2007) revealed that sixty percent of participants held positive attitudes towards inclusion because they possessed better understanding, and they displayed a relevant knowledge. However, 40% identified the need for special skills and inclusion resources to be effective. Future collaborative efforts and relationships in the professional world are difficult to attain due to the separation of received education and training. Mdikana, Ntshangane and Mayekiso (2015) argue that teachers who start their education training for inclusive education in their initial stages develop positive attitudes or perceptions of inclusive education, but the teachers who receive training in the form of in-service training or workshops develop negative attitudes or perception of inclusive education.

The reviewed studies clearly indicate that there is still a gap on providing the measures that would enable educators to implement or address diversity in the classrooms. It is vital that intensive studies be conducted to develop successful measures for the implementation of inclusive education.

## **2.6 The value of workshops conducted on inclusive education**

Anamuah-Mensah, Mereku and Ampiah (2017), Dembele (2018) and Lewin, Keith and Stewart (2010) state that the issues of teacher workshops and the quality of professional development that have emerged from studies in Africa, illustrate several persistent concerns. That includes: the importance of identifying the value of training; the good and useful aspects of practice and combining those with initial teacher education and the role of the department in training newly qualified teachers. It is generally agreed that learning to teach is a lifelong process. The idea of professional learning for teachers as a continuous process has been emphasised by several researchers, such as Zeichner and Noffke (2017). Providing meaningful professional development for in-service teachers is central to this goal, and it may result in the implementation process becoming successful. In the case of inclusive education, teachers seem to be encountering challenges regarding the workshops or trainings that are conducted to equip them with relevant skills and knowledge to ensure that they implement inclusive education successfully.

Mock and Kauffman (2012) reveal that teachers feel trapped and are not prepared to respond to the educational needs of every learner with special needs in inclusive classes. This is because teachers find it difficult to function beyond their training and specialisation. The teachers stated that workshops are held within short periods of time, and it becomes

difficult for them to acquire the skills and knowledge that is expected of them within such a short space of time. The workshops seem not to add value to their required skills and knowledge. As a result, the implementation becomes unsuccessful. Mock and Kauffman (2012) pointed out that teachers find it difficult to shift from the knowledge that they already have because it is the knowledge they acquired through enough and appropriate training.

Fullan (2012) argues that teachers attend workshops but when they return to their classrooms, they make no significant change in practice. This is because they are not provided with proper knowledge. There is a cause of dissatisfaction from the teachers who attended the workshops. This is supported by Review committee on Curriculum 2005 (2005), which indicated “the lack of practically continuous support or development for teachers when they return back to their sites after receiving training from workshops on inclusive education.” The educators need continuous encouragement during and after attending workshops for them to be positive in the implementation process, and to also ensure its success.

Researchers such as Collison and Ono (2009) and Villegas-Reimers (2011) are critical of the workshops, and believe most of them to be single experiences, which are fragmented, incoherent, decontextualized and isolated from the real classroom environment. However, it was a different version in a research conducted by Cutler and Ruopp (2009), who disclosed a case whereby teachers attended workshops twice a month at Boston area of the USA. These workshops focused on different outcomes, such as pedagogical knowledge and practices. The study reveals that teachers believe that workshops are very valuable because their practices in the classroom become improved after the workshops. The reviewed study portrays the provision of knowledge only as the positive aspect of teacher training that does not illustrate how the teachers can apply the knowledge to ensure success in the implementation of inclusive education.

Garner (2011) expressed his concern about the conceptual and practical unpreparedness of many teachers, who are expected to form a vanguard of inclusive initiatives. His study was conducted in Greater Britain whereby they planned to restructure teacher education programs to improve the traditional homogenous and separate teacher education. Florian (2010) acknowledges that separate teacher education programs have been identified as barriers to inclusion. Garner (2011) and Florian (2010) acknowledge the importance of

training teachers to equip them with appropriate knowledge that will enable them to implement inclusive education in heterogeneous classrooms.

Dumitru (2015) argues that a teacher should never stop learning. She further indicated that a teacher learns to become able to respond to different learners' needs and requests in diverse classrooms. This will enable the teachers to cope with the social changes and school exigencies. These indicate that teachers should attend proper continuous training. The aim of continuous training activities is to offer a developed professional knowledge and widen the teachers' competencies. The Department of Education should also implement improved and adequate measures to make inclusive education successful. Most teachers are not trained on inclusive education during their initial training, and it is therefore important for them to have continuous training through workshops. This will enhance their knowledge and skills to successfully implement inclusive education in different circumstances. Dumitru (2013) further stated that in the educational field, the notion of "learning throughout the entire life" is frequently used. It reflects the starting point of many activities that are initiated by teachers to improve their professional experience. It also allows teachers to understand the connection among some activities and teaching techniques, including how diversity manifests as well as what students learn.

The fact that teachers work in varied contexts does not assure that every specific approach to teaching will have the desired outcomes for learners (Timperley, 2009). In fact, continuous training and workshops resemble the key to quality services in education and solutions for problems in diverse classrooms. Timperley (2009) further argues that in order to get quality education, training and workshops should be perceived as an integral part of the teacher's work and professional development. This is clearly observable in measures taken to improve the teacher-training, such as: a pre-work course before entering the classroom as a completely responsible teacher; the coherent, supportive training process for young teachers who teach in their first years; continuous professional training in the form of in-serve process for those who are already in practice.

Stayton and McCollum (2002) outlined three models that are important in preparing teachers for inclusive classrooms, namely: the additional model, the infusion model, and the unification model. The additional model is about modifying existing courses or adding special education content in general teacher education curriculum. It includes strategies for including learners with special needs in the general education classrooms. The

infusion model is about team teaching by faculty from general and special education disciplines and joint supervision of field experiences. It infuses special and general education content on existing courses with the assumption that learners with diverse needs can be rescued by general education teachers. The infusion is a unifying model which was proposed by Pugach (2009) who argued for the teacher education programs that have been traditionally designed to separate the preparation of general (mainstream) teachers and special education teachers. These models are suitable to prepare teachers to better acquire relevant knowledge and techniques of dealing with learners with diverse needs in general classrooms.

Diker, Tosuna and Macaro (2011) declare that teachers usually complain about the lack of knowledge regarding the materials that should be used in inclusive classes, which lowers their motivation to implement inclusive education. The results highlight that the teachers are dissatisfied because they do not get sufficient help. They further indicate that this problem could be solved through teacher training. Teachers should be trained to use the learning materials in special education and its applications during in the training or workshops. Teachers also emphasised the need to get a professional support from psychologists and special education specialists to make them understand the nature and purpose of inclusion. In this case, the teachers have positive recognition that workshops are important to them.

The professional and continuous training programs are very important in inclusive education (Ghergut, 2017). Ghergut (2017) indicated that there are differences between what teachers think they know about inclusive education, what they really know and what they practice. This area should trigger an alarm signal for the decision factors that can make a reform to increase teachers' levels of competence for inclusive practices. Ghergut (2017) continued to illustrate the impossibility of implementing inclusive education without understanding or knowing the following: what the concept is, what the principles of this type of education are, what is expected from it, what other practitioners do in this educational field and what the developments regarding the concepts are. Ghergut (2017) illustrates the crucial factors that all stakeholders concerned in inclusive education in all countries should take into consideration. Without continuous training or workshops, teachers will not be able to implement inclusive education successfully. This is because they will not know whether they are applying the correct measures or complying with the teaching principles thereof.

Pinnock and Nicholls (2012) conducted a study in the secondary schools of Australia, to identify the gaps in the teachers training programmes. The most common reported experience was that inclusive principles are increasingly being articulated within policies and teacher-training curricula, but that transforming these principles into practice is not widespread for various reasons. These reasons include, amongst others that: there are trainers with little or lack of experience of inclusive strategies, there is inadequate investment of time and resources in practice-focused training, and, there are intense challenges with education infrastructure and resourcing. All these reasons make the basic conditions for inclusion difficult to achieve because they silence the teachers' perceptions on inclusive education.

In Australia, majority practitioners are supportive of the need to improve training systems to advance inclusive education in their contexts (Nicholls, 2012). There is a strong agreement that progress is being made to promote inclusive education for people with disabilities. Thus, the respondents see the prospects for building further positive change as relatively good. Nicholls (2012) further argues that several inputs from the practitioners provided insights into the issues of the trainers' lack of experience in inclusive practice and lack of allocated time and space for teacher training on inclusive approaches. The above issues were mentioned several times as factors that prevent teachers from having a meaningful focus on inclusion during practice. On the other hand, a relatively encouraging 16 percent of the respondents felt that inclusive education is a priority in teacher training.

According Foreman (2011) teachers must implement inclusive education to provide for the needs of all learners in their schools regardless of their conditions of ability or disability. Foreman (2011) elucidates that inclusion has developed into inclusive education, and it has made feasible the right of every child to reach the optimal level of learning and development in formal education settings by removing barriers to learning to all pupils in schools. On the other hand, Wedell (2005) argues that teachers need to implement inclusive education under any circumstances, although to a certain extent, the teachers may indicate shortfalls which suggest that they need to be well refined with skills and knowledge on how to fulfil the needs of the learners with learning deficits. Foreman (2011) and Wedell (2010) hold the view that teachers are sceptical and therefore develop negative perceptions whenever they are faced with a new education policy. The idea that Foreman (2011) and Wedell (2010) are driving home is that teachers move at a snail

pace to adapt to a new education policy and that aggravates the negative attitudes or perceptions towards new policies.

The more experienced and knowledgeable the teachers are, the more confident they become in implementing inclusive education successfully (McGregor and Campbell, 2011). This highlights the power that knowledge and practical experience has on changing attitudes and perceptions of teachers. Reber's study (2005) further illustrated that positive attitudes towards inclusion reduce the probabilities of exclusion in superdiverse classrooms. Vaillant (2011) further argues that effective training makes available a wide range of teaching tools that the teachers to immediately revert to in classrooms when they deal with learners with learning deficits. Thus, their experiences coupled with a continuous training develop nurture habits of innovation and functionality. Thus, if all teachers could be informed about the changes in the education system and be given thorough workshops the goals of new curriculum and inclusion will be successfully achieved (Jones, 2012).

## **2.7 The importance of the workshops attended by teachers on inclusive education**

The UNESCO (2015) report illustrated that inclusive education, from an educational perspective, can help to address the traditional and structural problems and challenges of poverty, modernization, and social and cultural integration, and superdiversity in national societies. These calls for teachers to better understand the phenomenon of inclusive education not only from the classroom perspective, but also to the level of the socio-economic issues that affect children from their societies. UNESCO (2015) further reiterates that inclusive education seeks to address forms and contents of exclusion, such as the social gaps that impinge on people's access to information and communication technologies (ICTs), the marginalization of disaffected young people (the uneducated and the unemployed), the lack of educational opportunities and low learning outcomes among migrant populations. Inclusive education can therefore be considered as a pathway to attain social inclusion.

The strength and effectiveness of the public education system highly depends on effective training and continuous professional development of teachers. Traditional approaches to teacher training and development have proven ineffective to meet the unique and changing needs of general education teachers (Schleicher, 2011). Presentation style

workshops have disseminated enormous information within an extremely short time-frame that left little room for teachers to apply their learning and develop their skills (McLeskey & Waldron, 2011; Debora, 2018). Heflin and Bullock (2013) indicate that teachers are seen to be resistant to implement inclusive education. This might be because of their insufficient capabilities to teach learners with learning difficulties. Teachers are recently being faced with more educational requirements, and inclusion is no exception to the demands. The 21<sup>st</sup> century teachers are expected to possess relevant skills to meet the needs of learners with learning difficulties and learners from diverse family, linguistic, religious or cultural backgrounds.

Slastenin and Chizhakova (2013) believe that education system that provides adequate training for teachers provides equal opportunities and a healthy learning for learners with diverse needs as well as those with special educational needs. The reviewed studies showed that there is a need to improve measures to conduct training for teachers, which the current study intends to achieve.

Heflin and Bullock (2013) argued that educators lose motives for attending the inclusive education training or workshops because the workshops make no impacts to their teaching habits and they add no value to their knowledge about inclusive education. Thus, they do not see the value and the importance of attending the workshops or training on inclusive education. Kleinert, Miracle and Sheppard-Jones (2009) argue that inclusion facilitators should collaborate to ensure that the entire school experience emanate from the playground to the dance floor, and is accessible to individuals with and without disabilities. Inclusive education means that every child, regardless of his or her learning abilities, pace or preference, is given the constitutionally deserved education with meaningful curriculum and effective teaching (Ferguson, 2014). In other words, each learner is provided with a challenging, meaningful learning experience that will enable the learner to reach his or her maximum potential. Thus, educators must be in possession of the skills to provide all learners with the type of education described above.

Teacher training or workshops involve professional development through pre-service and in-service practices. Professional development is defined as a process that promotes improvement in teachers' education and professional practice (Voltz, 2016), and fosters the relationship and collaboration between schools and universities to support the learning of prospective and experienced teachers (Margolin, 2011; Deppeler, 2006;

Ahsan, Sharma & Deppeler, 2012). Voltz (2016) further emphasises that inclusive education also includes the innovation and of the quality education programs. This further involves revisiting the preparation of professional development of experienced teachers and reconstructing schools for improved student learning. Teacher-training is important because it introduces the teachers to curriculum and pedagogical reforms (Petrie & McGee, 2012).

According to Ntombela (2009) providing training for the teachers tasked with implementing innovation and providing the necessary material and human resources for the innovation is important to achieve inclusive education. Thus, teachers' professional development can improve all students' achievement (Paliokosta & Blandford, 2010; Petrie & McGee, 2012). In this regard, an appropriate teacher training is regarded as a cornerstone of the development of inclusive education (Pearson, 2009). The aspect of development for teachers should be centred in their skills and knowledge so that they do not lack efficient skills to handle children with varying learning needs (Opertti & Belacaza, 2018), while still performing their role as teachers (Margolin, 2011). Acedo (2018) argues that when this type of support is not available and teachers are inadequately prepared and ill-equipped with skills, inclusive education cannot reach success (Ntombela, 2009). Thus, functional training should be provided through workshops and in-service training. This is an approach of educators' development that can upgrade teachers' skills and knowledge (Giangreco, Cichoskikelly, Sherman & Mavropoulos, 2011).

According to O'Gorman and Drudy (2010) school-focused in-service training is characterised by the continuing education activities which attempt to address the interests, needs and problems directly related to the job or the setting. In-service programmes are also a way of helping teachers to recapture their former knowledge and skills and to apply them in their current situations (Wearmouth, Edwards & Richmond, 2018; Margolin, 2011). Inclusion causes uncertainty about the roles and responsibilities of classroom teachers without specific planning (Kockhlar, West & Taymans, 2015). Countless school districts do not provide training to their practitioners to help them understand and learn strategies to address the needs of students with disabilities (Hewitt, 2011). Teachers should be provided with training so that they have the skills to implement inclusive education effectively. They further explain that poor implementation of inclusive education reinforces the misconception that inclusion does not work. Thus, a well



implementation of inclusivity in classrooms can be achieved through effective thoughts, organization, focus, training and the commitment to making it work.

