Alternative strategies to improve the performance of learners with special needs in Senior Phase: A Case of Khulunolwazi Primary School

by

Anna Maphanga

██████████

Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF EDUCATION

In the

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

CURRICULUM STUDIES

at the

UNIVERSITY OF LIMPOPO

SUPERVISOR: DR JM MAMABOLO

2020

Declaration

I the undersigned declare that:

"Alternative strategies to improve the performance of learners with special needs in Senior Phase: A Case of Khulunolwazi Primary School," is my work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged employing complete references. This research has not been previously submitted in partial or in full for a degree to another University.

_____   _____

Anna Maphanga   Date

Acknowledgements

Abstract

This study focuses on alternative strategies to improve the performance of learners with special needs at Khulunolwazi Primary School, Mpumalanga. In South Africa, learners with learning barriers are taught in mainstream schools together with learners who do not have learning barriers. Some mainstream schools are full/service schools. Full-service schools are expected to accommodate learners with learning barriers in their mainstream classrooms. However, the majority of teachers experience challenges on how to address the learning needs of learners with learning barriers. This is coupled with a lack of resources and inflexible curricula for learners with learning barriers.

The research was conducted by interviewing sampled participants teaching learners with learning barriers in the Senior Phase. Data was collected from those participants and through analysis of documents such as results and Support Needs and Assessment (SNA) 1 and 2 from the School-Based Support Team file. The research findings were that teachers lack sufficient training and continued support to identify and address challenges or learning barriers, especially to learners with learning barriers in the Senior Phase. Furthermore, the research revealed that there was minimal support from support structures like DoE, parents and other stakeholders in education. Recommendations for future research were discussed in support of learners with learning barriers in the mainstream setting.

List of abbreviations

ATP	Annual Teaching Plan
ABET	Adult Basic Education and Training
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
CAPS	Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements
DoE	Department of Education
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DBST	District Based Support Team
EFAL	English First Additional Language
ELRC	Education Labour Relations Council
EWP6	Education White Paper 6
FAL	First Additional Language
HIV	Human Immune Virus
HOD	Head of Department
ICT	Information Computer Technology
IDEA	Individual with Disability Education Improvement Act
INSET	In-Service Education and Training
ISP	Individual Support Plan
LOLT	Language of Learning and Teaching
LTSM	Learner Teacher Support Material
PL1	Post Level 1
P1	Participant 1
P2	Participant 2
P3	Participant 3
SACE	South African Council for Educators
SASA	South African Schools Act
SBST	School Based Support Team

SGB	School Governing Body
SIAS	Screening Identification and Support
SNA	Support Needs and Assessment

Keywords

Learning barriers

Special needs

Inclusive education

Teaching strategies

List of tables and figures

Figure 1.1   A linear hierarchical approach built from bottom to top (specific to general) steps in data analysis.

Figure 2.2 Participants profiles

Figure 4.2 Identified themes and sub-themes

List of appendices

Appendix A	Ethics Clearance Certificate
Appendix B	Letter of application to Provincial Head of Department
Appendix C	Letter of response from the Provincial Head of Department
Appendix D	Letter of application to the Circuit Office
Appendix E	Letter of response from the Circuit Office
Appendix F	Letter of application to the principal
Appendix G	Letter of response from the principal
Appendix H	Informed consent to participants
Appendix I	Interview Schedule
Appendix J	Document analysis schedule

Table of contents

Chapter one

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Chapter 3

Research methodology

Chapter 5

Discussions, Conclusions and Recommendations

CHAPTER 1

1. ORIENTATION OF THE STUDY

1.1   Introduction and background to the study

This chapter outlines alternative strategies employed by teachers to enhance the performance of learners with learning barriers in the mainstream schools at Senior Phase level of schooling. These strategies, for example narrative method, lecture method ,question and answer methods were found to be somehow ineffective as proven by unpleasing performance and drop in results. Learners with special needs were found lacking in their performance. The poor performance may have resulted from the complex work given to these learners in the mainstream classes. They were found to be either progressed to the next grade, dropped out of school, repeated grades throughout schooling, and showed behavioural problems (Leepo, 2015:24). The White Paper No 6 postulates that most learners with learning barriers left school early as a result of inaccessible curriculum and failure to cater for their needs (Department of Education, 2001b:24).

The high level of illiteracy among communities will not make a sophisticated society (Johnson, Johnson & Jared & Johnson, 2014: 2). I agree with the author, as it is the case with the community in which this study was conducted. The community is characterised, among others, by a high rate of illiteracy, low socio-economic background and poverty. The DoE introduced the Policy on Inclusion, which made it compulsory for mainstream schools to enrol all types of learners in mainstream schools.

Improving the performance of learners with learning barriers in education-required teachers to have acquired the relevant knowledge, skills and attitudes to teach learners with learning barriers. International schools in the eastern seaboard region of Thailand perceived themselves as lacking professional knowledge, skills and attitudes towards teaching learners experiencing learning barriers in mainstream classes Dapudong, (2014:7). This may be the case when comparing the implementation of inclusive policies in the South African context . This inability to meet learners' needs may negatively affect academic performance (Agbenyega, 2007:43).

It is emphasised that mainstream teachers needed capacity building to teach learners with learning barriers (Savolainen, 2019:51). If this was not fulfilled, learners would continue to face barriers in learning. I agree with this scholar as this posed a problem to teachers as they felt inadequate. They therefore developed fear and frustration as they were not equipped to teach learners with learning barriers. Moreover, there are limited resources and support with high expectations from the DoE in terms of performance. Leepo (2015:23) alluded that schools should effectively deliver the curriculum. This implied that schools should be made up of quality teaching and learning processes. This was unlikely to happen as teachers were faced with overcrowded classrooms on a daily basis as well as the issue of managing pressure of curriculum reform with very high-performance expectations from the DoE and other stakeholders in partnership with education with inadequate resources and support. This further contributed towards low academic performance and frustration on teachers.

In South Africa, schools in the black townships and rural areas lacked resources while those in the urban areas benefited from the resources because they were identified as special schools and were well resourced. The strengths of the inclusive policies are that segregation is done away with, learners learn with all other learners in the same classroom Donohue & Bornman (2014:106) It boosts their self –confidence, allows interaction, supports, makes everyone to belong and unifies them Ainscow (1999:108). The weaknesses are that inclusive setting may disrupt the learning environment for other learners as some learners with learning barriers may have behaviour problems and disrupt the learning process Donohue & Bornman (2014:106).The learners have different learning abilities and pace therefore cannot master activities at the same pace Donohue & Borman (2014:106) .This would work against the learning environment and time to finish the syllabus.

1.2 Aim

This study aims to investigate teaching and learning strategies used by teachers to improve the performance of learners with learning barriers, and to determine attitudes of teachers towards inclusion in mainstream classes and social behaviour of learners experiencing learning barriers in regular classrooms.

1.3   Objectives

- To examine teaching methods used by teachers to improve learners' understanding of content.
- To explore expanded opportunities afforded to learners experiencing learning barriers.
- To determine how teachers manage challenges in an inclusive classroom.

1.4   Significance of the study

This research will add value to the existing knowledge and help to realise goals of inclusive schools that function, and learners with learning barriers will progress to the next grade. This study will help to identify problems or difficulties faced by teachers, learners, parents, DoE and other stakeholders in education in exploring alternative strategies to improve the performance of learners experiencing learning barriers. It will help to determine the flexibility of instructional strategies used by teachers in teaching learners with learning barriers, thereby supporting them to realise objectives as set by schools and the DoE. It will direct the training of teachers and skills development when teaching learners with learning barriers.

Teachers will be developed on how to work on their attitudes and knowledge towards teaching learners with learning barriers. These negative attitudes may impede learning and teaching, resulting in non-progression of learners (Swart & Pettipher, 2016:175-178). Teachers will gain knowledge on how to successfully implement inclusive policies, vary their instructional methods of teaching learners experiencing learning barriers throughout schooling. It will assist teachers to explore expanded opportunities that they may have at their disposal to teach learners experiencing learning barriers in classrooms. Teachers may further be assisted on how to deal with challenges in an inclusive setting.

1.5   Problem statement

Policies regarding the admission of learners experiencing learning barriers in regular classes proved to have not managed transition as well as progression of those learners efficiently. A solution was not reached on alternative strategies to enhance the performance of learners experiencing learning barriers in the Senior Phase. The problem was not fully resolved as teaching and learning strategies, Annual Teaching Plans (ATPS') and Assessment Programs may need to be further adjusted to accommodate learners experiencing learning barriers. This is supported by NgugI (2002) as cited in Tsisindu, et al (2016:121) when he stipulates that there is a need for curriculum adaptation, diversified and change ways for assessing learners. One size fits all curricula have not provided for the needs of these learners, further hindering their access to the curriculum. This resulted in poor performance in schools, hence the need for deeper research to study the phenomenon. The inaccessible curriculum encouraged inappropriate behaviour, passivity, reading and learning problems or disabilities in learners.

1.6   Conceptual Framework

This study employed the Conceptual Framework which assisted the researcher to interpret information, explore, and explain some events and behaviour of the subject under study. A Conceptual Framework is defined as the final result of integrating related concepts together to look at the problem being studied Adom, et al., (2018:439). Teachers voiced their attitudes and opinions on strategies they used in managing learners with learning barriers in mainstream classrooms (Maddock & Maroun, 2015:46). Possible factors contributing to learners not performing well and experiencing barriers were identified. These were as follows: the one size fits all curriculum which does not accommodate the needs of learners experiencing learning barriers in regular classrooms; infrastructure challenges which do not address overcrowding and related problems; incompetency of teachers in teaching learners with special needs, specifically those with learning barriers; socio-economic background of learners, which plays an important role in their learning and future; poverty in families; school environment; teacher-learner ratios; attitudes of teachers, learners and their relationships; high illiteracy rate among parents and in the community; School Governing Bodies' (SGBS') different cultures; peer group

pressure; and parents and Learner Teacher Support Material (LTSM). With this information, the researcher was able to collect and analyse data collected.

1.7   Ethical considerations

The Merriam Webster Dictionary (2009) defines ethics as a branch of philosophy that studies ethics as it relates to what is wrong or right about human conduct. The word is derived from the Greek word 'ethos', which means custom or habit. It further refers to a system of moral principles dealing with what is good for individuals, including society. For example, it is stated that an action may be deemed legal, but unacceptable or vice versa (Resnik, 2014:1). It is significant to adhere to ethical norms in research; therefore, the researcher sought ethical clearance from the ethics committee of the University of Limpopo. Ethical standards were adhered to in this study as set out by the research ethics committee.

1.7.1 Confidentiality and anonymity

The researcher honoured the ethics values espoused by the University of Limpopo in protecting all communications, and ensured that the anonymity of participants is observed through the use of fake identification or pseudonyms. For example, participants were referred to as participant 1, 2 and 3 to ensure anonymity. Confidentiality and anonymity is key in research (Resnik, 2014:3). In view of this, the researcher interviewed participants face to face, and it is likely that some confidential information may be divulged. For example, a sickness or deficiency of a learner which can be a contributory factor to a specific barrier may be revealed to the researcher. Psychologists of DoE in the District Office responsible for assessing learners with barriers after being identified by teachers may write a report regarding a sickness/ deficiency that is confidential to a learner when they visit the school. They used forms known as Support Needs and Assessment (SNA 1 & 2) to find ways of assisting the learner. For example, they may refer the learner to a special school or provide help such hearing aid or reading glasses depending on the deficiency. Participant's right to anonymity was respected and will rest with them. This implied that the researcher may not divulge information shared during the interview.