Margolin (2011) argues that the education of teachers in the classroom must not stop when they complete their degrees. Developing their professional competencies, knowledge and pedagogical capabilities should be an on-going process and should be delivered whenever a need arises. This implies that, as far as changes in the education system are an evolving process, teachers are expected to undergo timely training through in-service courses or workshops to meet the new demands of the up-coming changes. Bennett, Rowe and De Luca (2009) also pointed out the importance of the teacher to know the learners without casting assumptions on their disabilities and needs. That is, teachers should be firm and flexible to effectively address inclusivity in schools (Coffey & Obring, 2011).

For teachers to work effectively in inclusive settings, they need to have the appropriate values and attitudes, skills and competences, knowledge and understanding (DoE, 2009). Teachers' roles become realities when the skills and knowledge of inclusion they have acquired through formal training and their own personal characteristics meet their understanding of the needs of the children with special needs (Florian, 2008). In other words, the success of inclusive education in any school depends largely on the capacity of the teachers' skills and knowledge regarding how inclusive education should be implemented (Bourke, 2010).

## **2.8 Support provided by the department to teachers regarding workshops of inclusive education**

Pilot Projects of the DoE (2009) stipulated that the government's objective is to show support to teachers involved in inclusive education, by building an inclusive education and training system that provides good quality education for all learners over the next 20 years. The government planned this to confront the weaknesses in the education system as it is now, include more of the learners that are not receiving education into the education system, and provide more opportunities for learners to be educated, help teachers and other education support services to meet the needs of all learners and ensure that these changes are implemented successfully. Educators have not received formal training in respect of the implementation of inclusive education either from either pre-service or district offices. The researcher is of the view that quality and definition of

service delivery is relative to the training and skills of educators. Educators are described in the Education White Paper 6 as the primary resource for achieving the goal of an inclusive education and training system (DoE, 2011).

According to Tutt (2016) the main challenge that most governments face, is to provide inclusive settings in all schools, through the provision of a diverse continuum of services that are part of a school network linked to other social policies. Even though they portray it as simple when they force teachers to implement inclusive education policy, they themselves encounter some challenges. Tutt (2016) further revealed that the challenges of attaining inclusive education are therefore also related to the provision of a comprehensive set of policies aimed at a pertinent and relevant curriculum with a vision that facilitates dialogue among various actors of the education system and complementary pedagogical strategies that can respond to the specificities of each learner by personalising educational provision, the available physical facilities and equipment aligned with the designed curriculum and its implementation, as well as the strong teacher support in the classroom. Teacher training and workshops should strengthen how teachers understand approach and respond to students' differences. The ways including teaching styles that should be revised and adjusted to be aligned with cultural and social contexts that are increasingly complex and uncertain. Teachers should be considered as co-designers and co-developers of inclusive education policies at the school and classroom levels, and not as mere implementers of curriculum change (Tutt, 2016).

According to Faller (2015) teachers in South Africa have not received formal training regarding the implementation of inclusive education, either from pre-service or district offices. Quality and definition of service delivery is relative to the training and skills of educators, described in the Education White Paper 6 (DoE, 2011) as the primary resource for achieving the goal of an inclusive education and training system. It is therefore the education department's role to ensure that educators are provided with an appropriate support. Knowledge and skills are interrelated, and educators need knowledge for inclusive education as conceptualised by the policy documents. They are necessary for teaching diversity in the classroom (DoE, 2011). Educators need support from knowledgeable management teams at institution level and from personnel in district offices to implement inclusive education. Teacher's knowledge of the act and the

provision of laws in the implementation of inclusive education is another aspect that should receive special attention from the Ministries of Education internationally

The report by UNICEF REAP (2012) indicated that the conditions to support teachers through inclusive education workshops are increasingly in place in many developing countries, although large scale change in teacher training is a challenge. The report further indicated that several teacher-training programmes or workshops had a strong influence on the teachers. This is because many teachers displayed strong insight of the training as they demonstrated high level of awareness improvements in teaching. However, it might be possible that respondents with strong knowledge of inclusive education are conscious of the education gaps and weaknesses. The respondents also had a view that the training might be described as positive because it was provided by people who had been involved in developing the policy, which may have led to positive bias about quality or effectiveness. Despite the positive training, the teachers felt that inclusive education was not covered to a satisfactory extent during the workshops, UNICEF REAP (2012). The teachers pointed out some comments about the trainers' lack of experience in inclusive practice, meaning that they could not translate inclusive practice principles into useful practical guidance and lack of space within the workshop for inclusive education approaches which prevented teachers from having a meaningful focus on inclusive practices.

Education White Paper 6 recognises the need to support teachers in the implementation of inclusive education because this is accepted internationally (DoE, 2011). It stipulates that it is critical for staff development and continuing assessment of educators' needs to take place both at schools and district level. Educators experience challenges due to inadequate and ineffective training as well as lack of support by the upper structures. As a key to successful implementation of an inclusive system, teachers will need time, continuous support and in-service training. Landsberg et al. (2012) also has a view that the education department should propose the establishment of resource centres close to schools where they can meet, and share information and experiences about inclusive education.

Curriculum materials should be produced at national or local level since teachers do not have time or resources to produce them. Teachers should be introduced to techniques of curriculum adaptation and multi-layered teaching, for example, how to manage

classrooms in which multiple activities are going on at the same time. Smith (2011) suggests that for the better attainment of quality workshops on inclusive education in South Africa, a model of multi-session workshop can be of great importance. This model is conducted by a qualified trainer or professional developer, with the participants meeting from time to time in different sessions to discuss topics. Hence, it is called a multi-session workshop. The workshop leader facilitates learning through activities and discussion of a certain topic. This model sounds very useful and understandable to be adopted by all the education departments to ensure that teachers are provided with appropriate training of inclusive education.

The DoE (2011) on Education White Paper 6 explains the curriculum and institutional barriers to learning. These include the content, the language or medium of instruction, the organisation of the classroom, methods and processes used in teaching, the pace of teaching and time available to complete the curriculum, the learning materials and equipment used; and assessment. The research conducted by Torombe (2013) in correlation to Bourdieu's concepts habits, field and capital, what teachers experience during their teaching in the school identified key factors that least facilitated policy implementation processes. The study has recognised a disconnection between the knowledge on inclusive education and the practices of implementation in the field. The study found that despite teachers' possession positive nurturing instinct to support children's education in view of the education for all, they are confronted with numerous challenges and complexities as they work to embrace practices of integration and inclusion within their capacities as teachers. The study found that educators were faced with challenges such as lack of knowledge and skills in inclusive education, congested classrooms, lack of collaborative support system within the school and the education system as well as lack of incentives. From the findings of this study, the gap of teacher-training or workshops is discovered which is precisely what the current study intends to address.

According to Kilimci (2009) inclusive education should be part of the courses in student training education, so that the student teacher might receive training in their departments starting from the beginning of their education. Kilimci (2009) pointed out that in Turkey, Special education courses were put in the initial teacher-training curriculum, starting from the year 2005, which helped the student teachers to understand how to teach learners with learning barriers. Researchers such as Matsumura, Slater, Crosson (2015) are

convinced that more knowledge and skills during the initial training is associated with more positive results due to the interactions among students, whereas unskilled teacher promotes negativity. The findings of this study address the phenomenon of perceptions as intended by the present study.

In some countries, the educational departments support inclusive education by providing specialist teachers or aides to assist within the regular classroom (Nguyet & Thu Ha 2010). These individuals provide support either by working alongside teachers in the classroom, as is the case with teacher assistants or during pull out sessions where the children spend some time out of the classroom to receive specialized services. Nguyet and Thu Ha (2010) further argued that in countries that lack resources to pay for specialized support staff, regular classroom teachers are responsible for all children with and without disabilities. In this case, promoting inclusive education training modules that can be integrated into the regular teacher training college curriculum would be more appropriate. It is the government's policy that inclusive education should become part of the regular education system, not a special service that requires extra incentives for teachers to do their job. This raises the difficulty of motivating regular classroom teachers to take on additional tasks. Crosson (2018) pointed out another strategy which is to provide creative ways to reward key teachers for their time and effort. Crosson (2018) further argues that schools express their gratitude through giving special (non-financial) awards to key teachers, such as a certificate of recognition for their commitment. In addition, becoming a successful key teacher is looked upon favourably by educational authorities and can lead to promotion.

Prinsloo (2017) suggests that community based involvement is necessary to help teachers and relevant stakeholders with skills and knowledge, because it is important for the school to make relationship with the community to effectively bring about better delivery of the curriculum, and actualise the full potential of the learners. Educators need to be trained in workshops and in-service training. They need to understand the various needs of the learners in the general classrooms, to identify their problems and to be able to provide remedial support to all the learners for them to learn and develop optimally (Prinsloo, 2017). Changing a mind-set of teachers to acquire new knowledge becomes a problem, especially the training of teachers to implement a new policy or curriculum. Studies on the effects of collaborative action research have found that experienced (in-service) teachers become more reflective, critical and analytical about their teaching

behaviours in the classroom when they engage in collaborative research (Rainey, 2000; Smith, 2005; McDonough, 2006). Majority of in-service programmes are extremely short, unrelated to the needs of teachers and ineffective at disseminating knowledge (Villegas-Reimers, 2003). In addition, Atay (2017) argues that current In-Service Education and Training programmes (INSET) are often unsatisfactory because they do not allow teachers to be actively involved in their development or reflect on their teaching experiences.

The National Education Policy Investigation report DoE, (2013) expressed a need for in-service education and training to support the development of teachers. The purpose of the in-service education and training is to help improve the quality of teachers and the standard of teaching so that they can provide quality basic education to dismantle the after effects of apartheid. The subject advisory services of the state-owned education system are traditionally responsible for in-service training of teachers. Instead of focusing on the subject curriculum only, the designers should also include inclusive education as part of the new curriculum, so that student teachers are being trained from the initial stage. Otherwise, the success of inclusive education will not be guaranteed. This is in line with the views of many educationists, such as Laridon (2013), that any new curriculum is bound to fail unless the teachers who are going to implement it are well trained in content, instructional approach and the assessment procedures. Most of these training sessions were in the form of one-to-three-days workshops usually held in the afternoons. However, there were occasions where teachers attended workshops for a week during school holidays. Invitations to the workshops were always given in advance, and they specified who was supposed to attend.

Valliant (2011) argues that since the inception of the inclusive education policy, teachers have been expected to practice inclusion and integration of children with disability in schools, but they are not being given enough support. Valliant (2011) emphasise that teachers are important partners in the development and success of inclusive education. Their role to make inclusive education successful will make the government innovation of the policy become reality at the school level, but it is only if they are provided with necessary support, guidance, materials and training to make the implementation easier. Workshops for teachers are very much important to help the trainers and teachers to meet each other to make the policy successful. Valliant (2011) emphasised the fact that a teacher's confidence is in the willingness and preparedness to carry out his tasks, and so

as in inclusive education, but if teachers are not prepared and not willing to implement the policy, then inclusive education will not reach a success.

Diker, Tosuna and Macaro (2009) claim that teaching students with disabilities in an inclusive classroom is a challenge for teachers who are teaching in the regular classrooms. Therefore, teachers should require the basic characteristics of effective teaching learners with learning difficulties, because to be a successful teacher in inclusive classrooms, one must deal with learners with different abilities. Therefore, as a teacher one need to be provided with necessary resources and acquire different strategies of dealing with these types of learners. Westwood (2018) and Sakarneh (2018) support the above statement when they indicate that most of the effective teaching evidence comes from the research done in the classrooms which are directly using different techniques.

UNESCO (2015) expressed that the identification of inclusive education as a process that involves changes and modifications in content, approaches, structures and strategies, with a common vision that covers all children of the appropriate age range and a conviction that it is the responsibility of the regular system to educate all children, means that all the concerned structures should join hands to support teachers in ensuring that the policy becomes successful. Furthermore, there are justifications to support inclusive education in this regard, as stipulated in the UNESCO (2015). Firstly, there is an educational justification which involves the requirement for inclusive schools to educate all children together. This implies that they should develop ways of teaching that respond to individual differences and that therefore benefit all children. Secondly, there is a social justification, which is about inclusive schools that are able to change attitudes toward diversity by educating all children together, and form the basis for a just and non-discriminatory society. Thirdly, there is an economic justification which shows that it is less costly to establish and maintain schools that educate all children together than to set up a complex system of different types of schools specialising in different groups of children.

Sakarneh (2018) attested that classroom teachers and subject teachers should have relevant skills and knowledge to provide successful inclusive education. Such qualities can be listed as; knowing the principles of inclusive education and implementing them, figuring out the individuals who need special education, knowing and being able to apply the methods and approaches in the inclusive education field, assessing and testing in a

healthy environment. In support of this view, Huberman (2015) asserts the importance of using teacher networks as an alternative for providing support to teachers. A network can either be relatively informal, with regular meetings between teachers, or formalised by institutionalising the relationships, communication and dialogue (Miles, 2009).

Sakarneh (2018) further argued that the way beneficial pre-service education of the classroom teachers will be understood by analysing their abilities in terms of preparing the education environment and implementation. All teachers are expected to employ their basic professional knowledge in the implementation process. However, in the inclusive education implementation, knowledge level of the teachers is observed to be disqualified and giving attention to learners with different learning difficulties in the classroom accepted as adequate.

To some extent, teachers' lack of knowledge and materials regarding inclusive education justifies the unsuccessful implementation of inclusive education (Diker & Tosun, 2016). The need for workshops and training for teachers thus becomes essential. UNESCO (2011) outlines the ways in which training of major stakeholders can take place for inclusive education to be successful: Teacher-education programmes, whereby teachers are reoriented and aligned to inclusive education approaches to give teachers the pedagogical capacities necessary to make diversity work in the classroom and in line with reformed curricula. Secondly, the training of all education professionals, including members of the community is essential in supporting an inclusive school, and thirdly, the creation of incentives renewing teachers' social status and improving their living conditions are necessary pre-conditions to professionalizing the role of teachers (e.g. increasing salaries, providing better living quarters, providing home leaves, increasing respect for their work, etc.)

Miles (2009) argues that the effectiveness of schools is determined by its effective leadership and staff. People who can deal with all learners and their needs, and is optimistic that all learners can progress and develop their abilities towards successful achievement, has a willingness to support its staff by meeting their needs considering the curriculum, and ensuring that the curriculum meets all the learners needs by effectively reviewing its programmes (teachers, curriculum, learner progress). This researcher portrays the notion that the teachers should get support from the leadership for them to successfully implement inclusive education. The leadership should be the first liner to



create effective programmes that will cater for the needs of the teachers as well as the learners. He further adds that a successful teacher challenges the learners' abilities by setting good quality tasks, providing learners with opportunities to choose their tasks, varying learning strategies and providing facilities that contribute to learners' learning.

Tournaki (2016) found that learners' characteristics such as social behaviour affect general education, academic and social success. The findings demonstrated that in the case of reading lessons, when a learner did not have reading difficulties but misbehaved in class, the teacher predicts academic failure despite the absence of a reading problem. Furthermore, when the learner is unable to read but properly behave and listens, the learner's chances of succeeding are high. The study also demonstrated that teachers use relevant and irrelevant information when predicting academic success and the use of irrelevant information puts learners with disabilities at a greater risk of failing in general education classrooms. Tournaki (2016) therefore, suggested that teachers should have continuous workshops and training to ensure that they acquire appropriate skills in dealing with different learners with diverse needs in classes.

Wildeman and Nomdo (2017) revealed that challenges based on resources become insurmountable as top structures restrict their service delivery mandates to the special needs education. Poorer provinces are unable to attract and retain suitably qualified professionals to constitute professional support teams (Wildeman & Nomdo, 2017). These researchers' work revealed that adequate funding directly impacts on sustainable and adequate service delivery. The lack thereof impacts on the efficacy of educators in schools, and therefore results in teachers developing negative perceptions towards inclusive education.

Smith (2011) defines attitude as a mental or neural state of readiness, organised through experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence upon the individual's response to all objects and situations to which it is related. Lauwen (2013) spoke of the "hearts and minds" of people which must be changed. Swart et al. (2012) argues that the school's ethos and the attitude of educators are crucial to successful inclusion. Swart et al. (2012) in their argument mentioned that policy makers tend to focus on knowledge, skills and practical support of educators without giving recognition to implicit needs and emotional inhibitions (Swart et al., 2012). The researcher considers both the attitudes towards inclusive education and towards the learners with learning barriers as contributors to

unsuccessful implementation of inclusive education in classrooms. Swart et al. (2012) illustrate the following contributors to negative attitudes towards inclusive education: inadequate knowledge, skills and training of educators for effective implementation of inclusive education; lack of educational and teacher support and insufficient facilities, infrastructure and assistive devices.

Wildeman and Nomdo (2017) perceive the gap in the Education White Paper 6 to be the lack of discussion of the role of public schools in realising delivery goals. Educators lack knowledge and competence to support inclusive education. Slee (2011) indicates that theories on special education which must be grafted into mainstream education leave educators challenged as they face unaddressed ambiguities in their personal constructs of inclusion and perceptions of how to implement it. The need to support teachers in the implementation of inclusion is accepted internationally. The Education White Paper 6 Special Needs Education (DoE, 2011) mentioned that it is critical for staff development and on-going assessment of educator's needs to take place at both school and district level. Faller (2015) criticises the current crisis in South Africa in its failure to produce sufficient teachers who have knowledge of inclusive education. She listed the negatives as; increasing levels of occupational stress and job dissatisfaction brought about by perceptions of heavier workloads; new and often poorly understood curriculum and assessment practices which many teachers regard as intimidating and an intrusion into their habitual ways; large classes and often poorly disciplined and disrespectful learners.

Swart et al. (2012) conducted a study in South Africa on the effects of large classes on learners with diverse needs. The study revealed that large classes were perceived as the most difficult obstacle to the successful implementation of inclusive education. In South Africa, schools in townships and rural areas may have fifty or more in a class and very often the group is comprised of learners of different ages. For teachers, the stress of congested classes is often compounded by the teaching of learners who have limited support from home and are frequently considered by teachers to lack identification with authority traditionally invested in their role as educators. Swart et. al (2012) pointed out that teachers are further stressed by the robust assessment schedules and extra mural demands, instead of focusing on the diverse needs of learners. These challenges do not allow teachers much energy or time to address the needs of those learners with barriers to learning. Therefore, this means that a learner with barriers is still seen from the medical perspective. This is a challenge that could be addressed by the department of education,

if teachers are provided with appropriate support and improved workshops. Otherwise their attitudes will persist being negative.

Engelbrecht et al. (2015) argue that what makes occupational stress for teachers especially significant is that it may not only affect teachers, but may influence negative perceptions and attitudes on their learners and the teaching profession. Therefore, it is important that the challenges be identified, understood and addressed. Educators are fast losing the joy and love of teaching, as they are continually required to change, revise and redo paper work as new ideas are brought into the schools from the district offices. These changes are implemented by district officials whom some educators perceive as having less classroom experience or background knowledge of principles of education than they do. General education teachers are not receiving adequate training that prepares them to effectively teach learners with disabilities (Cook, 2009).

Countless general educators lack confidence in their teaching abilities due to lack of training and preparation to meet the needs of learners with disabilities in the general education classroom (Jenkins & Yoshimura, 2010). In an analysis of literature concerning professional development needs, Darling-Hammond and Richardson (2009) connected classroom management and teaching learners with disabilities. Various interviews of inclusive classroom teachers found little evidence that those teachers were given information concerning learners with disabilities and successful inclusive practices (Jenkins & Yoshimura, 2010). These inadequacies call for professional training that is explicitly related to increasing teachers' abilities to teach and support every learner in an inclusive classroom, differentiate instruction, and participate in professional collaboration (Cook, 2009 and Ross, 2010).

Worrell (2016) emphasises the fact that general educator cannot be expected to be successful at teaching in an inclusive classroom without a solid foundation of knowledge about the learners' disabilities, educational needs, accommodations, modifications, and the laws that affect both the learners with disabilities and the teacher. Researchers such as Jenkins & Yoshimura (2010); Rehora (2017); Ross (2010) also indicate that teachers need valid information and proper training to feel more confident and effectively teach in inclusive classrooms and differentiate instruction. These studies are clearly indicating the fact that teachers receiving appropriate training or workshops are likely to perform or

successfully implement inclusive education with a positive attitude, which is the main objective that the current study wants to achieve.

Peters (2012), argues that the most valuable proactive role that the department of education can take to secure adequate support systems for inclusive education, is to help teachers adjust the educational activities inside the classroom and to adapt the general school environment because both areas nurture disabled learners' learning and participation in school. Bullock (2013) also believes that creating a barrier-free environment increases disabled children's capacity to experience freedom in learning and accessibility. Opertti and Brady (2011) argue that a learning environment that cannot easily be accessed by learners with disability does not produce successful inclusive education. Similarly, Chabra, et al. (2010) suggest that the ideology of inclusive education is not about segregating learners with special needs into special classes and schools but about fitting schools to meet the needs of all learners. In other words, school environments need to be adapted in such a way to ensure that all learners feel welcome as part of their school community. Bourke (2010) argues that creating an inclusive school environment is not an easy task and it requires professionally trained teachers to design a whole inclusive school environment that can best nurture different learners' needs.

Garner (2011) suggests that the teacher-training institutes should incorporate the concept of inclusion as part of the curriculum. For example, the Faculty of Education, Universities Kebangsaan Malaysia offers education courses with honours (special education), which trains future special education teachers. Many important aspects in relation to special education and special needs are stressed throughout the duration of the courses. These include the aspects of inclusive education. There are also courses which are open to students from other programmes as well which indirectly help to prepare the trainee teachers to gain knowledge in relation to students with special needs. As part of the teacher training programme, it is therefore recommended that education courses make room for critical discussion regarding issues and concepts of inclusion and teaching effectiveness. Garner (2011) also suggests that the trainee teachers be given structured opportunities to experience inclusive education in practice. Exposure to observing teaching learners with special needs in inclusive setting is one of the essential components in the process of breaking down barriers and building positive attitude.

A study conducted by Salisbury and McGregor (2017) suggests that the school principals should have an essential role in improving the school environment and in implementing educational policy. The researchers demonstrated the relationships between the school staff and the school climate, and emphasize the importance of the principal's awareness of the role of the staff in implementing the inclusion successfully. When most of the teachers share in an open workshops and discussion group regarding their beliefs, difficulties, different aspects of teaching and ways of coping with dilemmas, this encourages them to find better coping solutions and support in their difficulties with the inclusion process. In addition, when the school principal shares the decision-making process with the school staff, this contributes to more educational accountability and responsibility.

Results of the study conducted by Danne and Beirne-Smith (2011) on administrators and teachers' perceptions of the collaborative efforts of inclusion in the elementary grades, revealed that teachers may form perceptions based on numerous discrete factors, such as: how these teachers perceived inclusive education programme, their opinion on the team effort or collaboration between teachers and how they viewed the possible ways of improving the related aspects of inclusive education. The study also shows that teachers have positive perceptions towards the implementation of the inclusive education programme. However, there are some aspects that can be improved such as the collaboration between the mainstream and special education teachers and the preparation to train regular teachers in handling and teaching learners with special needs in general classrooms. The need to provide adequate resources to inclusive classes is never been more critical.

Ali, Mustapha and Jelas (2016) in their study of teachers' perceptions towards inclusive education in Malaysia explain several strategies that can be employed to enhance the effectiveness of an inclusive programme. Most important issue that needs the attention is that the mainstream classroom educators lack the exposure and the skills to deal with learners with special needs, and therefore need improvement on training or workshops. Within the context of the study, it is felt that the exposure to inclusive education is important for the teachers to understand the form of the education programme as well as to understand their role in implementing inclusive education.

Hay et al. (2009) aver that education has failed because insufficient attention had been paid to the current practices and needs by those who are expected to create solutions to educational discrepancies. It appears that the empowerment of educators is neglected in the South African policy documentation on inclusive education. Hay et al. (2009) further stipulate that if the implementation of changed policies fail in developed countries such as Britain, where educators are adequately trained, this could also emerge as true in South Africa where a large percentage of educators are insufficiently trained. The implication is that current practices and needs of inadequately trained teachers deserve thoughtful consideration when compared to that of developed countries when implementing policies of inclusive education.

## **2.9 Measures to improve the workshops and training on inclusive education**

According to Nguyet and Thu Ha (2010) for teacher training to succeed, three areas must be considered, namely: the attitudes of teachers and education staff, the pre-service training programs to help ensure that future generations of teachers enter the profession with the skills and knowledge to work in an inclusive environment, and the in-service training to improve the capacity of teachers already working in the field. Although the inclusive education policy is enshrined in the constitutional laws, it will never succeed without the enthusiastic support of its practitioners. Obtaining such support involves behaviour and attitudinal change which is not an overnight goal to attain.

Nguyet and Thu Ha (2010) further explain several ways to accomplish the changes. Hence, the following examples reflect activities and strategies that have been used successfully since the inception of inclusive education training: organizing training workshops on an on-going basis, providing training that is focused for teachers and key community members on general inclusive education techniques especially techniques that can benefit all children by improving the quality of teaching. Ochoa (2018) indicated that numerous general education teachers lack the necessary preparation to successfully work with students with emotional disabilities. Teachers need to be aware of the learners' needs beyond just academic learning, because this can promote positive attitudes among educators. Theories on special education which must be grafted into mainstream education should be disseminated to teachers to address the unfronted ambiguities in their personal constructs of inclusion and perceptions of how to implement it (Slee, 2011).

Nguyet and Thu Ha (2010) pointed out that teachers in many countries are required to advance their professional skills on an annual or regular basis to enhance their teaching performance. Hence, it is important that teachers be engaged in in-service training and ensures that secondary school teachers receive more in-depth specialized knowledge of a variety of techniques of inclusive education. Integrate awareness about inclusive education into schools' regular professional development activities. Teachers in many countries are required to elevate their professional skills on an annual or regular basis to enhance their teaching performance. The teachers need to integrate knowledge about the benefits of inclusive education into pre-service or initial training programs for student teachers in colleges and universities. Pre-service training refers to training individuals before they become teachers.

Nguyet and Thu Ha (2010) further suggested that countries should work towards promoting inclusive education as a compulsory subject in pre-service training programs and in-service training as a long-term goal, and to advocate for compulsory inclusive education modules in all training curricula as a future goal, and to also ensure that inclusive schools are also accommodative to all learners and that all relevant facilities are accessible to those type of learners (Thomson et al., 2013). Inclusive education means that students with disabilities are full-time members of general education not visitors who come to the class for certain activities (Foreman, Arthur-Kelly, Pascoe & King 2009). In that regard, the learners should be provided with full membership extends beyond the classroom to the playground, lunchroom and extracurricular activities through a convenient and appropriate training by well-equipped teachers.

Emperou, Chostelidou and Grive (2011) conducted a research on the training needs of teachers who are teaching English as a foreign Language (EFL) to learners with dyslexia in primary schools of China. The research revealed that the EFL teachers are well informed about dyslexia and its influence on the effort undertaken by dyslexic learners to achieve mastery of the English language. The challenge that the teachers are encountering is on how to address the needs of EFL learners in the mainstream classroom. Clark and Uhry (2018) and Levine (2012) stated that educators do not receive appropriate or adequate training in relation to inclusive education that effectively addresses the needs of EFL learners in the mainstream classroom.

Clark and Uhry (2018) further indicated that the department should realise that teachers are willing and prepared to implement policies, but only if they are provided with adequate training, meaningful workshops, enough training time, avoid sparing resources such as money for payment of training places (where teachers gather for workshops and better remuneration packages for teachers). Clark and Uhry (2018) further explained that the department should also need to provide teachers with focused in-service training (INSET) courses which will inform them about various aspects of teaching EFL to dyslexic learners and introduce them to the teaching approaches, methods and techniques to be adopted and implemented in the EFL classrooms. This research clearly shows that training is crucial to equip teachers with relevant and necessary skills to apply in addressing the needs of the learners in the implementation process.

Yusria, Goodwina, Mooneya (2015) highlighted the financial constraints and shortage of resources as some of the obstacles that hold the educators back from participating in mobile learning environment. The reviewed study is quite similar to the current study because it is about the perceptions of teachers towards mobile learning system training. However, the study was conducted using a quantitative methodology and the current study uses a qualitative methodology to find the deeper understanding and feelings of the participants towards the study.

Tudor (2014) in her study on perception of school teachers regarding the adequacy of initial training revealed that perceptions are different from one category to another, in relation to teaching experience and the teacher's own level of understanding, and also depending on the level of educational qualification. For instance, master students have a different understanding and perception and junior degree students also have their own perceptions. It is therefore important to take into consideration the level of teaching experience when dealing with how teachers perceive of policies or training, and therefore deal with such issues accordingly.

Smaste and Ignatovitch (2015) argued that effectiveness of the implementation of inclusive education system is highly dependent on social attitudes towards learners with special needs. One of the key issues of inclusive education is the training of the teachers who should possess high moral qualities and professional competence in inclusive activities. They emphasise that the successful implementation of inclusion in schools depends on the educator. Current trends in social policy for learners with special needs,



as reflected in the Salamanca Statement (1994), are aimed at developing measures to implement inclusive education. In pedagogy, it appears that there is a need for proper measures for training of future teachers to work with learners in the inclusive educational environment. This is to equip them with the knowledge that will enable them to know that each learner must be treated as an inimitable individual. Thus, any kind of discrimination is excepted and the appropriate conditions for learner development are created. The reviewed study in general shows that teachers in comprehensive schools are experiencing an acute shortage of knowledge in the field of Correctional Pedagogy. Advanced training course in the field of correctional training methods can significantly change the attitudes of teachers towards inclusive education practices.

Sanaia (2009) argues that inclusive education requires systemic changes. Unlike what one may think, the whole Scandinavian region is also working on improving inclusive education. To fulfil the goals of equity and equality, there is a need to focus on individual support in learning. Sanaia (2009) illustrates that in order to bring inclusivity to success, there should be stronger believes than ever before, that growing up and studying in heterogeneous groups is good for both individuals and for the whole nation. The idea of inclusive pedagogy is important. There is a need for development of good models and procedures, and all that need enthusiastic work.

On the other hand, Sanaia (2009) asserts that one of the biggest challenges recently is to focus on the years that follow the basic education and find better ways to encourage all learners to proceed with their studies in upper secondary education. Even though the drop-out percentages are minimal during basic education, after basic education there is a loss of about 5 to 6 percent of learners. These figures are not as high at the international levels as they are in South Africa. The research also discovered that there is a gap of interaction between teachers and the policy designers, which should be bridged because interaction helps to bring about mutual understanding and respect. Sanaia (2009) encouraged that people with disabilities should also be involved in the teaching profession and be helped to become trained teachers themselves. This is because they will have good understanding and experiences regarding inclusivity as they have had exposure to such classes, and this will make inclusive education more interesting.