1.7.2 Ethical Clearance

The researcher sought ethical clearance from the Ethics Committee of the University of Limpopo before she could start with interviews. The researcher further sought permission in writing from the Provincial Department of Education in Mpumalanga Province, from Steve Tshwete 2 Circuit Office and the affected school to conduct the research.

1.7.3 Voluntary Participation

The researcher ensured that participation is voluntary (Yip, Han & Singal, 2014:180). The study was characterised by respect and non-coercion. Assurance was given to research participants that participation was voluntary and would not jeopardise their jobs. They were informed that this study had nothing to do with fundraising or discontinuation of special schools, but focused solely on learners academically, especially those with barriers to learning. This would also assist teachers in teaching learners experiencing learning barriers in the mainstream schools. This study has nothing to do with the provision of resources for those vulnerable learners in mainstream schools. Lastly, research participants were given invitation letters and consent forms to participate in interviews (see Appendix J). Creswell (2009:197-198) contends that the rights, values, attitudes, opinions and desires of participants have to be observed by the researcher. In keeping with this contention, the researcher adhered to the required standards by informing them about all steps to be taken regarding the study.

1.7.4 Safety of participants

This study considered prioritising and maintaining the safety of participants and the institution's image, information and participants' confidentiality. The researcher safeguarded participants' rights by articulating the research objectives verbally to them and in a written form and ensured that they are well understood. Participants were informed of all data collection strategies and activities.

1.7.5 Honesty and clarity

The required standards were adhered to by informing participants about all expectations and steps to be taken regarding the study. Resnik (2014:3) states that the researcher should strive for honesty; there should be no fabrications or misinterpretation. There should be no false information regarding the study or embarrassment of participants.

1.8   Research Design and Methodology

This study employed the descriptive research design. Participants were purposely sampled and responded to questions. The questions were based on teachers' knowledge, attitudes, qualifications and experience in teaching learners with learning barriers in mainstream school, especially in the Senior Phase (Creswell, 2012:1). An interview schedule was designed for participants, who responded to the questions as much as possible. Rich data were collected from relevant participants through interaction (Creswell, 2001:15). The researcher requested to do a voice recording of the participants and it was granted.

A qualitative method and a descriptive research design were used to study the phenomenon. Qualitative research is characterised by exploring an individual or community problem, thereby deriving common understanding of it. The individual or a group may hold a common understanding to that of social or human problem postulated by Creswell (2008:233), who describes qualitative research as a comprehensive study of phenomenon of a social problem. In this study, interest was on alternative strategies to improve the performance of learners experiencing learning barriers in the Senior Phase**.**

1.9   Qualitative research

A qualitative method was followed as a means of inquiry. Qualitative research refers to a strategy of exploration and finding meaning, and understanding a particular society or individuals attached to a communal problem (Creswell, 2009:233). It involved ethical issues, visiting participants' site, the formulation of questions, processes and procedures that were followed, collecting data in participants' settings, inductive analysis of collected data, data interpretation for meaning and finally, developing a written report with a flexible structure (Creswell, 2009:197-198). The

researcher made meaning from findings developed from collected data (Creswell, 2009:230). This resulted in understanding strategies employed to improve the performance of learners experiencing learning barriers.

A face-to-face, one on one in-depth and unstructured interview was conducted with participants in their school. An interview schedule with open-ended questions was used for participants to exercise freedom and flexibility when answering questions. This will also enable the researcher to probe during interviews for clarity in the study (Fischler & Creswell, 2008:7). Each participant was interviewed using an interview schedule with open-ended questions. This was advantageous because the researcher had control over questions and could probe or clarify whenever participants needed clarity (Creswell, 2009:179). Participants could provide all information needed. Documents containing rich information were obtained. For example, schedules on presentation of Circuit performance, School-Based Support Team (SBST) information on Individual Support Plan (ISP), SNA 1&2 and referrals by the (SBST). This was very useful in that it saved the researcher's time and resources as the researcher could go back to the papers and read or refer whenever needed (Creswell, 2009:180). Audio recordings and transcriptions of words were done. This led the researcher to data analysis.

1.10   Research Design

A research design refers to a strategy involving philosophical assumptions and related procedures for researching general beliefs to specific research strategies to collect and analyse the data of the study (Creswell, 2009:233). It is a strategy of inquiry that presents procedures within a research approach when conducting a research study. A researcher could use a qualitative research design (uses open-ended questions), quantitative research design (close-ended questions) or mix method strategies. The qualitative research design was adopted to conduct this study as it allows the researcher to use unstructured interview to collect data. Open-ended questions allow the understanding of the participants regarding their opinions, perspectives and attitudes. It also allows the transcription of words from the data collected Fischler, et al., (2018:18).The Interview questions were detailed so to understand the social phenomenon on how they teach and improve the performance of learners with special needs in the Senior Phase (Mpya, 2007:10). This study used the qualitative research

design as the interview was unstructured; it allowed open-ended questions, flexibility and transcription of words from data collection (Fischler & Creswell, 2008:18). The aim was to look at alternative strategies to enhance the performance of learners experiencing learning barriers.

The descriptive research design was used as a research tool in the study. It was used in collecting information regarding the study. It helped in asking open-ended questions to describe the phenomenon of how and which strategies used by teachers to enhance the performance of learners with learning barriers (Neman, 2014:431). Participants' words and perceptions were used in reporting (Creswell; 2009:195). Qualitative researchers use various types of data tools such as interviews and documents (Creswell, 2009:175). This study employed interviews and document study as tools for data collection.

 Rich documents such as review schedule in circuit results and SNA forms from SBST were collected. All of these data were reviewed so that it makes sense, categorised or coded it into themes that include all data tools (Creswell, 2009:175). Data were explored inductively, and recurring themes, concepts or patterns were identified and described. The SBST provided documents showing how learners with learning barriers were helped to achieve, or in the case of referrals or psychological assistance, being invited to assist learners.

1.11   Population and sampling

Sampling refers to a careful selection of participants that would form a delegation towards the research providing data to the researcher (Lance & Hatori, 2016:8). The targeted populations for study purposes were three teachers responsible for Senior Phase teaching English First Additional Language (EFAL), IsiZulu Home Language and Mathematics in an inclusive setting. Purposive sampling was employed whereby the researcher purposefully selected relevant participants with rich information and ready to share their experiences and knowledge regarding alternative strategies to improve the performance of learners with learning barriers in the Senior Phase. Purposive sampling gave room for flexibility and uses one's judgment (Fischler & Creswell, 2008:5). This made it possible for the researcher to select information of the

study, save time as well as resources during data collection. Participants had first-hand information and could share it based on their experiences and knowledge.

1.12 Data collection

This study employed interviews, documentation and voice recordings of participants (Creswell, 2009:179-180). An in-depth face-to-face interview was conducted. Three participants were interviewed and information from documents was sought. One of the three Senior Phase teachers taught Mathematics, the second one EFAL and the third one taught IsiZulu Home Language. Documents were obtained from the Circuit Office.

1.13 Interviews

An in-depth face-to-face interview was conducted with three participants for data collection. This type of interview was useful as it allowed participants to give rich information and historical background of the problem (Creswell, 2009:179). The interview took place at participants' setting (the school). Documents were collected from the Circuit Office. Each interview was scheduled for forty-five minutes. An interview schedule was used to gather information. Participants were briefed on the importance of the research (Fischer & Creswell, 2008:23). Participants provided rich information, experiences and knowledge needed for the study.

Research participants were assured that participation in the research was voluntary and may discontinue if they no longer want to continue with the interview. There was no coercion of participants in the study or interview. The researcher obtained permission from participants to record the interview so that the she does not miss out important information to save time than to go back to participants in case the researcher missed out some information. Instead, she played back the recording to pick and verify the information. Voice recording allowed a full accurate recording of data, concentration on interviews and follow-up questions. Participants were allowed to express themselves in their language if needs be. Professionalism and courteousness were maintained throughout interviews.

1.14 Document analysis

Document or content analysis refers to information that a researcher may learn by studying, interpreting and analysing documents (Ary, Cheser, Sorensen & Razieh, 2010: 29). These materials included a review report on circuit performance in the form of documents from the Circuit Office and SBST through the ISP, SNA 1& 2. Documentation saves time and cost of transcription (Creswell, 2009:180).

1.15   Data Analysis

Data analysis means an open-ended strategy in data collection by asking questions and analysing data collected using specific to general levels of data analysis (Creswell, 2009:184). Raw data transcripts from interview schedules, recordings and documents were analysed.   Data were organised using Thematic Content Analysis. The researcher read through all data, hand-coded the data into themes and descriptions using a hierarchical approach building from bottom to top (specific to general). Interrelating themes during interviews and in documents were collected from Circuit Office, and recordings were interpreted into themes for meanings. Steps in data analysis using Thematic Content Analysis were followed. Transcription meant that the researcher transcribed voice-recorded data onto paper, and made thorough reading and understanding of its content. The researcher checked and edited the raw data by coding or dividing it into smaller meaningful related chunks. Coding refers to a process of preparing and grouping the collected data into smaller meaningful chunks for further engagement and meaning making (Creswell, 2009:227).

The researcher read each paragraph and recorded the themes. Similar themes were grouped to form related units. Analysis and interpretation were done as participants were allowed to use their language during the interview if they wanted to. The researcher scrutinised similarities and differences to allow typologies to surface and develop. Data were further coded into similarities and differences. Validation was done by reading the transcripts to validate the findings.

1.16   Quality Assurance

Quality assurance in qualitative study refers to a comprehensive strategy to investigate practices and conduct to obtain possible refinements and procedures. Research is aimed at increasing the systematic study of a body of knowledge which involves testing of hypotheses of theory. This ensures the protection of participants, quality of research and credibility of results (Reynolds, Kizito, Ezumah & Mangesho, 2011:43). The researcher ensured quality by setting principles for research participants, including herself. The principles were maintained throughout data collection, analysis and interpretation. The researcher made notes of relevant information for referral and reflection. Flexibility was maintained during data collection and throughout the research. The researcher ensured that transparency is maintained by explaining every step of the research to participants to make them feel free. All decisions were communicated to participants and the research questions were clearly articulated. Consent forms were given to all research participants before the start of interviews. There was no coercion of participants. Good ethical practices were maintained throughout the processes of the research. An appropriate attitude was encouraged and maintained.

There will be a triangulation of data to help check information received from interviews with participants and data collected from documents against the research study (Patton, 2002:559). This will help the researcher to find out if the report from participants tallies with what is in the documents and is aligned to the study to gain understanding. The researcher will be able to cross-check information from different participants and document study.

1.17   Limitations of the study

Data collected from research participants using documents were enough to continue with the study. However, the study was confined to one circuit and school. Participants may have been biased, and used the same strategy to tackle difficulties because they share information and skills as they meet during departmental meetings. The data collected may not represent all schools in Mpumalanga Province. This means that it may not capture all challenges in other schools and circuits.
 The challenges may differ in nature and how they unfold and addressed in other schools and circuits in the Province. This may further be aggravated by the nature of

resources, working strategies and the needs of the school to help improve the performance of learners with learning barriers. Another limitation is that the results of the study could not be generalised nationally to schools because of the limited sample used. Therefore, the results will be limited to that school.

.

The study was conducted in an overcrowded full-service inclusive school in a rural area with no resources to accommodate learners with learning barriers. The area is a poverty-stricken community with a high level of illiteracy and crime. It is possible that participants may have been biased in answering the questions in that they may have been tempted to make the school look like it was implementing the inclusive policy successfully and in trying to teach learners with learning barriers rather than reporting on their real situations.

1.18   Chapter outline

Chapter 1 Orientation of the study

The chapter outlined the background to the study, its context, problem statement, aim and objectives. The research questions were clearly articulated. The significance of the study was well explained.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

This chapter gave a detailed summary of the Conceptual Framework, which explains alternative strategies employed by mainstream teachers to enhance the performance of learners experiencing learning barriers, especially in the Senior Phase. Knowledge gaps on the study were identified. A contribution of this study to existing knowledge is well articulated.

Chapter 3 Research Methodology

The research design and its study population were explained in this chapter. Sampling methods, data collection and analysis methods were described.

Chapter 4 Data analysis

The school profile and background were articulated, followed by data analysis. The school profile includes three teachers that were interviewed and documents which provided rich information.

Chapter 5 Discussions and Recommendations

The chapter focused on responses from research participants, including document study to answer the research questions. Suggested recommendations were given and areas of future research were articulated.

1.19   Chapter Summary

Education is fundamental in South Africa and is a foundation for equity and innovation. It is a weapon to fight poverty and free the minds of nations to realise their goals. This means that education can empower society, reduce poverty, crime and other related societal inequalities (Van der Berg, Tailor, Gustafsson, Spaull & Armstrong, 2011:265). South African teachers need to continually reflect and review their professional standards and teaching by becoming Life-Long Learners and Designers of Learning Programs (Taylor, 2012:265). This further implies that teachers should lay a strong and healthy life for societies by delivering quality education for all.

The study will add to existing knowledge on alternative strategies to enhance the performance of learners experiencing learning barriers in the Senior Phase in mainstream settings. Collaboration is of prime importance among stakeholders like policymakers, educators, education specialists, curriculum implementers, parents, DoE, community members and other related organisations to benefit from it (Swart & Pettipher, 2016:178). It will help them to raise awareness of some strategies that will enhance learner competence. The rights of all learners will be promoted, thereby upholding the Constitution of the country (Shiimi, 2018:3). This study will guide plans of the education sector in terms of materials and in-service training workshops for teacher empowerment.

Senior Phase teachers will contribute their views, attitudes and knowledge on teaching learners with learning barriers. This study will raise awareness to teachers and guardians to involve themselves in education and best support their children

throughout their learning. For example, to attend scheduled parents' meetings and open days to view and discuss their children's work as organised by the school. This will enforce the culture of learning even if learners are at home. It will help to build positive working relationships characterised by support and good communications geared towards common objectives (Shiimi, 2018:18). SMT's will benefit during strategic planning for continuous teacher development and support and through individualised lesson plans to improve the performance of learners experiencing learning barriers, especially in the Senior Phase.

Positionality

As a researcher I feel that the inclusion policies were introduced in an attempt to do away with segregation and bring all learners together in the same environment. If this is to be implemented and be successful, it should be taken slowly step by step to enhance the education of these learners. They may be encouraged to learn from the learners without learning barriers as they interact thereby promote friendship. In the process of interaction they may improve their self –concept, increase their social awareness and acceptance of others. The learners with learning barriers may further develop personal principles and behavioural skills so that they are assisted in the learning process and life in general.

.

CHAPTER 2

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1   Introduction

This chapter reviewed relevant literature to provide a clear context of the research and jurisdiction of the study. Alternative strategies to improve the performance of learners with special needs, especially in the Senior Phase are explored. The chapter is presented as follows: conceptualisation of main themes pertaining to the study, historical overview of the problem, models of schools of thought, theories, methodological perspectives and conclusion. This study aims to investigate alternative strategies used by mainstream teachers in regular classrooms to help improve the performance of learners with special needs in education, especially those with learning barriers in the Senior Phase. Their intellect, attitude and behaviour may harm their performance if they are not well supported.

2.2   Conceptualisation of the main themes of the study

Full-service schools enrol learners with special needs in its mainstream classrooms. Special needs refer to different disabilities, for example physical, emotional, behavioural and learning impairment that requires an individual to seek additional special services or to be accommodated such as in education or recreation (Mirriam Webster Dictionary, 2020). It refers to disadvantaged learners whose needs arise from learning barriers or disability Shiimi,(2018:6).Special needs refer to those learners who require extra support from the various stakeholders in education in order for them to be educated without discrimination Shiimi,(2019:7) .As a researcher I then see special need learners as those learners who need additional help ,extra care, support and a special way of teaching them to realise their goals. In this study, the researcher will focus on learners experiencing learning barriers. Learning barriers refer to learning problems experienced by the learner internally or externally that prohibits or makes learning difficult (SIAS, 2014:7). The Department of Education and schools also experience these difficulties in terms of resources, curriculum strategies and the capacitation of teachers towards curriculum delivery. These factors prohibit access to learning and progress in education, and impede and contribute towards poor performance (SIAS, 2014:7). I have used the relevant literature to outline the nature of the phenomenon under study. Literature review contextualises the study in support of the researcher's argument (Henning, Van Rensburg & Smit, 2004:27).

South Africa has not yet improved academically and is rated at the bottom of all countries internationally Leepo (2015:102). In an effort to remedy the situation, the Department of Basic Education in South Africa has introduced full-service schools supported by the SBSTs and DBSTs DoE (2015:11). SBST refers to institutional based support teams which include all interested stakeholders in education aimed at supporting teachers to help vulnerable learners through a series of intervention strategies to address challenges, to achieve academically, and to get placement for learners SIAS (2014:7).

The DBST refers to management teams established at district offices to work together with SBSTs to make inclusion in schools functional (SIAS, 2014:7). The DBST does that by offering training and development to teachers to manage inclusion in general classrooms. This team also interrogates reports that it receives from teachers, and provides care and support to learners with learning problems. Most of them drop out of school early as the curricula seem not to cater for their educational needs (White Paper 6, 2001b:24). Provision was made through White Paper 6, which was to foster respect and respond to different needs of all types of learners according to their learning abilities (White Paper 6, 2001:12). Furthermore, it acknowledges that children may be capable to learn if they are well supported (White Paper 6, 2001:16).

The SIAS policy on inclusion addresses the ISP, which adjusts tasks to the level of learners SIAS (2014:11). Inclusion means the management of attitudes and the environment to address various changing needs and to facilitate the involvement of individuals who are vulnerable or having various learning disabilities to be equally recognised and to participate in their environment (Njoronge, 2015: xii). This policy requires teachers to adjust their activities to accommodate individualised activities SIAS (2014:24). ISP refers to a flexible plan of the curriculum designed for learners experiencing barriers in the regular classroom who need to be supported by designing extended activities and providing expanded opportunities for learning SIAS (2014:23). It is against this background that there is a need to conduct deeper research on alternative strategies to improve the performance of learners. A general model used in the classroom could be a combination of different methods. For example, textbook

and narrative methods in an endeavour to create a conducive learning environment. It includes looking at the behaviour of learners and their mutual relationships.

2.3 Historical overview of the problem

Learners with special needs were placed in mainstream classrooms to learn together with other learners without learning barriers White Paper 6 (2001b:24). These learners continued to perform poorly in the mainstream schools. Teachers are challenged on how to best teach them successfully .The poor performance may be aggravated by the impact of the apartheid education system whereby some schools were marginalised, divided according to race. For example, White, Indian, Black and Coloured. Learners with disabilities were admitted through medical diagnostic results carried out by professionals and hence some learners could not afford special school.

Learners were then in a disadvantaged position compared to other children in mainstream schools. The one size fits all curricula seem not to cater for them. Those learners show difficulty in learning as a result of a breakdown in listening, thinking, perceiving, memory and expression. This condition is not visible, therefore, such learners are considered demotivated, lazy, unresponsive or uninterested in their studies. Some learners will tease them and teachers will be frustrated on how to deal with them. These learners may drop out of school or the school system may reject them, causing stress to parents. This problem is not a new phenomenon; it was there since the beginning of schooling.

Priority has been given to learners with special needs by including them in regular classes. They should be encouraged to learn together, be supported in terms of resources, curricular and teaching strategies irrespective of their disabilities (Dreyer, 2016:383).Teachers in the Senior Phase may have a challenge to implement the policy on inclusion as they may not have enough training on teaching learners experiencing learning barriers. There are time frames to finish the syllabi without compromising the assessment standards (Yusof, Daniel, Low & Aziz, 2014:1242). It further calls for teachers to adjust lessons, apply flexibility during the learning process, adjust their attitude and have knowledge of strategies for individuals with learning barriers so as invite professional help if necessary (Price, 2018:15).

Some mainstream schools do not have the required facilities. Therefore, enrolling learners with special needs would be time-consuming as the teacher-learner ratio is too high. Results will drop, rendering the school dysfunctional. Teachers may not be able to finish the syllabus, hence it becomes a problem as learners will approach the examination unprepared (DBE, 2012:24). Teaching learners experiencing learning barriers in regular classrooms is a new policy. The policies are often top-down. This implies that there is no involvement of teachers in the decision-making process and formulation of these policies. The researcher agrees with this statement because teachers are real implementers of policies and need to be part of policymaking decisions. Teachers are expected to comply and implement all policies without alterations. This poses a challenge to them and makes them develop a negative attitude because they lack confidence and knowledge when teaching. Learners are subjected to the same assessment requirements (Tatyana, Yaraya, Masalimova, Vasbieva & Grudtsina, 2018:8). All learners need to be assisted to achieve their studies, thereby having a bright future.

2.3.1 South African Education System

South African education states that all learners can progress academically if they are offered the opportunity to actualise what they have learnt (SIAS, 2014:393). My departure point is that there is a need for teachers to adjust and vary their teaching methods to accommodate all learners to suit their needs (Dreyer, 2016:395). The gap is that there is a need for the application of relevant resources and capacity building for teachers .Although they have received workshops, there is less knowledge for teachers on teaching strategies therefore the need for continuous training and re-trained in identifying and teaching learners with learning barriers. Learners may improve academically when all stakeholders are aware of their intellectual development and be guided to reach a more complex level of performance; therefore, there is a need for collaboration on the side of teachers, parents, community and all educational stakeholders (Tsisindu,etal al 2016:121). Another gap is that socio – economic factors may hinder the implementation of the inclusive policies, For example, in a case where parents or guardians are illiterate and find the work challenging and cannot assist the learner. In some cases, parents work night shift and may find it difficult to assist their child. In addition to this, some children are heads of

families and may not be disciplined to carry out their tasks. The researcher feels that these factors may have a negative impact on curriculum delivery, and compromise education. Learners are likely to remain behind in grades, drop out of school or be pushed to the next grade (DoE 2001b:24). For example, by the condoning and accommodation policies instituted by the DoE in South Africa. It then puts pressure and frustration on teachers because the DoE expects them to assist all learners to proceed to the next grades. As a result, teachers may be unproductive in teaching, develop attitude towards inclusion and fearful to teach some learning areas.

In the South African context, inclusion policies are being implemented and are progressing at a slow pace. Teachers are receiving workshops that sometimes cover two to three days, of which it is not enough because a lot of work is given in a short time. Teachers in the mainstream school are expected to manage different challenges learners may have, and provide opportunities for all to learn develop and progress. The researcher disagrees with this notion as this may generate stress on teachers because they lack skills, resources and have little knowledge to teach learners with learning barriers. This means that they may face difficulties to assist learners to cope with learning (Price, 2018:13). However, this is in contrast with the demands for the need to accommodate learners with special needs. Teachers have expressed their concern about their lack of appropriate training and resources to meet the needs of learners with special needs. This further impedes the education of these vulnerable learners.