Numerous developing countries are now moving towards a more inclusive practice in the classroom, the school and the general education system (Deppeler, 2015 & Ferguson,

2009). Countries where these developments are taking place include Uganda, Lesotho, Vietnam, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Jordan, Palestine, Morocco, Egypt, Yemen, Brazil, India and South Africa (Mittler, 2017). However, because inclusive education is a relatively new phenomenon, research on inclusion in these countries is scant and the author was not able to locate any official research on the inclusion of autistic children in South African mainstream schools although future government initiatives around this theme will be discussed later in this chapter. Research documents that inclusive education is associated with improved cognitive and academic skills (Dore, Dion, Wagner, & Brunet, 2016; Fisher & Meyer, 2014; Hedeem & Ayres, 2015; McLeskey, Henry, & Hodges, 2012; Meyer, 2009), self-determination skills (Hughes, Agran, Cosgriff, & Washington, 2013), social skills, and peer acceptance.

Washington (2013) argues that it is through training or workshops that teachers can gain the skills to successfully implement inclusive education. It is easy to attempt to persuade others to implement inclusion by citing federal law. However, educators are a practical group, they tend to believe it when they see it and support those things that work. Thus, the surest way to convince a teacher is through inspiration. Work closely with teachers to help avoid fears and skepticism. Demonstrate for them the support they will receive, professionally. Be prepared to show them how to solve the problems together (Meyer, 2014).

A teacher-training workshop was conducted by International Child Development Programme- ICDP (2015). The main theme of the workshop was on quality inclusive Education to end exclusion in the schools of Akuapem North Municipality, in Ghana. It was revealed that the Inclusive Education is a necessity to the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals and the realisation of the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education Policy (FCUBE). Unfortunately, majority of teachers lack knowledge and skills needed to support all the children in the school. The committee recommended that conscious efforts should be made by the government, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders to address many of the issues which continue to affect learners in the schools.

According to Sherr (2014) the observations done in the workshop showed that teachers had a positive view and were actively engaged to show their willingness to acquire knowledge and skills that they are being trained for. This workshop has the similarities on

what current study is aiming to achieve, however, it was conducted focusing on the willingness of teachers to receive knowledge, and the current study intends to find out how teachers perceive of the workshops on inclusive education. The current study seeks to instil the sense of positive perception. Sherr (2014) further argue that teachers need a knowledge base for inclusive education as, in the very least conceptualised by the policy documents. Moreover, they need knowledge and skills for teaching diversity in the classroom. The latter includes an understanding of barriers to modify and adapt teaching methodology in the classroom.

Wildeman and Nomdo (2017) pointed out that there is a blind spot in the Education White Paper 6, which is the lack of discussion of the role of public schools in realising delivery goals. Educators lack knowledgeable and competent support from higher levels in education. Theories on special education which must be grafted into mainstream education leave educators challenged because educators face unaddressed ambiguities in their personal constructs of inclusion and perceptions of how to implement it (Slee, 2011).

Moon (2009) stated that eighty five percent of teacher education was pre-service education in South Africa. This means that an educator in the profession should 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 for them to learn and develop optimally (Prinsloo, 2017). Possibly the single greatest challenge facing education is the re-education, the training of educators to think and work from a new frame of reference. This is because it is the educators who deliver the service and it is the educators still who bring the curriculum to the learners. The need to support teachers in the implementation of inclusion is accepted internationally and it is recognised in the White Paper 6.

Scruggs and Mastropieri (2009) elucidated that teachers need systematic and intensive training, either as part of their initial training, or as well-planned in-service training by competent and experienced people. Many educators do not feel adequately prepared to understand and cope with the multitude of demands made upon them with respect to teaching children from contexts far removed from their own. Educators experience challenges through inadequate and ineffective training. As key to successful

implementation of an inclusive system, educators will need time, on-going support and in-service training. Thus, change needs a long-term commitment to professional development (Swart et al., 2012).

According to Liphapang (2008) having a policy on paper is desirable, but giving skills to those who must implement the policy is best. In further account, Liphapang (2008) noted that it is fruitful for schools to have policies on inclusive education. A policy does not only show intent, but it is a guideline that commits the school to a particular standpoint. The goal of inclusive education cannot and should not be oblivious to differences and should not fail to acknowledge the diversity in school. The Education Department should do well to monitor these schools and not to visit them only to record what the schools are doing. Creating inclusive schools involves attending to what is taught as well as how it is taught.

Pijl et al. (2017) explained that the major task of the government is to create the condition for inclusion in education. It is essential that the implementation of an inclusion policy is delegated to local policy-makers and school principals. Although many teachers have begun to understand the barriers to learning for all learners, including learners with disabilities, it is important to understand that the challenges of inclusive education have only just begun (DoE, 2011). The project indicates that some teachers are still resistant to inclusive education. Abundant work still needs to be done to develop positive attitudes towards learners with learning problems and disabilities.

The DoE (2009) emphasise that the educators from special schools train other teachers and they also serve as resource centres to support inclusive education in the districts. The staff enjoyed the training that they received and are trying to meet the challenges of developing a new role for them. However, although the pilot projects in the three districts did have some success in assisting the special schools in understanding their new role as resource centres for inclusive education, the special schools were uncertain if they could really do this properly. They felt positive about their new role in some ways, but they were also worried and anxious about it on the other hand.

According to Delors et al. (2016) inclusive education systems and societies can only be realised if governments are aware of the nature of the problem and are committed to solving it. This must be reflected in the willingness to ensure that there is a link of quality school and other kinds of education and training programmes. Government commitment would also express itself in appropriate legal frameworks established in accordance with

relevant international conventions and recommendations ensuring that inclusive education is appropriately understood and interpreted as a rights issue. This signals the need for the government to take responsibility to ensure that all the stakeholders involved in inclusive education are properly prepared or trained to ensure the success of inclusive education.

Bernard (2012) recommends that: the national legislation should be changed and revised to incorporate notions of inclusive education; international conventions should be signed and ratified and reflected in national legislation; the implementation of policy and laws should be promoted and enforced; and that the budgetary allocations for inclusive education should be equitable, transparent, accountable and efficient. Bernard (2012) further indicated that teachers, non-teaching support staff, parents, communities, school authorities, curriculum developers, educational planners, private sectors and training institutes are among many others, the actors that can serve as valuable sources of support to reinforce inclusion in schools. Some (teachers, parents and communities) are the keys to supporting all aspects of the inclusion process. This must be based on a willingness to accept and welcome diversity and to take an active role in the lives of students both in and out of school. Furthermore, one way to move towards a relevant and balanced set of aims is to analyse the curriculum in terms of inclusion and to ensure that implementers are well equipped with appropriate skills. This emphasises the fact that teachers need to be trained or workshopped to ensure quality implementation of inclusive education.

Meijer (2014) argued that training for inclusion involves the acquisition of knowledge and skills in differentiation and meeting diverse needs that allows a teacher to support individual learning in classrooms. The only gap in this regard is the issue of comprehensive and co-ordinated legislation for inclusive education that fully addresses issues of flexibility, diversity and equity in all educational institutions for all learners. This will ensure that policy, provision and support are consistent across geographical areas of a country/region. Such legislation is based upon human rights approach where individual learner can access mainstream education and necessary support services within all levels. It further recommends that all countries should try to provide the best possible education for their pupils according to their individual situation and are fully committed to equal opportunities and quality of education for all learners.

Ferreira and Graça (2015) recommend that to take full account of the diversity of the current school population, educators should be advisedly able to deal with the following aspects in their educational practices: learning difficulties and disabilities, emotional and behavioural problems, communication techniques and technologies, signification and multiculturalism, teaching methods and techniques and educational relationships. Gay and Kirkland (2016) argue that teacher education must include critical cultural self-reflection that takes place in a context of guided practice in realistic situations and with authentic examples and Baglieri (2012) proposed the incorporation of Disability Studies in teacher education.

Forlin (2013) asserts that teachers also need a detailed understanding of their role as educators in bridging the gaps caused by diversity. Thus, this requires a self-critical perspective that involves constant involvement in a process of reflection and introspection. Forlin (2013) adds that effective inclusive teaching also requires a high level of ethics and morals. That is, an understanding that the teacher's role is not only to inform and facilitate learning but also to act as a role model who guides the development of the learners, and commits to implement inclusion in schools.

Various researchers such as Snell and Jenney (2011), Carroll et al. (2009), Griffin et al. (2011); Hajkova (2018) have emphasised the importance of developing skills in collaboration and negotiation. Smith and Leonard (2011) stress the importance of collaborative skills and the ability to solve problems to enable teachers to meet students' support needs which may change regularly. Although the focus of the present study is on perceptions of workshops or teacher-training, it cannot be overlooked that teachers need to be cautioned that their responsibilities are the main factor drives the implementation of inclusivity, and thus the workshops to seek to refine their skills to act upon their responsibilities. Leach (2014), in agreement with Abebe and Hailemariam (2017), states that schooling is more than just teaching subject knowledge and employable skills. She suggests that subjects such as citizenship and democracy, life skills, guidance and counselling, and personal and social education should be included in the curriculum.

Scruggs (2017) found that co-teachers generally believed that their practices were beneficial to learners, but the educators indicated that co-teaching should only be voluntary, and not an assignment forced on those who do not want to participate. They

reported that successful co-teaching teams shared expertise during workshops and training and found ways to motivate their learners in the classrooms. Co-teaching does not fit into traditional setups in which special education services have been delivered, issues related to the logistics of establishing programs remain significant. The most frequently mentioned logistical matter is the need for training or workshops on planning for co-teaching.

In addition, Kohler-Evans (2018) surveyed teachers in 15 school districts regarding their co-teaching experiences. The issue they most frequently termed as affecting their relationship with their co-teaching partners was common planning time and training. Other researchers have reported similar findings. For example, Murray (2013) conducted a multiyear project with 40 general education teachers in three urban high schools. When the teachers were asked for items to include in a dream list of special educator responsibilities, they noted common planning time and the need for training on at least a weekly basis as critical factors.

Landbrook (2014) argues that educators have not received formal training with respect to the implementation of inclusive education either from pre-service training or from their respective district offices. The researcher is of the view that quality and definition of service delivery is virtual to the training and skills of educators. Educators are described in the Education White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001) as the primary resource for the achievement an inclusive education and training system. It must therefore be in the interests of impartial education that educators are adequately trained for new demands in education. Educators need a knowledge base for inclusive education as recommended by the policy documents. Moreover, they need knowledge and skills for teaching diversity in the classroom. This includes an understanding of barriers in order to modify and adapt teaching methodology in the classroom to accommodate all the learners.

Educators need support from the knowledgeable management teams at institutional levels and from personnel in the district offices for them to implement inclusive education. Conversely, a resistance to the concept of inclusive education does not predispose an educator to a willingness and confidence to make significant modifications to her teaching methodology. Faller (2015) claims that there is an inadequate training of teachers and that universities do not provide adequate teacher training programmes for all school phases regarding inclusivity. Rural teachers who attended universities (in cities) that

advocate for inclusivity often become urbanised and do not return to rural areas (Faller, 2015). From the above statement exemplify the notion that the educators are not well trained and prepared for current challenges in schools, particularly those in rural areas.

## **2.10 Conclusion**

This chapter has presented modernism as the current literature is reviewed and guiding this study. This chapter provided an overview of workshops conducted on inclusive education and the unfolding of inclusive education as outlined in the White Paper 6 policy. The main aim of the literature review was to explore the teachers' experiences regarding the workshops on inclusive education as a strategy for professional development. The main ideas pertaining to teachers' experiences in relation to inclusive education workshops have been discussed. The following chapter discusses the responses that were gathered regarding the main questions of this study.



## **Chapter Three**

### **Research Methodology.**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter presented the literature review. It has discussed the following aspects into details: conceptualisation, theoretical framework, and application of the theory, international perspectives on inclusive education workshops, South African perspectives and professional development to teachers. A conclusion was drawn at the end of the chapter to summarise the core issues which were discussed in the contents of the chapter. The present chapter describes the research methods that informed this study and gives detailed justifications regarding the decisions on the research approach and methods used herein. This chapter draws discussions under the following themes: the qualitative research approach, research design, research paradigm, sampling, data collection, data analysis and presentation, issues of trustworthiness, ethical considerations, credibility, transferability and confirmability. This study followed a qualitative approach. Merriam (2016) pointed out that qualitative research seeks to elicit the experiences of a particular group in relation to a certain phenomenon.

#### **3.2 Qualitative approach**

Qualitative research approach was used in this study because it allowed the researcher to generate the in-depth feelings and judgements of teachers about how the workshops on inclusive education are conducted. According to Merriam (2016) the qualitative researcher is interested in how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their world and what meanings they attribute to their experiences. In addition, Cantrell (2011) explains that qualitative research helps the researcher to understand and interpret participants' perspectives on the factors pertaining to a phenomenon under question. In this study, the researcher thrived to explore the in-depth understanding of the teachers' experiences of workshops on inclusive education as a strategy for professional development. Hence, the qualitative approach was chosen because it allows the participants to narrate their experiences and understanding of the phenomenon to the depth. According to Myers (2009) qualitative research involves data collection procedures such as open-ended questions, non-numerical data which is then analysed by non-statistical methods. Data collection procedure in a qualitative study commonly involve observations and interviews.

According to Creswell (2013) a qualitative research enables the researcher to examine an issue related to oppression of individuals, which in this study is inadequate provision of workshops conducted on inclusive education in South African schools. The aim of this study was to explain the experiences of teachers when attending workshops conducted in relation to inclusive education. The qualitative research approach is appropriate for a study that describes individual and collective social actions regarding a particular phenomenon (McMillan & Schumacher, 2011).

According to Merriam (2016) a qualitative study employs an inductive strategy which is not based on predetermined or preconceived ideas but on perspectives that emerge from the realistic data. The researcher employed the same quality in the current study to eliminate bias. Moreover, the researcher chose the qualitative methodology because it allowed participants to express themselves, their thoughts and experiences and to give them the leverage to express their opinions and stand-points regarding the research topic.

According to Myers (2009) qualitative research involves data collection procedures that results in open-ended, non-numerical data which is then analysed by non-statistical methods. Sources include participants observation (fieldwork), interviews and questionnaires, documents and texts analysis and the researcher's impressions and reactions. Qualitative researchers acknowledge that they are part of the world they study. They are systematically monitoring their influence, bracketing their biases and recognising that emotional response is part of their research responsibility (Mahlo, 2011). Marshall and Rossman (2011), Patton (2015) and Punch (2014) argue that qualitative research is a naturalistic inquiry that studies people in their natural settings. Therefore, the researcher studied participants in their natural form to unveil their realistic feelings about workshops conducted on inclusive education.

### **3.3 Research paradigm**

The term paradigm originated from the Greek word *paradeigma* which means pattern (Olsen, Lodwick, & Dunlop, 2014). Olsen, Lodwick and Dunlop (2014) further define a paradigm as a structure to a research culture with a set of beliefs, values, and assumptions that a community of researchers has in common regarding the nature and conduct of the research. In this study, the researcher yearned to explore the teachers' experiences of inclusive education workshops as a strategy for professional development. That is, the researcher thrived to investigate how teachers feel about the workshops

conducted on inclusive education as a strategy for their professional development. The participants in this study were eight educators who attended workshops on inclusive education in Lebopo Circuit. In this case, interpretive paradigm allowed the investigator to interpret the teachers' ideas and feelings on the experiences they had regarding the workshops they have attended on inclusive education.