2.3.2 Impact of full inclusion on learners' achievement

The transition of inclusion of learners with learning barriers in the regular setting created increased interest in research on how to accommodate and best educate them towards improving their performance (Spencer, Salend, Laurel Garrieck & Duhaney, 2016:114). Statistics from the US show that approximately 95% of learners with special needs are educated in regular classrooms (Spencer et al., 2016:112). District reports on a national study states that learners with special needs benefit academically, improve in writing and finishing their work, and show improvement in behaviour, interaction with their peers and attitudes to schooling (Spencer et al., 2016:114).

The institution and implementation of inclusive policies on learners with learning barriers in the mainstream setting may have made learners to be taught curricula that do not seem to cater for their needs (Mzizi, 2014:19). The enrolment of learners with disabilities continue in mainstream schools. It therefore, attracts a considerable interest among stakeholders in education (Maciver, Hunter, Adamson, Grayson, Forlin & MacLeod, 2001:18). Researchers have a mammoth task to investigate and conduct further research about teaching learners experiencing learning barriers to achieve educationally (Price, 2018:15). If education is to be perceived as a silver spoon to erase poverty, then there has to be an adjusted curriculum, methods of teaching and resources to realise the objectives.

Education can be a source one can use to achieve in life (Mandela, 2018:1). This implies that adjusting teaching strategies may help to enhance the performance of learners with learning barriers, enabling them to reach self-actualisation and realise their dreams to change the world. It further suggests that a job may be fulfilling a sense of pride, accomplishment and satisfaction in one's life; hence Maslow's hierarchy of needs may be satisfied. Laying a strong foundation is of paramount importance in preparation for high school, tertiary education and life in general. However, this may not be realised as teachers believe that the inclusion of learners with learning barriers in the mainstream setting contributes to them not finishing the syllabus and always behind with their work (Savolainen et al., 2019:51).

Therefore, it can be a demanding task for primary school and transition to adulthood. In contrast to data collected from Washington University in St Louis from six countries: Afghanistan, India, Sudan, Darfur State, Sierra Leon, Morroco and Tunisia, scholars found that learners with disabilities were disadvantaged, and not learning effectively because of outdated teaching methods which excluded them from learning effectively (Price, 2018:4). The researcher agrees with this statement as teachers are struggling to teach learners with learning barriers. It becomes difficult due to their lack of knowledge about which methods or strategies to use to accommodate learners. Inclusive classrooms should be accommodative of learners with special needs to receive education (Price, 2018:04). Teaching learners with learning barriers in

mainstream classrooms is described as the most fundamental need. It should therefore, should be prioritised (Price, 2018:4).

Learners with learning barriers need to be motivated towards dealing with their barriers to access the curricula and to realise their weaknesses in order to succeed academically. Earlier studies described learners with learning barriers as failing to see the relationship between appropriate effort and success as perceived by their teachers as less motivated than mainstream learners. The researcher agrees with this statement because teachers may not know the characteristics of learners with special needs. Contrary to this, learners with learning barriers taught in the mainstream setting obtained moderate outcomes (Zigmond, Jenkins, Fuchs, Deno, Barker, Jekins and Coathino, 1995:539).

Generally, learners with learning barriers were found lacking and not doing well in their school work. They often were unable to link their prior knowledge to existing knowledge, including their own experiences of the lesson. These problems are coupled with social, emotional and lack of comprehension, and often result in poor performance in an academic area. This suggests that without proper teaching and learning strategies, learners with learning disabilities will find it difficult to improve their performance. Placing learners with learning barriers into mainstream classrooms disturbs learners without disabilities academically and emotionally, lowering their performance (Savolainen et al., 2019: 51).

2.3.3 Impact of full inclusion into mainstream on the relationship between learners and teachers

The successful implementation of the inclusive system depends largely on the conduct of teachers towards learners with learning barriers (Dapudong, 2014:1). The impact of interrelationships between stakeholders enhances grounds for positive relationships and a decline in barriers (Conway, 2017:26). Teachers are real implementers of inclusive policies. They therefore need to be committed when they engage with learners in order to be able to identify those with learning barriers in the classroom (Tatyana et al., 2018:2). Stakeholders like teachers, psychologists, healthcare specialists, parents, learners and district officials need to collaborate to successfully support learners with special needs (Conway, 2017:43).

This calls for good human relationships and positive attitudes by all stakeholders in education to work towards a common goal of good performance. Furthermore, there should be shared responsibilities, decision-making processes and positive support to improve the performance of learners with special needs (Tatyana et al., 2018:2). This may, however, be difficult for teachers as they may not know characteristics of learners with learning barriers. They may become challenged, feel isolated and consider themselves not having relevant skills to accommodate learners with learning barriers (Engelbrecht, Swart, Eloff & Forlin, 2016:18).

2.3.3.1 Teacher attitudes

Teachers should be well trained not to develop a negative attitude towards learners with special needs as it destroys participation and psychological aspects of learners in the classroom setting and lowers their academic performance (Dapudong, 2014:1). This further indicates that attitude can be one of the barriers in the successful implementation of inclusive policies. These attitudes are influenced by the following factors: the level and nature of disabilities of learners, teachers' readiness in terms of knowledge and qualifications on how to teach learners with learning barriers, the confidence they have to teach such learners and the restructuring of the curriculum to accommodate learners with special needs (Njoronge, 2015:11).

The restructuring of the curriculum should be in parallel with capacity building on inclusion for teachers. The changes should embrace attitudes of teachers, in-service training and re-training of teachers (Njoronge, 2015:11). Stakeholders like DoE, teachers, parents and the community at large need to be committed for the successful implementation of inclusive policies (Sharma, 2006:80).

Negative attitudes impede the implementation of inclusive policies, learning and performance; hence there is a need for stakeholders in education to work together for inclusion to be implemented. For example, the teacher identifies learners with learning barriers, and the SBST assists teachers with ISP and SNA 1&2. DBST psychologists conduct tests and referrals and provide appropriate services (Njoronge, 2015:16). It is concluded that teachers lack confidence, skills and knowledge to teach learners with learning barriers (Njoronge, 2015:16). This may have resulted from their inadequacy in curriculum adaptation or modification to accommodate special needs learners. This

is further worsened by lack of resources and continuous support from relevant professionals with knowledge (Savolainen et al., 2019:52). The lack of support is a domestic, but also an international problem (Mahlo, 2011:58). It is vital to support teachers in an institution through capacity building workshops because their lack of knowledge in teaching learners with learning barriers might constitute a barrier on its own (Mzizi, 2014:44).

The support given to teachers for development purposes must be continuous and address the needs of learners with learning barriers (Mzizi, (2014:44). Studies indicated that learners with special needs made progress academically in mainstream classes as opposed to special classes, and did well socially because there was improvement in acceptance, interaction and peer relationships (Pit-ten Cate, 2018:50). Teachers further argued that it is difficult to teach using current resources as they do not meet the special needs of learners experiencing learning barriers. The SBST has the responsibility of responding to the needs of teachers through its ISP in an endeavour to accommodate learners with special needs. This could be done by providing expanded opportunities to learners with learning barriers.

2.3.4 Influence of the environment, parents and the community on the academic performance

The environment and socio-economic background of the child plays a significant role to shape him /her to achieve academically SIAS (2014:14). Good performance requires collaboration between parents, teachers, community as well as stakeholders in education. Adults in society are entrusted with the responsibility to systematically and intentionally develop children cognitively (Vygotsky, 1978:1). It is vital to consider the importance of culture and society to promote cognitive development. It is believed that every society has its culture that it will pass down to its children which is part of cognitive growth. When parents are involved in their children's education, it is likely that they will achieve in school (Ngeow, 1999, Schargel & Smink, 2001). This suggests that the interaction of teachers with parents plays an important role in shaping learners because of the conducive learning atmosphere that would have been created. It allows parents to play their role in and out of school. Their children would perform better, attend school regularly and complete their activities.

Children acquire concepts, skills and develop thinking skills in their social environment (Vygotsky, 2018:1). Therefore, a learner's background and milieu may negatively or positively affect his potential to learn and maximise his potential (Akinbote & Ogunrati, 2004:17). Bandura's Social Learning Theory poses that the teacher or parent can interact with learners through modelling, reading or demonstrating in the socio-cultural context while they are observing (Bandura, 2006:6). Learners may pay attention, be motivated to assimilate and imitate the modelled behaviour. Parental involvement plays an important role in learners' progress (Conway, 2017:43). They discovered that learners perform better in tests, attend school regularly and complete their tasks. .

2.3.5 Effects of full inclusion into mainstream on the social behaviour of learners

The full inclusion of learners with learning barriers into mainstream classrooms invited interest for researchers to investigate how they can be best accommodated in mainstream classes. The teacher is expected not to compromise policy in teaching and assessing these learners. He should apply the same assessment standards for all (Government Gazette No 38356 of 19, 2014). This means that the teacher should not separate learners with learning barriers from those without disabilities when teaching. The teacher should equalise opportunities for all and address barriers that learners may experience (SIAS, 2014:14). This may be difficult for the teacher, especially because of overcrowded classrooms of a ratio of 1:69 coupled with limited resources (Yusof et al., 2014).

The one size fits all curriculum may not work for learners in a heterogeneous class (SIAS, 2014:14).The results obtained from a study states that special needs learners in the mainstream classes preferred to go back to special schools following stigmatisation and isolation in mainstream classrooms (Njoronge, 2015:16).

In order to understand how the context of education has been influenced by various theoretical perspectives, the researcher will explore a number of schools of thought that influence the way inclusion and specifically methods of learning are conceptualised.

2.3.6 International influences

Research findings from 1980-2013 in 24 peer studies in USA revealed that when enrolling learners experiencing learning barriers in mainstream schools, they show

improvement academically and socially compared to other learners in special schools (Price, 2018:8). On the other hand, Maddock and Maroun (2018:18) state that although learners' social and psychological development is enhanced, there can be both positive and negative social and psychological results of placing learners with disabilities in mainstream classrooms. The researcher agrees with this statement as teachers in mainstream classes lack skills to identify and teach learners experiencing learning barriers. Teachers use materials provided for mainstream learners to teach learners with learning barriers (Yusof et al., 2014:1242).

International schools in the Eastern Seaboard Region of Thailand discovered that they are not capacitated to teach learners with learning barriers in regular classrooms (Dapudong, 2014:7). The inability to teach learners with learning barriers may negatively impact their academic performance and their entire lives. This is further emphasised by Savolainen et al. (2019:51), who agree that mainstream teachers need capacity building to teach learners with learning barriers. If this is not fulfilled, learners may continue to face barriers in learning. The researcher agrees with this scholar as this inadequacy may make teachers to feel frustrated, develop fear and negative attitudes as they are not equipped to teach such learners. The high expectations of the DoE in performance may not be satisfied (Leepo, 2015:23).

Teachers are designers of learning programmes and materials in the teaching of inclusive policies in their classrooms. They have to implement teaching strategies and design lesson plans that will accommodate all. They need capacity building and continuous support in order to teach all learners towards ensuring quality curriculum delivery for quality results (Tsisindu, Joel & Edward, 2016:121). The USA introduced assistant teachers in order to help learners with special needs. China provided in-service training for its teachers to cope with learners with special needs. Developed and well supported teachers are likely to have confidence, and develop teaching strategies that will suit learners; hence they may not be fearful and will show positive attitudes towards learners with special needs. Swaziland released the Education and Training Sector Policy (EDSEC) in April 2011.This policy informs stakeholders to teach learners with disabilities. In Lesotho, education is fundamental to every learner, therefore should be catered according to their needs (Maddock & Maroun, 2018:24).