### **3.3.1 Interpretive paradigm**

Willis (2011) asserts that interpretive paradigm is concerned with understanding the world as it is from subjective experience of individuals. The Interpretive paradigm was relevant for this study because it involves meaning oriented methodologies such as interviews and participants observation that rely on a subjective relationship between the researcher and subjects. These are methods of collecting data that are concerned with the nature of knowing and reality. Reeves and Hedberg (2011) note that interpretive paradigm is concerned with understanding the world as it is from subjective experiences of individuals. The interpretive paradigm helped the researcher to understand the experiences of teachers regarding workshops in the field of inclusive education.

Walsham (2017) reiterates that in the interpretive tradition there are no correct or incorrect theories. Instead, the theories should be judged on how relevant they are to the research and its objectives. In addition, interpretive research does not predefine dependent and independent variables, but focuses on the complexity of human sense in relation to the existing or emerging situations (Kaplan & Maxwell, 2017). This study explores the feelings of teachers regarding workshops on inclusive education and further uses interpretivist paradigm because it relies much on naturalistic data. It enables the researcher to use open methods (interviews and observations) for collecting in-depth data.

### **3.4 Research design**

This study adopted a case study design to investigate the workshops conducted regarding inclusive education as a case of this study. The aim of this study was to investigate how teachers are trained through workshops about the matters of workshops on inclusive education. Research design is the logic or the master plan of a research that sheds light on how the study could be conducted (Mouton, 2015). In addition, Yin (2016) defines a case study as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly defined. Yin (2016) concurs, in addition, that a

research design is an action plan for getting from here (one place) to there (the other), where 'here' may be defined as the initial set of questions to be answered and 'there' is some set of conclusions. This study uses the case of teacher training in the form of workshops on inclusive education in the secondary schools of Lebopo Circuit. In this study, the questions such as what are the experiences of teachers regarding workshops on inclusive education and do workshops add value to the teachers' understanding of inclusive education, are the initial set of questions to be answered to provide some set of conclusions.

According to Johnson (2017), a case study design allows the exploration and understanding of issues while providing holistic and in-depth explanations of the social and behavioural problems in question. In this regard, the case study design was considered suitable because it allowed for the in-depth exploration of the teachers' experiences of inclusive education workshops. According to Ritchie and Lewis (2013) a case study is one of the most effective designs in qualitative studies because it enables the researcher to understand human beings in a social context by interpreting their actions as a single group, community or a single event. Gillham (2011) furthermore explains a case study as an investigation that seeks to answer specific research questions through a range of different evidences from the case settings. However, when using a case study, it is not possible to conduct the research on a large scale due to the in-depth nature of the data. In this study, the researcher seeks to gather a range of evidence that can be used to draw arguments on whether inclusive education workshops are conducted adequately to effect change in diverse classrooms. Yin (2016) further argues that the case study uses multiple methods of data collection such as interviews, document reviews, archival records and direct participant observations.

### **3.5 Sampling**

A purposive sampling was applied in this study to select the research participants. McMillan and Schumacher (2011) argue that purposeful sampling is used to increase the utility of information obtained from a small sample, which is the case of a study. Eight educators were purposefully sampled from the chosen four secondary schools, based on their experiences of attending inclusive education workshops. The educators were sampled because their experiences of attending workshops were the relevant determinants of their capabilities to yield relevant information with respect to inclusive education. According to Trochim (2014) sampling is the process of selecting units from a

population of interest to participate as respondents of an investigation. A researcher may use various forms of sampling techniques such as random sampling, probability sampling, proportional, systematic, cluster, convenience and purposive sampling amongst others (Creswell, 2013). However, this study applied the purposive sampling, based on the motives already discussed above.

### **3.6 Population**

A population is a group of elements, whether individuals, objects, or events, that conform to specific criteria and to which the researcher intends to generalise the results of the research (McMillan & Schumacher, 2011). Lebopo Circuit consists of an overall figure of thirty-five educators who have experiences of attending the inclusive education workshops. However, this study invited two educators from each selected school to participate in this study as the respondents. Thus, this study consisted of an overall sample population of eight educators from four purposefully selected secondary schools in Lebopo Circuit. Teachers who have participate in this study were selected based on: four male and female teachers, ten years of teaching experience, experience of attending an inclusive education workshop and an experience of teaching im a rural secondry school.

### **3.7 Data collection instruments**

Data collection refers to the process of gathering and measuring information on targeted variables in an established systematic fashion, which enables one to answer relevant questions and evaluate outcomes (Merriam, 2013). There are various instruments of gathering data in qualitative studies, namely: inter alia, observations, interviews, documents review, and the use of audio-visuals materials (McMillan & Schumacher, 2011). A qualitative data-collection instrument was used in this study, namely: interviews.

#### **3.7.1 Interviews**

According to Janesick (2013) 'interviews' refers to a meeting people to exchange information through questions and responses, resulting in communication and a joint construction of meaning about a particular topic. Interviews are an established communication routine that the qualitative method works well with. This is because it is a versatile research instrument and also good to apply in the circumstances such as investigating a social life phenomenon. Therefore, interviews were preferred as the core instrument to collect data in this study. Interviews were deemed as relevant for this study

because they are based on real-life phenomenon (inclusive education) that affects educators. Miller and Crabtree (2015) in Dornyei (2012) claim that interviews provide an interesting, reliable and first-hand data with its turn-taking conventions and expectations for respondents' roles.

The researcher used interviews by using an open-ended questionnaire to interact and guide the researcher and the respondents during the data collection process. This allowed maximum flexibility for the researcher to follow the interviewee in unpredictable directions, with only minimal interference from the researcher. Interviews are often preceded by observations to allow the researcher to develop an understanding of the feelings of the respondents. In this study, the researcher developed an understanding of the teachers' perceptions and feelings regarding the workshops conducted on inclusive education. One-to-one interviews were beneficial in the sense that they were initiated by the interviewer with the aim to gather certain information from the respondents. During the interviews, the researcher asked pre-determined set of questions using the same wording and order of questions as specified in the interview schedule.

### **3.8 Data analysis**

According to Schwandt (2015) data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of the collected data. Bodgan and Biklen (2010) claim that qualitative data analysis is a process of evaluating the data, organising them, breaking them into manageable units, coding them, synthesising them and searching for patterns. This means that the researcher undertakes a process to categorise the collected data in an organised and understandable manner. The data collected from the interviews was organised and arranged in the form of themes. Patton (2015) points out that a qualitative analysis transforms data into findings, and it involves reducing the volume of raw information, sifting significance from trivia, identifying significant patterns and constructing a framework for communicating the essence of what the data reveals. In this study, data was analysed using content analysis. According to Weber (2012) content analysis is a systematic, replicable technique for compressing many words of text into fewer content categories based on explicit rules of coding. Wheelock, Hany and Bebell (2018) add that content analysis enables the researcher to sift through large volumes of data with relative ease in a systematic fashion.

### **3.8.1 Data trustworthiness**

Trustworthiness is the extent to which the findings provide a true value of data collected (Babbie, 2013). Creswell (2013) claims that in qualitative research, validity or trustworthiness is achieved through dependability, credibility, transferability and confirmability. Moon (2009) claims that trustworthiness in the findings and interpretations is determined by the researcher's ability to demonstrate how the findings of the study and the conclusions were reached. The significance of trustworthiness is therefore that it concludes the validity and credibility of the findings of a study (Bowen, 2009).

#### **3.8.1.1 Credibility**

Credibility in qualitative research is defined as the extent to which the data presentation and analysis are believable and trustworthy (Smith and Ragan, 2017). Credibility is analogous to internal validity. That is, it reflects how the research findings correspond to the reality of the investigated case. Therefore, reality is relevant to the meanings that people construct within social contexts. Smith and Ragan (2017) further add that a qualitative research is valid to the researcher and not necessarily to others due to the possibility of multiple realities. It is upon the reader to judge the extent of its credibility based on his or her understanding of the study. Most rationalists argue that there is not a single reality to be discovered because each individual construct their personal reality.

This study ensured that credibility is achieved by conducting in-depth interviews with teachers who voluntarily consented to be participants in this study. The interviews enabled the researcher to gather as much information as possible, because the respondents were able to discuss their views to a greater depth. Thus, from an interpretive perspective, understanding is co-created and there is no objective truth or reality to which the results of a study can be compared nor confirmed. Therefore, member checking into the findings, that is, gaining feedback from the participants on the data interpretations and conclusions, was one method of increasing credibility. Lincoln and Guba (2013) consider member checking into the findings as the most critical technique for establishing credibility. The researcher spent two hours each day for two weeks with the participants to know them better and build a trust relationship and gain their confidence, which according to McMillan & Schumacher (2011) is a prolonged engagement.

### **3.8.2 Transferability**

Research findings are transferable or generalizable only if they fit into new contexts outside the actual study context. According to Maxwell (2013) transferability is comparable to external validity. That is the extent to which findings can be generalised. Generalizability refers to the extent to which one can extend the account of a particular situation or population to other people, times or settings than those directly studied. Transferability is considered as a major challenge in qualitative research because of the subjectivity from the researcher as the key instrument, and is a threat to valid inferences in its traditional thinking about research data. However, a qualitative researcher can enhance transferability by detailing the research methods, contexts, and assumptions underlying the study. Seale (2009) advocates that transferability is achieved by providing a detailed, rich description of the settings studied to provide the reader with sufficient information that will enable them to judge the applicability of the findings to other settings that they know.

Transferability serves as the extent to which the researcher's working hypothesis can be applied to other contexts (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009). It is not the researcher's task to provide an index of transferability, but it is responsibility of the researcher to provide data sets and descriptions that are rich to enable other researchers to make judgments about the findings' transferability to different settings. The researcher in this study ensured that the ideas and experiences of the teachers who are interviewed in the Lebopo Circuit represent the ideas and experiences of other teachers in the schools of Lebowakgomo cluster regarding workshops for inclusive education. The data that was collected was supported by sufficient evidence.

The following information was considered to ensure transferability:

The researcher stated the number of schools that participated in the study and where they are based. In recap, four schools participated in this study, and for the results to be transferable the researcher sampled secondary schools based in rural villages so that the results can be relevant to any Ga-Molepo secondary schools. The researcher identified the restrictions based on the type of people who contributed data in this study. The restriction was that the participants did not disclose the names of learners who are experiencing difficulties in learning and the teachers were given an opportunity to volunteer to participate. The researcher further stated the data collection methods that



were employed. In this study, the researcher used different data collection methods for the results to be transferable. The use of open-ended questionnaire helped in developing a close rapport between the researcher and the participants. Furthermore, the researcher used different data collection tools for data gathering, and that enabled the researcher to harvest rich and quality data.

The researcher specified the number and length of the data collection sessions. To collect in-depth data, the researcher gave the participants sufficient time to express themselves when responding to the questions. However, the sessions were not lengthy because sometimes long sessions can be monotonous to participants. In other words, the researcher ensured that the interview sessions were not very long nor very short. Lastly, the researcher provided the time-schedules over which the data was collected. To estimate the correct time/period for data collection, the researcher did pilot testing. This helped the researcher to ensure that all data is captured without being compromised due to time constraints.

### **3.8.3 Dependability**

Dependability is comparable to reliability. It is the consistency of observing the same finding under similar circumstances. According to Merriam (2013) dependability refers to the extent to which research findings can be replicated with similar subjects in a similar context. It emphasises the importance of the researcher accounting for or describing the changing contexts and circumstances that are fundamental to consistency of the research outcomes. The quality of inferences also depends on the personal construction of meanings based on the experiences of the researcher and how skilled the researcher is at gathering data and interpreting them. As a result, reliability in the traditional sense is not practical in a qualitative study. Merriam (2013) suggests that reliability in the qualitative study should be determined by whether the results are consistent with the data collected. A consent form was provided to the participants to ensure that they are comfortable and provide reliable data.

According to Seale (2009) dependability can be achieved through auditing. Auditing refers the researcher's documentation of data, methods and decision made during a thesis as well as its end products. Auditing for dependability requires that the data and descriptions of the research be elaborated and enriched. It may also be enhanced by altering the research design as new findings emerge during data collection. In this study the

researcher followed the right process of transparency, communicability and coherence to arrange data in a format that is understandable and acceptable by other researchers. The researcher also considered the following strategies to enhance internal validity in this study:

### **3.8.3.1 Triangulation**

According to Merriam (2013) triangulation means using multiple sources or techniques of data collection to confirm emerging findings from different sets of evidence. In this study, interviews, observations and document reviews were used to gather information to ensure triangulation.

### **3.8.3.2 Member checks**

This involves taking data and tentative interpretations back to the participants and asking them if the results are plausible. Thus, after analysing the data provided by the teachers, the researcher took the interpretations back to the teachers to confirm if they find the results credible.

### **3.8.4 Conformability**

Conformability refers to the extent to which the characteristics of the data, as posited by the researcher, can be confirmed by others who read or review the research results (Bradley, 2010). Conformability further denotes the degree to which the research findings can be confirmed or supported by others. It is comparable to objectivity in that it elucidates the extent to which a researcher is aware of or accounts for individual subjectivity or bias. Seale (2009) argues that auditing could also be used to establish conformability in that, the researcher makes the provision of a methodological self-critical account of how the research was conducted. In order to make auditing possible by other researchers, it was best for the researcher to store all the collected data in a well-organised, retrievable form so that it can be made available to them (other researchers) if the findings are challenged. To ensure conformability the researcher took some notes about her personal feelings, attitudes, and reactions to minimise possible bias and preconceived ideas regarding the teacher perceptions of workshops on inclusive education.

### **3.8.5 Ethical considerations**

In this study, the researcher interacted deeply with the participants, thus entering their personal domains of values, weaknesses, individual learning disabilities to collect data. Silverman (2013) claims that the researchers should always remember that while they

are doing their research, they are entering the private spaces of their participants. Understandably, this raises several ethical issues that should be addressed during and after the research has been conducted. Creswell (2013) explains that the researcher is obliged to respect the rights, needs, values and desires of the participants. Therefore, the researcher adhered to the issues in 3.8.6.-3.8.9. to address the ethical considerations.

Silverman (2013) argues that the relationship between the researcher and the subject during an interview needs to be considered in terms of the values of the researcher and cultural aspects. Therefore, appropriate steps should be taken to adhere to strict ethical guidelines to uphold the participants' rights to privacy, confidentiality, dignity and anonymity.

### **3.8.6 Informed consent**

The researcher informed the participants about the background of this study, its purpose and questions. The researcher wrote a letter to the Head of the Department of Education as well as to the Circuit manager to request for permission to conduct a study in the secondary schools of Lebopo Circuit. Thence, the researcher immensely informed the participants about their roles as participants in this study and allowed them to ask questions about the study or the researcher. Thereafter, the researcher obtained the signed informed consent forms before commencing with data collection.

### **3.8.7 Honesty and trust**

The researcher adhered strictly to all the ethical guidelines which serve as standards of honesty and trustworthiness of the data collected and the accompanying data analysis. The researcher has been truthful in presenting and analysing the collected data and refrained from biasness. The researcher guaranteed the respondents that the data presented herein is truthful and honest according to the responses that they have provided regarding the phenomenon in question.