2.3.7 Professional matters

Teachers are expected to teach all types of learners in the general education classrooms. This poses a big challenge as they feel lacking in terms of skills and knowledge to accommodate learners with special needs (Pit-Ten-Cate et al., 2018:50). This implies that teachers are expected to be competent in skills, knowledge, attitudes, beliefs and be motivated to teach a heterogeneous class (Pit-ten Cate, 2018:51). This is further attested in that teacher competence

Teachers believed that they have little professional skills and knowledge regarding teaching mainstream classes (Savolainen et al., 2019: 51). Studies by Soodak, Podell and Lehman postulate that when teachers are well trained, they may feel confident, change their attitudes and successfully implement policies on inclusion (Avramidis, 2010:140). Furthermore, they need continuous training and support from external specialists. However, time factor and flexibility regarding the timetable is needed. There will be insufficient time for planning special activities and implementing differentiated material. The researcher agrees with the statement as some teachers lack those skills. In African states, it is stated that they do not have knowledge regarding teaching learners with special needs (Price, 2018:15).

In South Africa, teachers receive support from officials in inclusive education, but it is not enough as it is only for a day or two. This contributes to the lack of confidence as they engage with learners in their classrooms because they are unable to adjust the curricula to suit the needs of learners with learning barriers (Njoronge, 2015:16). This works to a disadvantage because of lack of professional knowledge and insufficient orientation to deliver the curriculum. This result in teachers' beliefs that the curriculum is imposed on them without further training and continuous support (Savolainen et al., 2019: 53).

The professional and psychological aspects of teachers play a pivotal role in the success of inclusive education (Tatyana et al., 2018:2). This implies that teachers should be capacitated regarding teaching learners with learning barriers and must have acquired teaching strategies that will help them to teach these learners. This further indicates that teachers must be willing to design special lessons and assessments for learners with learning barriers.

A psychological barrier like attitude is one of the challenges in the implementation of inclusivity in mainstream settings. This means that teachers have to develop positive

attitudes in teaching those learners for them to develop positive self-esteem and actualise their potential to the fullest (Tatyana et al., 2018:1). Learners will be used to the same teaching and assessment requirements like mainstream learners. They may also establish positive relationships with their peers, which is important in developing their social and emotional well-being.

South Africa has qualified special education teachers who can assist in designing differentiated activities for the learners. Although some of the teachers may lack knowledge of subjects that they are currently teaching, there are workshops that are conducted for three days though the content may not be enough. This is supported by (Skinner, Garreton & Schultz 2011:09), who argue that the shortage of qualified specialist teachers makes it difficult to teach. It is teachers' perceptions that it is impossible to teach learners with learning barriers if they are not well trained and there are no resources. Current teachers need to be trained and retrained. Professional knowledge is of prime importance to enhance teaching. It shapes teachers to develop positive attitudes and be willing to implement strategies that will assist learners.

2.3.9 Resource allocation

Teachers' knowledge of resources is important if the curriculum is to be delivered effectively and the performance of learners with special needs is to be realised (Wanjiku, 2014:14). This implies that teachers should know how to interpret the curriculum, use appropriate teaching methods, set realistic goals, use relevant teaching methods, assess learners, arrange for referrals, show appropriate professional conduct, use appropriate resources, evaluate progress and accommodate all learners according to their needs. Facilities play a significant role to facilitate teaching and learning (Savolainen et al., 2019: 52). This indicates that shortage of resources will highly contribute to poor performance and likely jeopardise the future of learners (Savolainen et al., 2019: 52). Hence it is believed that for teachers to teach successfully there is a need for continued support and sufficient resources (Price, 2018:5).

The present resources do not cater for vulnerable learners. Classes are overcrowded with a ratio of 1:69 learners in some schools. It therefore becomes difficult for the teacher to take individual care (Savolainen, et al., 2019:52). This is time-consuming and makes teachers not to finish the syllabus and is often blamed for this (Leepo,

2014:51). Furthermore, teachers should also think about the behaviour of learners with learning barriers as it is going to disturb academic performance of other learners in mainstream classes. The effective utilisation of resources is important to enhance teaching and learning.

Teachers, principals and DoE need a collaborated effort to implement policies and to ascertain that the desired objectives in teaching and learning are attained. There is therefore a need to examine the impact of teaching methods used to improve the performance of learners. Inadequate training of teachers is a huge challenge in an attempt to accommodate learners with learning barriers (Price, 2018:15). Facilities are some of the challenges facing mainstream schools. There is a need to invest in resources to realise the objectives of learners with learning barriers (Price, 2018:15). This shows that teachers in the mainstream school will need equipment and alternative strategies to enhance the performance of learners.

2.4 Models of schools of thought

Some of the key theories that underpin inclusive education are Constructivism, Behaviourism and Cognitivist (Al- Shammari et al, 2019:8). Constructivism refers to understanding the social dimensions in learning through adaptation of the content or activities in order to build the cognitive structure of learners (Al-Shammari et al., 2019:6). Constructivism views teachers as facilitators who guide learners to discover their learning (Al- Shammari et al., 2019:6). Learners are to make their meaning without the memorisation of information (Al- Shammari et al., 2019:6). This makes learning meaningful and realistic. Bruner's cognitive learning theory postulates that learners creatively construct new concepts and ideas based on the known to the unknown. Prior knowledge is key in this theory. Learners will be actively engaged as they construct new information, explore avenues and manipulate objects in their environment. In so doing, they will be accomplishing Piaget's Cognitive Theory of development.

Learners develop their spheres of thinking and reasoning, therefore socialise as they explore. Hence, Vygotsky, Bruner and Piaget contend that learning takes place when learners are asked in relation to their environment they actively develop concepts that link from the past to the current lesson (David, 2014:6). Piaget's cognitive

developmental theory is based on the idea that children learn when they are in their real world (David, 2014:18). In Vygotsky's theory of social development as well as the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), learning occurs under adult guidance or collaboration with others and solving the problem independently. This, according to Vygotsky, will assist learners to reason logically and focus mainly on matters at hand.

Behaviourism believes in imparting knowledge of reality and the acquisition of stimulus-response that is followed by reinforcement (Conway, 2017:40). Adapting teaching strategies from traditional teaching methods is known as behavioural teaching (Conway, 2017:40). Cognitivists focus on mental activities of the learner-influenced responses. It acknowledges processes of mental planning, goal-setting and organisational strategies. It focuses on making knowledge meaningful and helping learners to be more organised and able to relate new information to existing knowledge stored. For the study, the Constructivist model was applied. The social role is emphasised as it is vital for the cognitive development of the learner as he/she interacts with other peers and teachers, including parents (Vygotsky, 2018:1).

2.4.1 The Constructivist Approach

The Constructivist approach helps the researcher to understand in that it uses real-life experiences, making the lesson more meaningful (Al-Shammari et al., 2019:6). For example, the constructivist theory will assist with the nature of assessment that teachers use to assess learners with learning barriers. It will also assist teachers with the differentiation of tasks to suite the level of the learners as emphasised by the SIP. Learners will be able to develop cognitively to tackle the tasks. Their understanding, if provoked, makes them interpret, observe and adapt information to their level. This requires teachers' mental models which they should provide to learners for the understanding of content and making meaning of their real worlds. Learners require insights to make meaning of the whole (Al-Shammari et al., 2019:6). This means that the learner should be able to understand, construct, create through observing, interpret activities and adapt to learning. Constructivists maintain that understanding of content or instructions informs and maximises teaching (Al- Shammari et al., 2019:6). This involves a two-way process whereby questioning is involved and creative decision-making is encouraged (Conway, 2017:40). This encourages critical thinking, builds self-esteem and gives problem-solving strategies.

With the Constructivist theory, learners are encouraged to learn through discovery; therefore, it is advantageous because the teacher can vary methods of teaching that will suit learners' needs. Learners become part of the teaching and learning process (Conway, 2017:40). With the Constructivist theory, learners construct and create meaning. They develop their meaning of the content as they learn. Constructivists believe that teaching should be guided by comprehension of content. Teachers become facilitators as they are required to provide important information, and prepare activities for learners to actualise individual learning. The tasks should be learner-centred and make them to be hands-on and minds-on. They should be practical, meaningful and real to their experiences (Al-Shammari et al., 2019:6). This further implies that instructional strategies should help learners to explore complex topics from what they know to the unknown. For example, the use of real-life examples, modelling, debates, discussions and coaching. Teachers' concerns about learners with special needs will be voiced out how they shape their behaviour. The debates and discussions satisfy the social role as emphasised by Vygotsky cognitively as learners interact with peers and teachers, actively participate and reflect on the content. Constructivism does not favour memorisation but encourages relationship, understanding, reflection and self-monitoring.

Learners should be taught how to make summaries, paraphrase, make prediction and interpretation of visual images, which will help them to comprehend and remember what they have learned. The three days-workshop organised by DoE on inclusion is not enough, hence they seek external support from social services and other relevant stakeholders in education (Al-Shammari et al., 2019:6). Collaborations with services, psychologists, parents and the community play a vital role, embrace the Constructivist approach and enhance opportunities for social integration in schools. It further provides an opportunity for learners to practise knowledge gained and support them in their various communities (Wentzel, 2016:6).

Constructivist-based settings afford learners to learn from their older peers because they can formally and informally work together and learn in their environment. Teachers should organise brainstorming sessions for learners organised in pairs. It is important to apply behavioural approaches when teaching learners with learning

disabilities as it is coupled with behavioural and social problems (Al- Shammari et al., 2019:8).

2.4.2 Curriculum Differentiation as an Inclusive Strategy

Curriculum differentiation refers to how tasks or tests are changed without altering the standards of what the test or assignment measures to enable learners with learning barriers to learn from mainstream curricula (Meadows, 2012:13). Teachers should be capacitated to identify learners with learning barriers, be able to identify them and adapt lessons that will accommodate them. Learners are unique (Tatyana et al., 2018:2). Teachers may face a challenge to identify these learners as they did not receive training to this effect (Tatyana et al., 2018:2). Their inability to identify learners with learning barriers often makes teachers to label learners as arrogant, lazy, disruptive and disobedient (Wentzel, 2016:4). This further calls for teachers to be life-long learners in their profession to acquire knowledge to address the demands in the mainstream classroom. They can further collaborate in their teaching by sharing knowledge and expertise to provide opportunities for all learners to progress (Wentzel, 2016:2).

Teachers are expected to simplify activities to the level of learners with special needs (Wentzel, 2016:2). These authors agree with the DBE (2012:22) in that the Individual with Disability Education Improvement Act (IDEA) 2003 of the United States of America gives learners access to the curricula by accommodating them individually. The researcher finds this challenging in overcrowded schools, and makes it impossible for teachers to practise individual care. These authors agree that overcrowding makes it difficult to use resources (Wentzel, 2016:4). Some schools do not have resources that can be utilised to teach learners with learning barriers (Mavuso, 2015:193). With the accommodation strategy, a range of teaching methods, content and tasks are to be adjusted for learners.

Sandra, Miedel and Raymond (2000) postulate that parental involvement improves learners' academic performance. It plays a major role in shaping learners towards learning, achievement, school attendance and completion of tasks (Ngeow, 1999; Schargel and Smink, 2001). Demotivated and ill-disciplined learners, illiteracy of most

parents, poverty and unstable socio-economic backgrounds as well as coping with the curriculum change may put a challenge on teachers to implement policies. Quality resources are needed for the smooth-running of the curriculum. Some schools do not have resources that can be utilised for learners with special needs.