### **3.8.8 Privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity**

The researcher ensured that the participants' names are anonymised and sustained the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants throughout the research report. Prior the analysis of information gathered from the respondents, the researcher removed all the identifying characteristics that may put the privacy of the participants in danger. The researcher made it clear that the participants' names would not be used for any purpose in the report, nor will the recorded audios of the information they shared with the

researcher be transferred or sold to any other person. The researcher guaranteed the participants that their identity is protected and that their privacy will be treated confidentially.

### **3.8.9 Voluntary participation**

Despite all the above-mentioned precautions, it was made clear to the participants that the research was only for academic purposes. Thus, their participation in the study was voluntary. That is, no participant was forced to participate in this study and no respondent was remunerated for contributing to the study.

### **3.9 Conclusion**

This chapter discussed the research paradigm, research methodologies, strategies and tools, and designs that were employed in this study to collect and analyse data. The discussions also covered the procedures and justifications for selecting the participants of this study. This chapter further illustrated how the teachers were approached in their respective schools in the Lebopo Circuit. The following chapter will draw discussions on the presentation and interpretation of the findings.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter discussed the research methodology that was adopted in this study to achieve the research objectives. It further described the research design, data collection instruments, how data was collected and how it will be presented and analysed in the current chapter. This chapter aims to present the findings from the collected data. This study gathered data through interviews, observations and documents analysis. Since the study was qualitative in nature, the researcher incorporated direct quotes from the participants to support her claims in this chapter. Data was collected, transcribed and presented. Seven main themes emerged from the collected data, i.e. 1). the teachers' understanding of inclusive education, 2). teachers' inputs on how workshop facilitators conduct the inclusive education workshops, 3). the sufficiency of time allocated for the workshops, 4). the importance of workshops in helping teachers to understand the phenomenon of inclusive education, 5). measures that could be implemented to improve the inclusive education workshops in Lebopo Circuit, 6). how the Department of Education can assist teachers and schools to implement inclusive education and 7). the teachers' suggestions on how to improve the quality and the significance of inclusive education workshops.

#### **4.2 Data analysis process**

Data analysis is a process of inspecting, sifting, transforming and modelling data to discover useful information, suggesting conclusions and supporting decision-making (Schutt, 2013). According to Glaser and Strauss (2009) it is easier to analyse data in qualitative research by following constant comparative analysis, which is the general approach. Glaser and Strauss (2009) elaborate further that constant comparative analysis involves taking one piece of data from interviews for example, and comparing it with all others that may be similar or different, to develop conceptualisations of the possible relations between the various data. In this study, descriptive data analysis was used as a lens through which the researcher critiqued the collected data.

The researcher used the following steps to break the data into smaller and understandable units:

- The researcher scrutinized the large volume of data to obtain a sense of what it means and what it entails.
- The researcher also identified the relevant and possible categories and themes that emerged from the data.
- Thence, the researcher linked and summarized the data.

### **4.3 Identification of the participants**

The participants were rest assured of their confidentiality and anonymity to adhere to the ethics. The participants from the four schools, were identified by pseudonyms as Teacher A, Teacher B, Teacher C, Teacher D, Teacher E, Teacher F, Teacher G and Teacher H in the study.

### **4.4 Introduction of the themes**

The following insights were generated as themes through an intensive study and critique of the collected data. Thus, they have been used as themes because they stroke the researcher attention in terms of how they best respond to the questions and objectives of this study. The themes are as follows:

- The teachers' understanding of inclusive education.
- The teachers' inputs on how the workshop facilitators conduct the inclusive education workshops.
- The sufficiency of time allocated for the workshops.
- The importance of workshops in helping teachers to understand the phenomenon of inclusive education.
- Measures that could be implemented to improve the inclusive education workshops in Lebopo Circuit.
- How the Department of Education can assist teachers and schools to implement inclusive education.

- The teachers' suggestions on how to improve the quality and the significance of inclusive education workshops.

#### 4.4.1 The results from the interviews

Themes	School A	School B	School C	School D
<p><b>Theme 1:</b></p> <p>The teachers' understanding of inclusive education.</p>	<p><b>Teacher: A</b></p> <p>"Inclusive education is a system that encourages all schools to include all learners in the teaching and learning process, despite their learning barriers."</p>	<p><b>Teacher: B</b></p> <p>"Inclusive education is an inclusion of all learners in the ordinary schools, but the teachers do not even have knowledge to teach the learners who have learning needs."</p>	<p><b>Teacher C:</b></p> <p>"Inclusive education is the education that encompasses and caters for different kinds of physical and mental disabilities."</p>	<p><b>Teacher D:</b></p> <p>"Inclusive education is a process of addressing the diverse needs of all learners by reducing barriers to, and within the learning environment."</p>
<p><b>Theme 2:</b></p> <p>The teachers' inputs on how the workshop facilitators conduct the inclusive education workshops.</p>	<p><b>Teacher: A</b></p> <p>"Workshops are conducted by the officials from the Department of Education. They call a specific number of teachers from each school (e.g. two teachers per school), and summon them to inclusive education workshops, but after a long time."</p>	<p><b>Teacher: B</b></p> <p>"The workshops are conducted by departmental officials who just come and distribute notes regarding inclusive education and do presentations, but they display lack of confidence and knowledge in their presentations. Most of the questions that are raised remained unanswered."</p>	<p><b>Teacher: C</b></p> <p>"The workshops are conducted by people from the Department of Education who are not knowledgeable.</p> <p>They just bring along notes and they spend a lot of time interpreting the notes for us."</p>	<p><b>Teacher: D</b></p> <p>"The workshops are conducted by the people who are appointed by the Department of Education to train teachers. There is a challenge with the people who are conducting the workshops, because they do not give us proper materials like policies documents."</p>

<p><b>Theme 3:</b></p> <p>The sufficiency of time allocated for the workshops.</p>	<p><b>Teacher A:</b></p> <p>“The time allocated is not enough. They conduct workshops for few hours and do not do it regularly, yet they know that we are not conversant with the policies of inclusive education and it poses challenges to us in the implementation process.”</p>	<p><b>Teacher B:</b></p> <p>“The time allocated is not enough at all, because they normally conduct the workshops for about 2 to 3 hours and after a long period. Most of us if not all, in Lebopo, did not undergo the training regarding inclusive education, so we need adequate time to grasp relevant information.”</p>	<p><b>Teacher C:</b></p> <p>“The time is definitely not sufficient, since most of us are not well acquainted with inclusive education.”</p> <p><b>Teacher D:</b></p> <p>“The time allocated is usually ± 4 hours, after two to three years.”</p>	<p><b>Teacher E:</b></p> <p>“According to me, the time allocated is not enough and will never be enough, as long as they are still taking long time to train us. When they come they train us for two hours, thus, we will never gain knowledge of inclusive education and the implementation process will forever not succeed.”</p>
<p><b>Theme 4:</b></p> <p>The importance of workshops in helping teachers to understand the phenomenon of inclusive education.</p>	<p><b>Teacher A:</b></p> <p>“The workshops are important because teachers attain new knowledge that they did not have before.”</p> <p><b>Teacher B:</b></p> <p>“Workshops are important because they promote positive environment between teachers and learners. If teachers know what to do, they develop positive attitudes towards a system.”</p>	<p><b>Teacher C:</b></p> <p>“I think the workshops are important because they help us deal with reality that we face on daily basis in the classrooms.”</p>	<p><b>Teacher D:</b></p> <p>“If the workshops were conducted effectively, they will help us to know the concepts of inclusive education that are unknown to us. Because in real sense, workshops help teachers to revise and keep practicing what is correct.”</p>	<p><b>Teacher F:</b></p> <p>“Workshops are important because they promote positive environment between teachers and learners. If teachers know what to do, they develop positive attitude towards a system.”</p>



<p><b>Theme 5:</b></p> <p>Measures that could be implemented to improve the inclusive education workshops in Lebopo Circuit.</p>	<p><b>Teacher A:</b></p> <p>“The department should select few teachers for in-service training on inclusive education for a particular period, e.g. for a year, and they come back and work as trainers for other teachers in Lebopo.”</p> <p><b>Teacher B:</b></p> <p>“The department should provide the teachers with relevant policies like they do with subject policies, and not give the policies to the principals only. Some of the principals do not share the policies’ stipulations with the teachers.”</p>	<p><b>Teacher C:</b></p> <p>“The department should come up with proper materials for inclusive education, so that the people who are coming to train teachers are well equipped.”</p> <p><b>Teacher D:</b></p> <p>“The department should hire more specialists that will be able to visit the schools to ensure that inclusive education is implemented successfully.”</p>	<p><b>Teacher E:</b></p> <p>“The department should send inclusive education specialists to schools at the beginning of the year, to provide support and to monitor the way teachers implement inclusive education.”</p>	<p><b>Teacher F:</b></p> <p>“The department should encourage the curriculum designers to design pace setters that will accommodate even learners who have barriers in learning, because one of the other reasons we are unable to implement inclusive education is that we work according to the pace setters, such that we rush whatever we are doing, to cover the work. This leaves behind other learners who have challenges with learning in a fast pace.”</p>
<p><b>Theme 6:</b></p> <p>How the Department of Education can assist teachers and schools to implement inclusive education.</p>	<p><b>Teacher A:</b></p> <p>“It will be important for the department to hire more specialists concerning inclusive education, so that they provide necessary documents and support to teachers at schools.”</p>	<p><b>Teacher B:</b></p> <p>“The department should take teachers for in-service training regarding inclusive education if possible. Or select teachers who have specialized in Life Orientation so that they will come back and train the other teachers in Lebopo.”</p>	<p><b>Teacher C:</b></p> <p>“The department should ensure that every school in Lebopo is a full-service school, because most schools if not all in Lebopo are located in deep rural areas, where most parents do not have enough information about inclusive education and special schools.”</p>	<p><b>Teacher D:</b></p> <p>“The department should provide relevant materials that will cater for various needs of inclusive education.”</p>

Theme 7:	Teacher A:	Teacher B:	Teacher C:	Teacher D:
<p>The teachers' suggestions on how to improve the quality and the significance of inclusive education workshops.</p>	<p>"The department does not make follow-ups on how teachers cope with new systems, policies and curricula. The department should also refrain from applying the cascading modelling if inclusive education is to be effectively rolled-out. It should distribute enough materials on inclusive education in all schools in the province."</p>	<p>"The department should employ people who really understand inclusive education, because most of the workshops that the teachers have attended leave them with unanswered questions. People who facilitate the workshops seem to have lack of knowledge of what inclusive education is."</p>	<p>"I would advise the department to introduce inclusive education as a course that will be done as an independent curriculum. People who will study the course, will be the ones who will be hired as specialists."</p>	<p>"The way these workshops are conducted wastes time and does not add value to our knowledge of inclusive education. E.g. The time is too short for us to grab all the information. The people who are conducting the workshops do not even have confidence and seem to lack knowledge of inclusive education. The venues that are used for workshops are not convenient because they cannot accommodate a large number of teachers. Thus, facilitators have to select few teachers from various schools. Why not all because we all implement inclusive education? There are no proper materials for inclusive education and we do not get necessary support from the department."</p>

## 4.5 Presentations of the results from the interviews

### 4.5.1 The teachers understanding of inclusive education

Inclusive education is defined in different ways significantly by different researchers. Therefore, there is no precise definition of inclusive education. Some researchers define inclusive education as a process that involves all learners with and without disabilities to participate and learn together in the same class.

Teachers in this study portrayed an understanding of what inclusive education implies. Despite the challenges that the teachers may be faced with in classrooms regarding the

learners with learning barriers, they interpreted inclusive education remarkably. For instance: Teachers A: “inclusive education is a system that encourages all schools to include all learners in the teaching and learning process, despite their learning barriers.” Teacher B noted that: “inclusive education is an inclusion of all learners in the ordinary schools, but the teachers do not have knowledge to teach the learners who have learning needs.” Reflecting on Teacher B’s view, teachers understand inclusive education well, but they do not know how to implement inclusive education. Though teachers know what inclusive education is, they cannot implement inclusive education successfully without proper knowledge.

The above theme was based on the teachers understanding of inclusive education. It was found that eight participants did understand what inclusive education entails. However, they lacked knowledge to implement inclusive education in their classrooms. One of the participants showed that teachers are still unable to involve all learners in the education system, despite their learning barriers.

#### **4.5.2 Teachers’ experiences of workshops on inclusive education**

Workshops refer to the training sessions wherein teachers are provided with unknown skills by officials and experts in a particular field. In this study, it is in the field of inclusive education. The participants had common views regarding the inclusive education workshop facilitators, and the way the workshops were conducted. The participants showed that the workshop facilitators seemed to have lack of knowledge regarding inclusive education. They did not call all teachers to attend the workshops, but selected two teachers from each school. They furthermore used small venues which were inconvenient. The participants expressed their views about these circumstances as thus: Teacher A: “Workshops are conducted by the officials from the Department of Education. They call a specific number of teachers from each school (e.g. two teachers per school), and summon to the workshops, but after a long time.” Teacher B stated that: “The workshops are conducted by departmental officials who just come and distribute notes regarding inclusive education and do presentations. The facilitators, however, show lack of confidence and knowledge in their presentations. They could not respond effectively to the teachers’ questions. Therefore, most of the questions that were raised by the educators remained unanswered.” Reflecting on Teacher A and B’s views, the implementers of the workshops portray some natures of lack confidence and lack of sufficient knowledge about inclusive education. All these may justify reasons why the

teachers do not feel empowered to attend the workshops. Hence, not all teachers attended the workshops on inclusive education in Lebopo Circuit. Those who attended did so because they were chosen (propelled) by the officials who organise the workshops, as they usually request for two educators from each school in the circuit.

The above discussions make explicit the notion that the officials who conduct the workshops on inclusive education lack confidence in their capabilities to facilitate the workshops. They also express inadequacies of knowledge pertaining to inclusive education. Furthermore, it is questionable that they do not call all teachers to attend workshops, but a certain number of teachers. At the end, they expect all the educators to implement inclusive education.

#### **4.5.3 The sufficiency of time allocated for the workshops**

The times were allocated differently according to the participants. Some of the participants indicated that the workshops were conducted for about 2 to 3 hours, whereas other participants indicated that the workshops were conducted for approximately 4 hours. Despite the different time allocations, all the participants claimed that the time was not sufficient. The participants stated that there is a high need for proper training for all teachers with enough time. For instance, educators express the following sentiments on time allocation: Teacher A: "The time allocated is not enough. They conduct workshops for few hours and do not do them regularly, while they know that we are not conversant with the policies of inclusive education. Thus, this poses challenges to us in the implementation process." Teacher B: "The time allocated is not enough at all, because they normally conduct the workshops for about 2 to 3 hours and after a long period. Most of us if not all of us in Lebopo, did not undergo training regarding inclusive education, so we need an adequate time for us to grasp relevant information." Teacher C: the time is definitely not sufficient, since most of us are not well acquainted with inclusive education." Teacher D: "The time allocated is not enough, because workshops approximately take 4 hours, after two to three years. The principals are often called by the district to discuss inclusivity, but it is useless because the teachers are the implementers not the principals." Teacher E: "In my view, the time allocated is not enough and will never be enough, for as long as they still delay training us. When they come, they train us for two hours. We will therefore never gain knowledge about inclusive education and the implementation process will forever not succeed."

#### **4.5.4 The importance of workshops in helping teachers to understand the issues of inclusive education**

The participants stated that the workshops are important because they are meant to help them to gain new knowledge about inclusive education. They claim that workshops unfold opportunities for them to get clarity where they have challenges. However, the workshops are not conducted effectively as indicated by the participants previously in 4.5.3. Participants highlighted that the workshops are conducted for shorter periods and limit their opportunities to gain more knowledge on how to implement functional inclusive education. One of the participants indicated that, have the workshops been conducted effectively, they would help them to internalise the concepts of inclusive education that are unknown to them.

These are the teachers' voices regarding the effectiveness of the workshops on their understanding of inclusive education: Teacher A: "The workshops are important because teachers attain new knowledge that they did not have before." Teacher B: "Workshops are extremely important, because most teachers in Lebopo Circuit, if not all did not undergo a proper training. This is because time for in-service might not be possible in the secondary schools. Majority of the secondary schools in Lebopo circuit have small numbers of educators. Thus, if teachers would be taken for in-service training, the department might not get good results at the end of the year, because learners would be left alone for most of the times. Teacher C: "I think the workshops are important because they help us deal with reality that we face on daily basis in the classrooms." Teacher D: "If the workshops were conducted effectively, they would help us to master the concepts of inclusive education that are unknown to us. Because in real sense, workshops help teachers to revise and keep practicing what is correct." Teacher E: "Workshops are extremely important. Since most teachers in Lebopo Circuit if not all did not undergo a proper training because of severe time for in-service training. Majority of the schools in Lebopo Circuit are small. Thus, if teachers would be taken for in-service training, the department might not get good results at the end of the year because learners would be alone without teachers." Teacher F: "Workshops are important because they promote positive environment between teachers and learners. If teachers know what to do, they develop positive attitude towards a system."

#### **4.5.5 Measures that could be implemented to assist with the improvement of workshops for inclusive education in Lebopo Circuit**

The participants presented different views regarding the measures that could be endorsed to improve workshops on inclusive education. For instance: Teacher A: “The department should select few teachers for in-service training on inclusive education for a particular period, e.g. one year, and then they come back and work as trainers for other teachers in Lebopo. It can work well if the department selects the specific number of teachers in each circuit. This will minimize the mistakes and challenges that teachers are encountering with regard to the implementation of inclusive education.” Teacher B: “The department should provide the teachers with relevant policies like they do with subject policies, and not give the policies to the principals only. Some of the principals do not provide the policies to the teachers.” Teacher C: “The department should come up with proper materials for inclusive education, so that the people who are coming to train teachers are well equipped.” Teacher D: “The department should hire more specialists who will be able to visit the schools to ensure that inclusive education is implemented successfully.”

Teacher E: “The department should send inclusive education specialists to schools at the beginning of the year, to provide support and to monitor the way teachers implement inclusive education.” Teacher F: “The department should encourage the curriculum designers to design pace setters that will accommodate learners who have barriers in learning, because one of the reasons we are unable to implement inclusive education is that we work according to the pace setters, such that whatever we are doing, we rush to cover up the work, leaving out the learners who are having challenges with learning in a fast pace.”

#### **4.5.6 Ways in which the department could assist the teachers and schools regarding inclusive education**

The participants seem to be unsatisfied with how the department handles the matters of inclusive education. They feel that they are not given sufficient assistance with respect to the implementation of inclusive education. To cite their views: Teacher A: “It will be important for the department to employ more specialists concerning inclusive education, so that they provide necessary documents and support to teachers at schools.” Teacher B: “The department should take teachers for in-service training regarding inclusive education if possible. Or select teachers who have specialized in Life Orientation so that

they will come back and train the other teachers in Lebopo Circuit.” Teacher C: “The department should ensure that every school in Lebopo is a full-service school, because most schools if not all of the schools in Lebopo are located in deep rural areas, where most parents do not have enough information about inclusive education and special schools.” Teacher D: “The department should provide relevant materials that will cater for various needs of inclusive education.”

#### **4.5.7 The teachers’ suggestions on adding value on the provision of inclusive education workshops**

The participants claimed that they encounter challenges regarding the implementation of inclusive education. To support their arguments, they further elaborated their challenges as such: Teacher A: “The department does not make follow-ups on teachers when it provides a system to the teachers.” Teacher A further states that: “The department should refrain from applying the cascading modelling if inclusive education is to be effectively rolled-out. It should distribute enough materials on inclusive education in all schools in the province.” Teacher B: “The department should employ people who really understand inclusive education, because most of the workshops that the teachers have attended leave them with unanswered questions. People who facilitate the workshops seem to have inadequate knowledge of what inclusive education is.”

Teacher C: “I would advise the department to introduce inclusive education as a course that will be done as an independent curriculum. Thus, the people who will undergo the course training will be the ones who will be employed to implement it. This is because the manner in which these workshops are conducted wastes time and does not add value to our knowledge of inclusive education. For instance, the time they allocate for us to interact with them during the workshops is too short for us to grab all the information. The workshop facilitators do not even have confidence, and this signals that they also lack knowledge of inclusive education. In addition, the venues that are selected for workshops are not convenient because they accommodate a smaller number of educators, and thus compels the organisers to select two teachers per schools. This affects the practicality of inclusive education by all educators because a larger proportion of educators miss out on the constructive workshops others receive. As a result, this incapacitates our skills to develop proper materials that would ensure inclusivity. We do not get necessary support from the department.”

The above assertions and arguments may signpost the need for the government to establish an advisory committee that would comprise of educators and government officials to guide the Department of Education to organise functional workshops. This might add a worthwhile value to the teachers' understanding and implementation of inclusive education.

#### **4.6 Conclusion**

In line with the purpose of this study, data was presented in this chapter and confirms that the workshops on inclusive education need proper planning for effective implementation to fulfil the demands of the Education White Paper 6. The categories of participants and their perceptions were presented in this chapter. Thus, the participants' responses developed insightful themes that elucidated their deeper understanding of inclusive education and their views on the effectiveness of inclusive education workshops. The Education White Paper 6, as the policy guideline, assisted in supporting the voices of the respondents regarding the inclusive education workshops that are conducted in their circuit.



## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **Summary of key findings, recommendations and conclusion**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter presented the findings of the study. The current chapter provides the interpretation of the findings observed in the previous chapter. This chapter discusses the interpretations under three umbrella themes, namely: the summary of the main findings, the interpretation of the main findings and the implications of the findings. A conclusion is drawn at the end of this chapter to summarise the discussions drawn in this chapter and the whole study.

#### **5.2 Summary of the main findings**

The purpose of this study was to investigate teachers' experiences of workshops on inclusive education as a strategy for professional development in Lebopo Circuit. Through the qualitative case study design, this study has generated in-depth data from eight purposefully sampled participants (teachers). The data was collected through two methods: interviews and observations. There are eight insights that emanated from the data, namely: a). Teacher's experiences of workshops on inclusive education, b). teachers' lack knowledge of inclusive education, c). facilitators' lack of confidence and knowledge on how to conduct the workshops on inclusive education, d). insufficient time allocated for the workshops, e). the workshops become impactful and crucial when they are conducted properly, f). the need for proper measures that could be implemented to improve the inclusive education workshops, g) the need for the Department of Education to support the teachers, and h). lack of value of the workshops conducted on inclusive education.

#### **5.3 Discussion of main findings**

##### **5.3.1 The teachers' experiences regarding inclusive education workshops**

Educators (the case of this study) indicated that they experience challenges regarding workshops on inclusive education. They explicated that the workshops do not enable them to reach the understanding of inclusive education. Luning (2015) points out that teachers are still experiencing challenges regarding training and teacher development. Luning (2015) adds that there are still gaps of knowledge that need to be bridged, e.g. lack of proper resources and inadequate facilitators. It appears that inclusive education

displays a vacuum in the training of mainstream school teachers which will have to be filled with compulsory training and workshops. Furthermore, Luningo (2015) showed that with the new dispensation, teachers in the ordinary schools are now challenged with inclusive education and are unable to prevent nor address barriers to learning and development.

Maebana (2016) revealed that workshops on inclusive education did not yield the expected results in terms of equipping the School Management Teams' competence for the implementation of inclusive education. In addition, Engelbrecht and Swart (2001) point out that the theory of inclusive education emphasises the importance of providing sufficient support for teachers in mainstream schools. Thus, they should be equipped with knowledge and skills that enable them to deal with learners with learning deficit. Swart, Engelbrecht, Eloff and Pettipher (2002) argue that teachers experience challenges through inadequate and ineffective training. As key to the success of an inclusive system, educators will need time, continuous support and workshops or in-service training to implement inclusive education. Thus, change requires long-term commitment to professional development.

### **5.3.2 Contribution of the workshops to the teachers' understanding of inclusive education**

The participants (teachers) portrayed lack of understanding of what inclusive education implies and entails. Teachers seemed to have content knowledge but without any meaningful conceptual understanding of inclusive education. The researcher highlights this because the teachers claimed that they are aware of the policy, but they do not have sufficient understanding of what the policy means and what it requires of them to do in class. To confirm this, Teacher B indicated that, "inclusive education is an inclusion of all learners in the ordinary schools according to the policy document, but the teachers do not understand what inclusion of all learners in ordinary schools means. We still lack knowledge." These claims illustrate that despite the workshops that were conducted to equip teachers with knowledge of inclusive education, teachers are still faced with a challenge of inadequate understanding of what inclusive education is.

Mittler (2003) noted that "Most teachers know the concepts reflected in the policy documents, but they cannot interpret the concepts. This makes it quite clear that they lack conceptual understanding of the inclusive education policy, and that they are not

sufficiently knowledgeable about the existing curriculum. Hence, they are not able to apply the knowledge to address a wide range of learning needs in diverse classrooms. (Donald 2002) noted that much needs to be done for teachers to upsurge their knowledge regarding inclusive education. Workshops or trainings emerge as inadequate for equipping teachers with the relevant knowledge that would enable them to effectively implement inclusive education in schools. Continued development of skills, insights and qualities is essential for expanding the teachers' professional and personal competencies in implementing inclusivity in schools. Faller (2006) claims that teachers do not receive proper training with respect to the knowledge of inclusive education either from workshops or pre-service training. The studies show that there is a gap in teacher-training and workshops that negatively impacts on the teachers' conceptual understanding of inclusive education.

These results signal the need for inclusive education policy-makers to improve the quality of the workshops for the viability of teachers' skills and competencies in implementing inclusive education.

### **5.3.3 Facilitators' lack of confidence and knowledge on how to conduct the workshops on inclusive education**

Teachers highlighted that people who conduct the inclusive education workshops portray lack of confidence and competence during their presentations. Scruggs and Mastropieri (2005) argue that teachers are lured into dysfunctional workshops and training because they are facilitated by incompetent and inexperienced people. Many educators feel incapacitated to handle the multitude of demands made upon them with respect to inclusive education. This is because they experience challenges that they describe to be the results of inadequate and ineffective training. In support of this notion, Nyembezi (2010) avers that the lack of knowledge on how to effectively train teachers on inclusive education creates the feeling of discomfort to the educators. Nyembezi (2010) further revealed that the trainers do not express confidence in what they disseminate, as a result, this gives educators (trainees) no confidence to implement inclusive education in their schools. Lack of confidence and lack of knowledge are strictly intertwined because the existence of one gives life to the other, hence, the lack of one jeopardises the existence of the other.

Engelbrecht and Swart (2001) assert that teachers experience lack of appropriate professional training, particularly that concerns inclusive education and facilitation on new practices stipulated by new curriculum. The trainers continuously provide inadequate training due to their lack of knowledge, and this becomes a recipe to confusions and stress to the teachers. Avramidis, Bayliss and Burden (2000) showed that a specific relationship between teacher training on inclusive education and proper acquisition of knowledge contribute to a significant positive professional development. However, if the teacher-training turns out to be ineffective, it will create negative outcomes on teachers' professional development.

The above arguments amplify the evident that the inclusive education workshops facilitators are not competent. This gives a negative feedback to their endeavour to equip educators with the necessary skills to successfully implement inclusive education.

#### **5.3.4 Insufficient times allocated for workshops**

Teachers who participated in this study indicated that the time allocated for inclusive education workshops is not sufficient because the workshops are usually allocated two to three hours, and after a long period of time. This reveals that the workshops do not cover all discussions on important aspects of inclusive education, including the glimpse of activities that should be done in classes to encourage inclusivity. This therefore qualifies the claim that teachers do not get enough time for training and this leaves some inclusive education terminologies not clarified to them. Thus, all participants concurred that the time allocated for inclusive education workshops is insufficient.

Luninggo (2015) argues that when teachers do not get adequate time for training for inclusive education, they become challenged by learners with barriers to learning. Luninggo (2015) further revealed that teachers are unable to deal with the learners' challenges because of: inadequacies in training; negative attitudes; lack of resources; lack of support from the relevant stakeholders; impoverished standards of the workshops; lack of strategies to deal with the learners with special needs; lack of capacity amongst the district officials and lack of dedication when organising workshops. This signals that teachers are unable to deal with learners who experience barriers in learning even after attending inclusive education workshops. Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman and Yoon (2012) claim that very few educators participate in high quality professional development because the predominant mode of professional development (for the majority of teachers)

is still once-off workshops that intensively focus on subject matter. Nghipondoka (2009) reveals that teachers feel that the time allocated to them during the training does not allow them to grasp all the necessary information about inclusive education or to do extra planning for activities that will help them to understand concepts of inclusive education.

All participants claimed that the time constraints appeared to be most problematic when workshops are held for inclusive education. They repeatedly claimed that when they teach learners with learning barriers, they need enough time to explain contents thoroughly because they are dealing with a special cohort that needs more time to progressively move at its own pace. This implies that policy makers need to create more time for both teachers and trainers to avoid unnecessary confusions for teachers. This could ensure that teachers are well developed and prepared to implement inclusive education in their schools.

### **5.3.5 The importance of workshops on inclusive education**

In general, the participants showed that the workshops are important. However, the participants were concerned that the workshops are not conducted effectively. One participant highlighted that the district officials should refrain from using the cascading model, because that is one of the contributing factors to the ineffectiveness of the workshops or teacher-training on inclusive education. This confirms Robinson (2017)'s argument that the cascade model offers training, but with little or no follow-up support structures for teachers who have to deal with the policy of inclusive education in the long-term and in the new reforms. This concern coincides with the apprehension that a serious challenge facing South African teachers in general is the lack of a successful translation of new curriculum reforms into classroom practice. This is despite the widespread use of professional development to help teachers understand inclusive education concepts (Rogan & Grayson, 2010). The cascade model has been widely criticised as inadequate for delivering effective training (Khulisa, 2011). When the intended message is transmitted to the next level, the probability that crucial information could be misinterpreted becomes high (Fiske & Ladd, 2011). Faller (2015) pointed out that educators do not receive formal training with respect to inclusive education. The Education White Paper 6 (DoE 2011) described quality and definition of service delivery as relative to the training and skills of educators, and as the primary resource for achieving the goal of an inclusive education and training system. It must therefore be in the interests of inclusivity in education that teachers are adequately trained. Knowledge and skills are

twofold, and educators need a knowledge base for inclusive education as conceptualised by the policy documents. This can be achieved through proper and adequate training and workshops. Addler and Reed (2010) assent that effective training workshops are important not only for improving teachers' knowledge and skills but also for establishing interpersonal relationships and overcoming gaps in teaching practice.