A study conducted in South Africa encouraged the notion of letting learners with special needs to remain behind an extra year to support their inclusion in a mainstream setting (Price, 2018:13). In Ethiopia, learners with special needs are all promoted through grade 4 regardless of their competencies in the next grade. This automatic pass policy is implemented to motivate them and to prevent dropouts (Price, 2018:13). In South Africa, learners' right to learn was of prime importance in the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. The UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2015) advocates for inclusion and promotion of lifelong-learning for all learners. It is advocated that learners with learning barriers be educated in a flexible setting that will accommodate them (Price, 2018:11).

The concept of Individual Education Plan (IEP) is used internationally while South Africa uses the ISP in the SIAS document (Nel et al., 2013:68). The ISP is designed for learners who need to be supported by designing extended activities and expanded opportunities for learning in consultation with teachers, learners, relevant health professionals and parents of affected learners, including the SBST (DBE, 2010:6). It is used for the flexibility of the curriculum when teaching and assessing learners or designing activities that will suit learners with learning barriers. Learners with special needs did not achieve when there were no specially designed activities to accommodate them (Spencer et al., 2016:178).

Methodology refers to the methods applied to a study. These methods are systematic and theoretical. Methodology alludes to one's approach towards problems and how one seeks answers to solve those problems. It is how the research was conducted. An individual's interests, assumptions and purpose shape which methodology one uses. (Taylor, 2015).

2.5 Conclusion

Education in South Africa serves as a foundation for equity and innovation. It may empower the society, and reduce poverty, crime and other related societal inequalities

(Van der Berg et al., 2011:265). Teaching in South Africa should be valued as of high quality coupled with teachers that are life-long learners who continually reflect and review their professional standards and teaching (Taylor, 2011:265). This means that teachers need to deliver quality education for all so that learners may become better citizens.

CHAPTER 3

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The qualitative research approach was used in this study. The approach is described as an exploration of the meaning that an individual or a group attaches to a societal problem A descriptive research design was used to describe attitudes, beliefs of teachers and their teaching strategies to improve the performance of learners with learning barriers . Purposive sampling was employed to carefully collect rich data from participants and its flexibility in using judgement. Thematic Content Analysis was employed to analyse data.

3.2 Research paradigm

A research paradigm refers to a mutual understanding of beliefs among scientists based on understanding and addressing problems (Kuhn, 1970:175). It is an approach which is tested and considered to be the standard by scholars and researchers. This study is based on the Constructivism paradigm. The aim of Constructivism is to gain a deeper understanding of individuals' world by studying them in their natural environment and appreciating their lived experiences. It maintains subjectivity and allows the researcher to interview participants in their real-life setting (Cohen et al., 2000).

The epistemological perspectives of Constructivism hold the view that people become involved in the construction of their own experiences and knowledge when observed in their natural environment through social interaction **(**Creswell, 2014:15). Apart from the descriptions of experiences given by participants, the researcher was able to observe and read what could not be put in words by participants by being present in the real-life classrooms of participants. Classroom observations, lesson presentations and the use of teacher-learner material LTSM brought up undisputed facts that the researcher could use to determine the credibility of findings.

With this view in mind, the researcher aimed to conduct an in-depth study of human behaviour by observing teachers in their real-life settings (classrooms) so as to explore alternative strategies used by these teachers in the Senior Phase to enhance the performance of learners in mainstream classrooms. It further says that it is not simple to control human behaviour as this can be affected by subjectivity; therefore, it becomes imperative to study human behaviour in their daily lives compared to their controlled environment (Louis et al., 2014). The researcher holds the view that the situation of an individual is determined by factors in participants' environment, therefore the school was a real setting for conducting interviews. In-depth interviews were held with participants. The researcher read and transcribed information from documents regarding learners who have been referred to Special Schools and those that have been assisted with the ISP.

Vygotsky, Erickson and Bronfenbrenner in their theories of Constructivism argue that knowledge is produced and re-produced when an individual reaches the next level of understanding (Nel et al., 2013:29). Jean Piaget's (1896-1980) theory postulates the epistemological aspect of Constructivism in that meaningful knowledge is constructed

within a social context and regulated by an individual as they experience learning and teaching (Conway,2017:40).

This further asserts that individuals need to be actively involved to make meaning of their lives through their socio-cultural contexts (Wentzel, 2016). Participants reflected on experiences influenced by prior knowledge (Akpan, 2016:394). Data was collected as teachers made sense, giving descriptions of the occurrences and use meaningful strategies in their classrooms as asserted by Bandura's learning theory (Bandura, 2016:25).

3.3 Research approaches

A research approach refers to a plan that states in details procedures and processes involved in research from the broad assumptions to specifics of data collection strategies or approaches as analysed and interpreted (Creswell & Creswell, 2008). It presents how selected individuals or groups of a sample construct their own understanding and meaning.

This study employed the qualitative research approach because it views the interconnection of participants to their natural setting as the basis for propitious research integrity. The approach was appropriate for the study as it allowed participants to express themselves more freely (Creswell, 2008:15). In the present study, participants gave a full account to all questions raised. A deeper understanding of alternative strategies to enhance the performance of learners with special needs in the Senior Phase was studied. This study is purposeful in that it seeks to find out alternative strategies used by teachers to improve the performance of learners with special needs in the Senior Phase.

The epistemological sphere was built on trust, respect and transparency. Its flexibility helped to relax the environment, making it less formal for participants to answer freely and to express their opinions based on the questions. It allowed the rhetorical structure of the research to give the researcher an opportunity to collect rich data from respondents and documents to develop a deeper understanding of perspectives, participants as individuals, their attitudes and opinions (Nassaji, 2016:129). The researcher made meaning from understanding participants' activities in terms of how they teach learners with special needs and feel about the reality they are in.

3.4   Research design

A research design refers to a strategy involving philosophical speculations, related procedures in conducting research from general assumptions to specific research strategies, data collection and analysis of the study (Creswell, 2009:233). This implies a strategy of inquiry that presents procedures within a research approach when conducting a research study.

A researcher could use a qualitative research design with open-ended questions, quantitative research design with close-ended questions and mix method strategies. A qualitative research design was employed in this study as in-depth interviews were administered to a small group to understand a social phenomenon from individual research participants on how they teach and improve the performance of learners with special needs in the Senior Phase (Mpya, 2007:10). This study used qualitative design as it allows open-ended questions, unstructured interviews, and transcription of words from data collection (Fischler et al., 2008:18). The aim is to look at alternative strategies to improve the performance of learners with special needs in their classrooms, especially those with learning barriers.

The descriptive research design was used as a research tool in this study as it is used to collect information of the study. The design in asking semi-structured questions to describe the phenomenon on how and which strategies used by teachers to teach in order to enhance the performance of learners with special needs (Neuman, 2014:431). Participants' words and perceptions were used to report data, interviews and documents analysis (Creswell, 2009:175).

The researcher used documents as other forms of data collection such as summary of results documents from the Steve Tshwete 2 Circuit and SBST SNA1& 2. All of these data were reviewed so that they yield the required information, which was categorised and coded into themes that include all data sources (Creswell, 2009:175). Data is explored inductively, and recurring themes, concepts or patterns are identified and described (Nassaji, 2015:130).

3.5   Sampling

Sampling refers to a selected group of people that can be observed during a study. The sample should represent the larger population to ensure that the researcher can

generalise the findings from it (Ben-Shlomo, Bookers & Hickman, 2013:1). Types of sampling are as follows: random sampling, systematic sampling, stratified sampling, clustered sampling, quota sampling, sampling and snowball sampling (Creswell, 2009). This study used purposive sampling to enable participants to provide information given their considerable years of experience working in the DoE. The flexibility of purposive sampling made it possible for the researcher to target participants who gave rich information regarding alternative strategies to enhance the performance of learners. The researcher purposely selected three participants that were willing to participate in the research. They had the relevant knowledge needed for the study to get attitudes and perceptions of participants representing the larger population.

Participants were interviewed using an interview schedule with unstructured, open-ended questions which gave them an opportunity for self-expression and detailed answers (see attached appendix F). The sample of the study was made up of three Senior Phase teachers out of 9 teachers in the senior phase and a total of 56 teachers in the whole school. They are teaching learners with learning barriers in the mainstream classroom. One of them teaches Mathematics, the second one teaches English First Additional Language (FAL), and the third one teaches IsiZulu Home Language. The other teachers were excluded because they teach foundation and intermediate phases. Documents showed on how they screen and do referrals. Other rich and relevant information on circuit performance were sought from the Circuit Office. Data collected was enough to yield meaningful results. Participants provided rich data needed for my study. The use of purposive sampling is significant for researchers to procure flexible and thick data that enable research studies to thrive by producing scholarly results (De Vos et al., 2002:1).

3.6   Data collection

Data collection involves a purposeful scope and gathering of information employing structured and semi-structured interviews with participants (Creswell, 2009:178). Various types of data collection are observation, which means that the researcher observes without participation; interviews which can be done face-to-face or telephonically; and documents in the form of minutes of meetings or newspapers, journals, letters or diaries and audio-visual materials such as a videotape (Creswell,

2009 :179-180). The setting was natural in that it allowed the researcher to collect data by asking questions and guiding the discussions.

Participants explained how they made sense of their experiences in their lives and perceptions. Purposive sampling was used in that a sample of participants was interviewed to observe their views, actions and interactions (Creswell, 2009:13). The researcher studied the phenomenon to make sense of contrasting data, possible replication, and constantly compared data (Creswell, 2009:194). The researcher ensured that objectivity and truthfulness are maintained. The following tools were used as data collection instruments: interviews, documentation and audio recording instrument.

3.6.1 Interviews

The interview was used as an instrument of data collection as it was relevant in the study in that participants were be face-to-face with the researcher. This allowed them to provide historical background (Creswell, 2009:179). The interview took place in the quietness of the staffroom. The researcher identified teachers teaching in the Senior Phase and briefed them about the research (Fischler & Creswell, 2008:23). The fact that the researcher works at the same institution as her colleagues made the research stronger because teachers with rich information, experience and knowledge were sampled.

Research participants were made aware that participation was of out of their free will and they could cancel any time if they did not want to continue with the interview. There was no coercion of participants. An interview schedule was employed to collect data from participants. Permission was sought to record the interview session so that the researcher does not miss out important information and can always play back the recording to verify information in order to save time than to go back to the participant. A voice recorder was used during each interview to allow full accurate recording. Notes were also taken. It is helpful to use a voice recorder because the researcher was able to pay attention to what was said during interviews so as to think about follow-up questions. The researcher maintained professionalism throughout the interview and applied courteousness.

3.6.2 Documentation

Document or content analysis refers to information that a researcher can learn from by studying, interpreting and analysing documents (Ary et al., 2010:29). These materials include public records, textbooks, letters, voice-recordings, reports and letters. In this study, a report on the reviews of circuit performance was sought from the Circuit Office. Rich information on how learners with special needs were supported individually in the SNA 1&2 was sought from the SBST. This worked to the advantage of the researcher in that words and language of participants were sought. It was convenient to get documents as they were fully compiled. Documentation saved time and expenses of transcription (Creswell, 2009:180).

3.6.3 Audio-recording

Qualitative research may use video recording or videotaping when collecting data (Creswell, 2009:231). Audio recording is a means of collecting data from participants using a voice-recorder. The researcher sought participants' permission to audio-record the data. Participants may not be recorded without prior permission. They knew and agreed to this arrangement. This study employed voice recording as a tool to collect data to save time and maintain transparency. Permission was granted. This saved the researcher from going back to ask questions in case she missed some information. She could playback the recorder and get the information she needed. Participants were assured that the recording will be destroyed after transcribing the information so that it can be coded. This was done to maintain confidentiality, trustworthiness, credibility and professionalism.