These results have implications on the conditions that influence teacher professional development in inclusive education and general ways of conceptualising the effects of effective workshops on the success of inclusive education. This study, has illustrated that there is a relationship between adequate workshops and the success of inclusive education. However, factors such as the unpreparedness of trainers or workshop facilitators and improper time allocations need to be taken into consideration and be resolved.

### **5.3.6 The need for proper measures that could be applied to improve inclusive education workshops**

The participants pointed out that educators are faced with challenges which are the results of the mistakes committed by the district officials when they conduct the inclusive education workshops. They highlighted that the workshops on inclusive education are often conducted in the middle of the year while teachers had already gone far with the curriculum in terms of what the pace setter recommends should be done at that time. Furthermore, there are no pace setters that accommodate learners who have barriers to learning. One of the participants highlighted that they find it difficult to fulfil the demands of inclusive education because they work according to the pace setters. As such, they work in a fast pace to accomplish the given work within the provided time-phrase. This, therefore, propels them to leave behind the learners who have challenges with learning, particularly those who are slow in learning.

Faller (2015) claims that the departments are ill-equipped to provide adequate teacher-training for inclusive education. It may thus be reasoned that the educators are not well trained or prepared for current challenges in schools. Hence, there is a lack of leadership and expertise in educations particularly regarding inclusive education. Wildeman and Nomdo (2017) consider the gap in the Education White Paper 6 (2001) as the signal that there is a high need to bridge the lack of discussions on the role of public schools in implementing inclusivity. Educators portray lack knowledge and sufficient support from

higher levels in education such as the Department of Education. Slee (2011) states that inclusion must be grafted into mainstream education. This is because the existing practices leave educators challenged because they face unaddressed ambiguities in their personal constructs. Swart, Engelbrecht, Eloff and Pettipher (2015) pointed out that many teachers do not feel adequately prepared to understand or cope with the multitude of demands made upon them concerning respect of teaching learners with learning needs. Prinsloo (2017) found that teachers' lack of the necessary knowledge, skills and expertise to understand inclusive education causes frustration, demotivation and serious feelings of inadequacy among educators. As a result, this disrupts effective teaching and inclusive learning from taking place. Thus, Bothma et al. (2010) recommend that teachers should receive (pre-service and in-service) training in the form of workshops to gain the necessary knowledge, skills and values that will enable them to cope with learners with varying abilities and diverse needs. Prinsloo (2017) further highlighted the following factors among others, as strategies to improve workshops and professional development:

#### **5.3.6.1 Changes**

Prinsloo (2017) noted that change has become the only certainty that governs life and success. Furthermore, Walton (2011) concurs that changing the manners in which teachers are trained regarding inclusive education will definitely have a significant impact on its success.

#### **5.3.6.2 Attitude**

Talmor, Reiter and Feigin (2009) assert that the most important condition for successful inclusive education workshops is a transformation from negative to positive attitudes of educators and the trainers. Slabbert (2012) stresses that positive attitude can transform hopeless situations into challenges to be overcome, and this could function well in the workshops. The teachers will be equipped with adequate knowledge and skills of inclusive education through an open learning environment that is filled with positive attitude.

#### **5.3.6.3 Strategies**

According to Walton (2011) strategies refer to systematic plans or tactics that can be employed that will enable the predetermined goal (managing inclusion) to be realised. Turnbull (2013) concurs that, for teachers to achieve the best results, they should be exposed to the relevant strategies and skills that address the current or the existing challenges that the learners experience. The use of strategies such as in-service training,

continuous school visits for teacher support and incentives for teachers who actively participate in the workshops are important and supportive in making inclusive education workshops successful. One of the participants declared that the department should provide the teachers with relevant policies like they do with subject policies. They should further avoid giving the policies to the principals only, because some principals do not share the policies with the teachers. Whereas those who give them to teachers, just give them least information that seems to make no impact to their existing knowledge. Another participant expressed that the department should hire more inclusive education specialists.

The above discussions provided different facts on appropriate measures that can be employed to improve the quality of inclusive education workshops. The teachers needed follow-up after the workshops to assess their stance on professional development. This could enable them to address the needs of learners experiencing barriers to learning in their respective schools.

### **5.3.7 Lack of appropriate support to teachers by the department**

The participants were not enthusiastic about the support they received from the government. Some the participants indicated that they had attended workshops on inclusive education but felt that the departmental officials were not helpful because they did not even have adequate resources for the workshops, and that the time allocated was insufficient. The participants were concerned that inclusive education is a process that needs intensive training for educators to implement it effectively. However, the department does not provide support that is required by the teachers as practitioners of its (inclusive education) implementation. Bothma, Gravett and Swart (2010) in Engelbrecht and Green (2016) claim that teachers view inadequate knowledge, skills and training, as well as lack of: educational and teacher support, sufficient facilities and resources as major hindrances in the effective implementation of the inclusive education. One participant emphasised that workshops should be on an ongoing basis until educators felt that they were well equipped to teach superdiverse classes effectively. The participants expressed their desires to receive adequate support from other role players for successful management of inclusive education at the workshops and at the schools. They additionally highlighted the following:



- Learning and teaching materials that are relevant to teach learners with learning deficits including audio-visual equipment (over-head projectors) are supportive devices for learners with learning barriers, and should be available in public schools.
- There is a high demand for buildings which are user friendly for physically challenged. Most schools in Lebopo Circuit are physically not accommodative to all learners because they were not built to accommodate the physically disabled learners.
- There is a high demand for educators to be equipped with knowledge and skills to teach learners who are severely struggling in learning theoretical activities, e.g. learners who are unable to cope with theoretical subjects but can do practicals.

The department needs to involve the parents in the discussions on how to implement inclusive education in their schools. Engelbrecht et al. (2015) aver that implicitly in the philosophy of inclusive education is the significance of the role that parents play to make decisions about their children. This is a predictor of their support to their children in education and their attempts to ensure that their children's needs are met.

### **5.3.8 Lack of value of the workshops conducted on inclusive education**

The participants eluded that, inclusive education workshops that are conducted in Lebopo Circuit lack value because they do not add any knowledge to them and other educators. This may suggest that the problems regarding inclusive education workshops do not affect teachers in Lebopo Circuit only. It could be a challenge to the majority educators in South Africa and worldwide as indicated in Chapter two.

Prinsloo (2001) claims that in South Africa, teachers lack the necessary knowledge, skills and expertise to understand inclusive education. As a result, this causes frustration, demotivation and serious feelings of inadequacy which disrupt effective and successful learning from taking place in diverse classrooms. Thus, Bothma, et al. (2010) argue that teachers need to receive in-service education and training to gain the necessary knowledge, skills and values to cope with learners of varying abilities and with diverse needs. This implies that workshops should be conducted in such a way that educators are given the opportunity to observe the facilitator demonstrating lessons (Bothma, et al., 2010).

#### **5.4 Implications of the findings**

The study revealed that the workshops failed to equip teachers in Lebopo Circuit with necessary skills and knowledge to understand inclusive education. For this reason, it is necessary for the department to support the teachers with in-service training facilities, and to also encourage teachers through incentives (bursaries), to enrol for studies regarding inclusive education. With respect to insufficient time allocations for the workshops, it is necessary for the department and policy designers to ensure that more time is allocated for workshops. In addition, the study illustrated that there is no support from the department regarding inclusive education, and that the workshop facilitators lack confidence. The researcher found that this resulted in lack of value and quality of the workshops. As such, this implies that the department should ensure that it employs experts of inclusive education who will provide excellent and continuous support to the educators.

#### **5.5 Areas for further research**

The study suggests that further research should focus on strategies to improve workshops on inclusive education, time allocated for workshops, support and follow-up by the department as well as to broaden the understanding of the theory and practice of inclusive education. Moreover, these strategies should lay more emphasis on fostering the development of an open learning environment in which teachers will be equipped with relevant skills which enable them to meet the demands of the White Paper 6 (2001) with respect to inclusivity.

#### **5.6 Conclusion**

The aim of this study was to investigate the teachers' experiences of workshops on inclusive education in Lebopo Circuit in the Lebowakgomo District of Limpopo Province. The study was pursued to provide guidance on how educators can address the challenges that they face regarding the inclusive education workshops that are conducted in their circuit. Furthermore, the study yearned to provide guidance that will serve as an eye opener to the Education Department with respect to the significance of inclusive education in public schools. Moreover, to empower educators to overcome the challenges they encounter regarding inclusive policies in their schools. Thus, the Department of Education needs to put rigorous efforts in teacher professional development to enhance the teachers' skills to deal with children from linguistically, culturally, religiously and educationally diverse family backgrounds, with no exception to those with disabilities.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Ethical clearance certificate



**University of Limpopo**  
Department of Research Administration and Development  
Private Bag X1106, Sovenga, 0727, South Africa  
Tel: (015) 268 2212, Fax: (015) 268 2306, Email:noko.monene@ul.ac.za

**TURFLOOP RESEARCH ETHICS  
COMMITTEE CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE**

**MEETING:** 02 November 2017

**PROJECT NUMBER:** TREC/301/2017: PG

**PROJECT:**

**Title:** An investigation into teachers' experiences of workshops on inclusive education as a strategy for professional development in Lebowakgomo District

**Researcher:** IB Makofane

**Supervisor:** Prof MJ Themane

**Co-Supervisor:** Dr KS Malatji

**School:** Education

**Degree:** Masters in Curriculum Studies

  
**PROF TAB MASHEGO**

**CHAIRPERSON: TURFLOOP RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE**

The Turfloop Research Ethics Committee (TREC) is registered with the National Health Research Ethics Council, Registration Number: **REC-0310111-031**

**Note:**

- i) Should any departure be contemplated from the research procedure as approved, the researcher(s) must re-submit the protocol to the committee.
- ii) The budget for the research will be considered separately from the protocol.  
**PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER IN ALL ENQUIRIES.**

**Appendix 2: Letter of request for permission to the Department of Education**



## Appendix 3: Letter of permission from the Department of Education



**LIMPOPO**  
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

### DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Ref: 22/2      Enq: MC Makola PhD      Tel No: 015 280 9448      E-mail: [Makola.MC@edu.limpopo.gov.za](mailto:Makola.MC@edu.limpopo.gov.za)

Makofane IB  
P O Box 55515  
Polokwane  
0700

#### RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

1. The above bears reference.

The Department wishes to inform you that your request to conduct research has been approved. Topic of the research proposal: **"TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF WORKSHOPS ON INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN THE SECONDARY SCHOOLS OF LEBOPO CIRCUIT, IN LIMPOPO."**

2. The following conditions should be considered:

- 3.1 The research should not have any financial implications for Limpopo Department of Education.
- 3.2 Arrangements should be made with the Circuit Office and the schools concerned.
- 3.3 The conduct of research should not anyhow disrupt the academic programs at the schools.
- 3.4 The research should not be conducted during the time of Examinations especially the fourth term.
- 3.5 During the study, applicable research ethics should be adhered to, in particular the principle of voluntary participation (the people involved should be respected).
- 3.6 Upon completion of research study, the researcher shall share the final product of the research with the Department.

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH MAKOFANE IB

CONFIDENTIAL

Cnr. 113 Bloccard & 24 Excelsior Street, POLOKWANE, 0700, Private Bag X0489, POLOKWANE, 0700  
Tel: 015 280 7600. Fax: 015 287 6920/4220/4494

**The heartland of southern Africa - development is about people!**

- 4 Furthermore, you are expected to produce this letter at Schools/ Offices where you intend conducting your research as an evidence that you are permitted to conduct the research.
- 5 The department appreciates the contribution that you wish to make and wishes you success in your investigation.

Best wishes.



**Ms NB Mutheiwana**  
**Head of Department**

20/04/17

**Date**

## Appendix 4: Participants' consent form

### CONSENT FORM

Project title: An investigation into teachers' experiences of workshops on inclusive education as a strategy for professional development in Lebopo Circuit, in Lebowakgomo District.

Project leader: Makofane Inneth Baby (200401831)

I, hereby voluntarily consent to participate the following project: "An investigation into teachers' experiences of workshops on inclusive education as a strategy for professional development in Lebopo Circuit, in Lebowakgomo District."

I understand that:

1. My responses will be treated with confidentiality and only be used for the purpose of the research.
2. No harm will be posed to me.
3. The research project aim has been explained to me.
4. I do not have to respond to any question that I do not wish to answer for any reason.
5. Access to my records that pertain to my participation in the study will be restricted to persons directly involved in this research.
6. Any questions that I may have regarding the research, related matters, will be answered by the researcher.
7. Participation in this research is entirely voluntary and I can withdraw my participation at any stage.
8. I understood the information regarding my participation in the study and I agree to participate.

Signature of interviewee

---

Signature of interviewer

---

Signature of witness

---



## **Appendix 5: Interview schedule**

### Interview schedule

- What do you understand about inclusive education?
- Do you think inclusive education is important in the secondary schools and why?
- Who conduct workshops on inclusive education and how are they conducted?
- How sufficient is time allocated for the workshops?
- Do you think people who are conducting the workshops have adequate knowledge of inclusive education and why do you think that way?
- How do the workshops assist you understand issues of inclusive education?
- How relevant and useful are the activities done during the workshops on inclusive education?
- According to your knowledge, what are measures that could be put in place to assist with the improvement of workshops for inclusive education in rural secondary school?
- How do you think the department could be of assistant to the teachers in rural secondary schools regarding inclusive education?

What other things that you would suggest that would add value on the provision of inclusive education workshops?





Semone Tshwenyego Benny  
P O Box 1077, Senwabarwana 0790, South Africa  
Cell: 0724168689 / 0812180898  
Email: [semonobt@gmail.com](mailto:semonobt@gmail.com)

**TITLE: AN INVESTIGATION INTO TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES OF WORKSHOPS ON INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AS A STRATEGY FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN LEBOWAKGOMO DISTRICT**

**TO : TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN**  
**FROM : SEMONO TSHWENYEGO BENNY**  
**DATE ISSUED : 24 MARCH 2019**  
**SUBJECT : LB MAKOFANE**

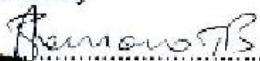
I hereby declare that the above-mentioned project is accurately edited.

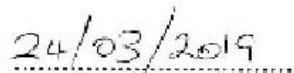
The editing process involved refining the work at five distinct levels:

- Editing for structure to help the reader follow the logic of the writer's arguments.
- Editing for language to ensure good use of grammar, coherence and consistency in tense.
- Editing for writing styles and consistency in technical presentations (i.e. font sizes and colour, alignment, paragraphing and other technicalities) such that the reader will be able to concentrate on the content.
- Proof-reading to eliminate repetition, spelling errors, punctuation errors, redundant statements, inconsistent formatting and other exasperating distractions.
- Editing to fix citation errors and to ensure that all the sources acknowledged in the text are enlisted in the bibliography. This level of editing involved ensuring that all citations and bibliographic formats are correct and consistent with the method of referencing applied herein.

I am therefore confident that the document is reader-friendly and proficient enough to evaluate.

Sincerely





Date signed

Building solutions for Africa