3.7 Data analysis

Data analysis refers to retrieving, isolating, grouping and regrouping of collected data into meaningful chunks. It involves the open-ended strategy of data collection by asking questions and analysis of data collected from known to unknown levels (Creswell, 2009:184). The researcher will transcribe and summarise the data collected. Voice recoded interviews will be transcribed and destroyed later to maintain the confidentiality of information. The steps in data analysis will be as in the below structure:

Interpretation of Themes (meanings)

Interrelating Themes—Interviews   Description

                        Documentation

                        Recordings

        Themes   Describing

Classifying data   -- Hand/Computer

41
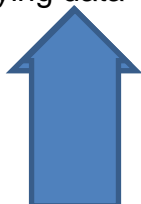
Studying data
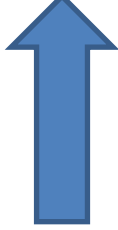
Organising data

Raw data (interview schedule and tape-recording)

Figure 1.1 A Illustrating linear hierarchical approach built from bottom to top (specific to general)

Steps in Data Analysis

Thematic Content analysis was employed to analyse collected data from interviews and documents. This helped to reduce and code the data collected from participants and documents. The method consisted of five steps: namely, transcription, checking and editing, analysis and interpretation, generalisation and validation (Creswell, 2009:189).

Step 1: Transcription

Tape-recorded data was transcribed onto paper for easier understanding of its content.

Step 2: Checking and Editing

Raw data was coded into smaller meaningful chunks. Coding refers to a process of preparing and grouping collected data into smaller meaningful units to further engage and make meaning of it (Creswell, 2009:227). Each paragraph and recording of the themes was organised into groups. Similar themes were grouped to form related units.

Step 3: Analysis and Interpretation

Data collected was interpreted and analysed. Participants were given the latitude to express themselves in their own language if they wish during the interview.

Step 4: Generalisation

The interviews were scrutinised, and similarities and differences were identified to allow typologies to surface and develop. The data were further coded and grouped into related similarities and differences.

Step 5: Validation

The researcher went through the transcripts again to ensure the validity of data. A central theme was obtained.

3.8   Quality assurance matters

Quality assurance in qualitative research refers to an organised strategy to review practices and procedures in order to identify alternatives. This ensures the protection of participants, quality of the research and credibility of results (Reynolds, Kizito, Ezumah & Mangesho 2011:43). The researcher ensured quality by setting principles for research participants, including herself. The principles were maintained throughout data collection, analysis and interpretation. The researcher made notes of relevant information for on-going referral and reflection. Flexibility was maintained during data collection and throughout the study. The researcher ensured that transparency is maintained by explaining every step of the research to participants to make them feel free. All decisions were communicated to participants. The research objectives were clearly articulated. Good ethical practice was maintained throughout all the processes of the research. An appropriate attitude was encouraged and maintained. The researcher ensured transparency and guided the participants.

There will be a triangulation of data to help check the information received from interviews with participants and data collected from documents against the research study (Patton, 2002:559). This will help the researcher to find out if the report from participants tallies with what is in the documents and aligned to the study to gain

understanding. The researcher will be able to crosscheck information from different participants and document study.

3.9 Ethical clearance

This research honoured ethical standards set by the Turfloop School of Ethics. The importance of maintaining ethics in the field of research finds consonance with views by other scholars such as Locke (1982), Marshall & Rossman (1989), Merriam (1988), Spradley (1980) in Creswell (2009:197-198), who posit that a research work has to be rigorous and scholarly methodologically and in terms of subsequent findings. The rights, values, attitudes, opinions and desires of participants were observed by the researcher. The required standards were adhered to by informing them about steps to be taken regarding the study.

The study was characterised by respect and non-coercion. Participants were informed that participation in the study was voluntary and will not jeopardise their work. Information about the learners and results of the Circuit performance will remain confidential, including reports regarding a deficiency or SNA 2 of a learner.

This study considered maintaining the institution's image, information and participants' confidentiality. The researcher safeguarded their rights by articulating the research objectives verbally and in a written form, and ensured that they are well understood. Participants were informed of data collection strategies and activities. All data analysis and transcription will be made available to them. Participants' right to anonymity was respected and will rest with them. Confidentiality was maintained throughout interviews and stages

3.10 Conclusion

The Chapter presented how the research paradigm shaped the results of the study. The approach to the study was well detailed and all processes were followed. Data were interpreted and documented.

CHAPTER 4

4. DATA PRESENTATION

4.1 Introduction

In the previous Chapter, the researcher discussed the phenomenon of interest which was alternative methods employed by teachers to improve the performance of learners with special needs in the mainstream setting, especially in the Senior Phase. A phenomenological method of conducting in-depth interviews and gathering information from documents was followed to maintain objectivity when collecting data (Langkos, 2014:5). A descriptive research design was used to describe attitudes, beliefs of teachers and their teaching strategies to improve the performance of learners with special needs. Purposive sampling was employed to carefully obtain rich data collected from participants and its flexibility in using judgement (Fischler & Creswell, 2008:5). Thematic Content Analysis was used to analyse data.

In this chapter, the researcher reports on the findings of the study by presenting themes that were obtained during Thematic Analysis of raw data from interviews and relevant documents from files of the SBST, and summary of results and schedules from the Circuit office. The aim of conducting a qualitative study is to obtain findings concerning the problem statement (Wentzel, 2016:75). Qualitative data analysis, therefore, changes data into findings. Raw data was sifted and reduced to important information, sifting it into significant information in order to identify relevant patterns

and themes. The researcher further used relevant literature in the study. The main themes and sub-themes emerged from the process of data presentation. Data collection was interactive and not linear.

4.2 Profile of the school and participants

4.2.1 School

It is a school built in 2007 as a combination of farm schools in Steve Tshwete 2 Circuit. It is situated in Mpumalanga and boasts 2 173 learners. It offers, among other subjects, IsiZulu Home Language from grade 1 – 3 and English as First Additional Language (FAL) Grade 4-7. It is a full-service/ Inclusive school that enrols learners with special needs in its mainstream classrooms. It is a Section 21 school and is governed by the School Governing Body (SGB). It has 22 classrooms, 56 teachers comprising 12 males and 44 females, 1 principal, 2 deputy principals, 4 head of departments (I male and 3 females), 9 PL1 male teachers and 44 PL1 female teachers ranging from REQV 13 (4 teachers), REQV 14(28 teachers), REQV 15 (11 teachers), REQV 16(6 teachers), 2 administration clerks and 3 gardeners. There are flushing toilet facilities, 2 of which accommodate disabled learners. It has ramps and rails, electricity, clean water facilities from the municipality and a borehole, and is partially fenced with 1.8 palisades. The school has no facilities like a laboratory, library, multimedia centre, music room, home economics centre, multipurpose centre, school hall, standardised sports field and a parking area.

4.2.2 Participants

Participant	Race and gender	Teaching and other responsibilities	Qualifications	Teaching in learning support	Teaching experience
1	Male Foreign teacher	PL1 educator teaching Mathematics in the Senior Phase	Bed Honours in Mathematics	No formal training in Inclusive Education. He only received	31 years

		He is an organiser of INSET Programs in the Circuit, a sports organiser, a member of the allocation committee of subjects and timetable.	BA Industrial Psychology	once off workshop on Curriculum Differentiation.	
2	Male African	PL1 teacher, Senior Phase IsiZulu Home Language. Currently acting HOD for Home Language Department Subject allocation and timetable committee member. Gate control, nutrition programme and manager of exams and invigilation timetables.	B.Ed. Honors Management He is currently studying for a Diploma in Public Management	Done a module in his Honors Degree of Inclusive Education.	3 years

3	Female African	She is PL1 teacher, currently Acting as HOD teaching English First Additional Language (FAL) She also has good experience in teaching foundation phase. She is a member of the School Based Support Team (SBST). She manages the scholar patrol and gate control in the morning before the school starts.	B.Ed. Management She currently studies for a Diploma in Public Management	Has done Inclusive Education at Honours level	6 years
Documents		Document from files of the School Based Support Team (SBST) in the form of SNA 1&2, Individual			

		Support Plan, reports from psychologists were studied.			
		Document study in the form of schedules and summaries of Circuit results from Circuit Office.			

4.3 Theme1: Poor performance of learners with learning barriers. Learners experiencing learning barriers usually perform poorly in written work, tasks and exams. The following headings are sub-themes: Learning content that does not accommodate learners with learning barriers, use of material that does not accommodate learners with learning barriers, lack of inclusive knowledge, lack of continuous support from officials, unacceptable social behaviour.

4.3.1. Learning content that does not accommodate learners with learning barriers in mainstream classrooms.

The learning content in mainstream classrooms is designed for learners without learning barriers. My departure point is that learners with learning barriers find it difficult to cope with their work. The participants said:

P1 *"Differentiated work must be given to the learners, work within the competence of the learner".*

P2 *"I need improvement on how to support learners with learning barriers".*

P3" *Learners need repetition and drilling, but it is impossible and slow because of overcrowded classes that I can't manage".*

It is a disadvantage on the side of these learners as they are struggling with the content of a high level. It also frustrates teachers as they are not equipped on how to plan lessons for them, and it becomes a burden to do extra work on top of the overcrowded classes that they are facing.

4.3.1.2 Use of material that does not accommodate learners with learning barriers.

Teachers use material that is provided for mainstream learners to teach learners with learning barriers (Yusof et al., 2014:1242 requirements for all (SIAS, 2014:15). This is what they said;

P1 *"The provisions of resources in the mainstream classroom do not accommodate learners with learning barriers.*

P2*"There is a need for the adjustment of activities for the learners with learning barriers"*

P3 *"It is difficult to teach with the provided resources because they do not understand and the classes are overcrowded, I cannot help learners individually".*

A teacher in a mainstream school is expected to comply with the provided curriculum and apply the same academic requirements for all (SIAS, 2014:15).

4.3.1.3 Lack of inclusive knowledge

Some teachers have little knowledge of teaching learners with learning barriers and of sustaining their improved academic performance (Leepo, 2015:21; Savolainen, 2019:51). This is further emphasised by Acheampong & Ampiah (2000:43-44), Avramidis et al. (2000), Harvey (2005) & Chabba et al. (2010).

P1 *"I don't have knowledge on how to teach learners with learning barriers"*

P2 "I have little knowledge gained from workshops and I have done introduction to inclusive education at the university. At least I can try "

P3" I have done a module on inclusive education, but I cannot apply it well because of overcrowding"

Inclusion may be successfully implemented throughout the world when teachers have acquired the necessary knowledge, skills, attitudes and are well supported (Wentzel, 2016:114). I agree with this scholar because they will be able to adjust the curriculum to suit the needs of learners with learning barriers (Njoronge, 2015:16).As a researcher I believe that teachers can do more if they understand the content they are about to teach. They should not feel that the curriculum is imposed on them without further training (Savolainen et al., 2016: 53). The professional and psychological aspects of teachers are important in the success of inclusive policies in mainstream classrooms (Guidelines for Full-service/Inclusive Schools, 2010:29).

4.3.1.4 Lack of continuous support from officials

Continuous professional support is needed for teachers to successfully teach learners with learning barriers in mainstream classrooms.

P1 "The three-day' workshop is not assisting as a lot of information is given to teachers in little time".

P2 "I need to be supported because I have little knowledge in teaching learners with learning barriers in mainstream classrooms.

P3 "I need continuous professional support pre-and in-service training from the DoE and DBST's.

Lack of knowledge on the side of teachers may work against the performance of learners relating to characteristics of learners with learning barriers.

4.3.1.5 Unacceptable social behaviour

One of the scholars postulated that learners without disabilities complained that learners experiencing learning barriers demonstrated unacceptable social behaviour in the classroom and that the teacher spent too much time on individuals (Demerath, 1994:18). This may result towards failure to complete the syllabus and would impact

negatively towards learner performance hence it becomes a misconduct on poor work performance Policy Handbook for Educators (2003:14). The participants said"

P1: "Learners without learning barriers feel pity for those with learning barriers, sympathetic, wants to rescue them. Some laugh, scorns despise them and they think that they are better. A few genuinely want to assist".

P2: "Teasing them, provocative and the teacher intervenes, protecting the one with learning barriers. The teacher creates a conducive environment, ensures that they are accommodated and protected".

Theme 2: Ineffective teaching strategies used by teachers to teach in inclusive classrooms. The sub –themes are as follows: One on –one –strategy, lecture method, extra classes and peer tutoring. The issue of overcrowding remains a contextual factor in mainstream classrooms as teachers are unable to assist learners with learning barriers. Individual care is not well practised coupled with little knowledge of teachers.

4.3.2.1. One –on –one strategy

The teacher in the mainstream classroom is expected to accommodate all learners in the teaching and learning encounter (SIAS, 2014:14). Educators are advised to select appropriate strategies that will help accommodate learners with special needs (Killen, 2000:22). There is a need for teachers to adjust teaching methods in order to accommodate all types of learners. Selected extracts on individual participants include the following:

P1: "One-on-one gives individual attention, a learner can ask questions freely. No pressure or jeering from class. More time is needed and it is a slow process."

P2: "As a language teacher I do listening and speaking helping kids who cannot read or write during break. I believe they can express themselves verbally and improve. I need improvement.

P3: "There are many learners in a class; it is difficult to do individual care. I do remedial after hours. Individual care is time-consuming".).

This suggests that the teacher may start by prioritising learners in the educational context by attending to them one-on-one, give them respect, listen to them and allow

time for them to share their opinions or views, challenges on schooling experiences, performance in subjects as well as their needs and interests (Maciver et al., 2018:1792).

4.3.2.2 Lecture method

Emphasis is on the development of teaching methods that will accommodate learners (White Paper 6, 2001:17). Teachers in mainstream classrooms use the lecture method to teach all types of learners.

P3: "They are all in one class and overcrowded, it is difficult to teach".

P2: "Learners should be divided and taught according to their barriers."

P3: "They should be grouped according to their abilities, and is difficult to assist them because of overcrowded classrooms".

A big challenge is that some teachers feel insufficient with skills and knowledge to accommodate learners with special needs; hence they use the lecture method (Pit – ten Cate et al., 2018:50).

4.3.2.3 Extra classes

Teachers are expected to be competent in skills, knowledge, attitudes and beliefs, and to be motivated to teach a heterogeneous class (Pit-ten Cate et al., 2018:51). The participants said,

P1 "Extra lessons are a good idea, but the attention span of learners with a learning barrier is too short, rendering extra lessons ineffective and works at a disadvantage for learners who stay far away from the school.

P2 "I engage learners in extra classes in the morning before the school starts and during breaks for slow learners".

P3 Teachers no more have break time since they have to assist learners with learning barriers.

This is further attested in that teacher competence involves the ability to use skills and knowledge successfully in a variety of situations under diverse circumstances which

may sometimes be strenuous and unpredictable. He calls this skill of teaching under changing conditions as 'efficacy' (Pit-ten Cate et al., 2018:51).

4.3.2.4 Peer tutoring

Peers model or facilitate activities to learners experiencing barriers in learning to help them to develop. Teachers can first train learners who perform at a higher level or those that are older than the others (cross-age tutoring) to model activities (Wentzel, 2016:48). The teacher may also introduce a "buddy" system whereby a more competent learner in language encourages the less gifted to read (Wentzel, 2016:49).

4.3.2.5 *Theme 3:* **CAPS Curriculum does not accommodate learners with learning barriers in the mainstream classroom**. The sub-headings are one-size fits all curriculum, Annual Teaching Plans and lesson plans that do not cater for learners with learning barriers and assessment requirements.

4.3.2.6   One size fits all curriculums

 The one-size fits all curricula are ineffective to learners experiencing learning barriers in the mainstream classroom (SIAS, 2014:14). Participants said"

P1"Learners with learning barriers find it difficult to cope with the work".

P2 "I teach them during break, I even assess them orally"

P3" They find it difficult to cope with the work in class".

 The results obtained from a study in the Netherlands discovered that learners with special needs in mainstream classes preferred to go back to special schools following non-flexible curricula and stigmatisation as they do not progress to the next grade Njoronge, 2015:16).

4.3.2.7 Annual Teaching Plan (ATP) and lesson plans that do not respond to learner needs.

Teachers are designers of learning programmes and materials in their teaching profession. Education in South Africa advocates that there should be one curriculum that accommodates different needs for all learners (Mzizi, 2014:35). Teachers utilise one ATP for all learners. It is difficult to do individual care (Savolainen, 2019:52).

Teachers find it difficult to adjust lesson plans, apply flexibility during the learning process, and adjust their attitudes and knowledge of strategies for learners (Price, 2018:18).

P1 said: *'It will be strenuous to do separate lesson plans and is time-consuming and makes teachers not to finish the syllabus and be blamed for non-compliance and may be charged for poor performance'*.

P2"Teachers utilise one ATP for all learners. It is difficult to practise individual care'.

P3"Learners are slow and I must finish the syllabus".

One scholar postulates that teachers are expected to design lesson plans suitable for inclusive learners. As a researcher I feel that teachers need capacity building and continuous support to respond to diverse needs in trying to accommodate all learners towards ensuring quality curriculum delivery (Tsisindu et al., 2016:121).

4.3.2.8 Assessment requirements

Special needs learners are subjected to the same assessment requirements of mainstream learners (Tatyana et al., 2018). The material they are giving them is of the same font even for those with sight problems. This makes them vulnerable to failure. The time frame for tests and exams are the same for all. All learners need to be assisted to achieve their studies, thereby having a bright future. On the other hand, learners with learning barriers may become frustrated with the mainstream assessment requirements, likely not to perform well academically and easily drop out of school or repeat grades throughout their schooling (Leepo, 2015:24). White Paper 6 agrees with the above researchers in that learners with learning barriers may drop out of school as a result of assessment standards that do not cater for their needs (DoE, 2001b:24).

The teacher in a mainstream school is expected to comply with the assessment criteria, not to compromise the standard of assessment and apply same academic requirements for all (SIAS, 2014:14). Furthermore, the teacher is expected to equalise opportunities for all learners by responding to challenges experienced by learners (SIAS, 2014:18). This means that teachers should vary the methods to accommodate all learners, teach and complete the syllabus as expected. The hypothesis is that it

might be difficult for them to complete and equalise opportunities for all since learners vary according to intellect and understanding. This challenge will further be worsened by the lack of knowledge, skills, attitudes, resources and time to accommodate learners experiencing learning barriers.

Assessment should not only entail writing; instead, the teacher should also know and understand individual learners (White Paper 6, 2010:30).

P 1: "Assessment is challenging especially the examination. Homework and classwork are usually not done. No helpers at home."

P2: "They cannot be assessed with other normal learners; they need a concession."

P3: "They are too slow and cannot be assessed with other learners, they need more time".

As a researcher I feel that sometimes they are giving them material that is of the same font even for those with sight problems. This makes them vulnerable to failure. The time frame for tests and exams are the same for all. White Paper 6 agrees with the above scholars in that learners with learning barriers may drop out of school as a result of assessment standards that do not cater for their needs (DoE, 2001b:24).

4.3.2, 9 Theme 4: Teachers' capabilities in teaching learners with learning barriers. Teachers feel that they are not capable to teach learners with special needs. This may be because they lack skills and knowledge in that field.

The sub-themes are as follows: Incompetent teachers. Failure to implement the curriculum and untrained teachers.

4.3.2.10 Incompetent teachers

Teachers confessed that they did not have the capacity to teach learners experiencing learning barriers (Savolainen et al., 2019: 51). The inability to teach learners with learning barriers may have a bad impact on their performance. Learners are unique (Tatyana et al., 2018:2).

P1: "Modern technology such as laptops, ICT gadgets, internet, and smartphones tablets connection, overhead projectors, PowerPoint presentation are needed to cope with learners".

"The problem is that there are conflicting rules in schools such as the one where learners are not allowed to carry phones to school and the use of some calculators is not allowed in some Mathematics topics."

"Developed and well-supported teachers are likely to have the confidence to develop teaching strategies that will suit learners with special needs."

Learners are likely not to progress if their teachers are not well trained; hence, the high expectations of DoE may not be satisfied (Leepo, 2015:23). Teachers may face difficulties to implement policies, especially regarding learners with special needs when rated in terms of results (Maciver et al., 2018).

4.3.2.11 Failure to implement the Curriculum to learners with learning barriers. White Paper 6 postulates that learners with special needs may drop out of school because of the curriculum that does not accommodate their needs (DoE, 2001b:24).

P1" They do not cope and I find it difficult to teach those learners"

P2 "I don't have skills to teach them. I need help"

P3 "I find it challenging to teach learners with learning barriers".

As a researcher I realised that policies on inclusion may put pressure and frustration on teachers because the DoE expects teachers to assist all learners to proceed to the next grades. Teachers may become unproductive in teaching, develop an attitude towards inclusion and become fearful to teach some learning areas.

4.3.2.12   Untrained teachers in teaching learners with learning barriers

Teachers are faced with inadequate skills and knowledge to teach learners with special needs in mainstream classes (Savolainen et al., 2019: 51).

P1" I have only received a day workshop on inclusive policy. I find it difficult to teach those learners"

P2"I only studied a module on the introduction of inclusive education, therefore it is not enough"

P3 "I find it challenging to teach learners with learning barriers".

The researcher agrees with this statement that it is impossible if their special needs and resources are not met (Leepo, 2014:51). There is a shortage of special education teachers (Taylor et al., 2012:06) Workshops that are conducted for three days are not enough (Taylor, 2008:25). This is supported by Skinner, Garreton and Schultz (2011:09), who argue that the shortage of specialist teachers make it difficult to teach. Current teachers need to be trained and re-trained.

4.3.2.13 Theme 5: Challenges faced by teachers in teaching learners with learning barriers

A challenge refers to a new activity or something which needs great input and determination (Wentzel, 2016:93). Sub-themes as eluded by participants are discussed below. The sub-themes are as follows: Overcrowded classrooms, language of learning and teaching, poverty, demotivated learners, poor ICT skills and tools unavailable for teaching and learning.

4.3.2.14 Overcrowded classrooms

Overcrowding happens when learners exceed the limit and disturb teaching and learning (Wentzel, 2016:93). This means that teaching and learning may not be effective when the number of learners exceeds the required limit.

P1 "Teaching is not effective in such classes. I am struggling to teach".

P2 "I cannot finish the syllabus on time as I have to assist slow learners".

P3 "It is time-consuming and I find it difficult to finish the syllabus on time".

Teachers may not be able to finish the syllabus; then it may be a problem as learners will approach the examination unprepared (DBE, 2012:24). Results will drop, rendering the school dysfunctional. As a researcher I feel that there should be a strong cooperation networking professional, support and monitoring among stakeholders (Price, 2018:11).

4.3.2.15 Language of learning and teaching (LOLT)

 The school offers IsiZulu Home Language from Foundation Phase and switches to EFAL in the Intermediate Phase. This may be a challenge and disadvantages learners

who are not Zulu speaking. They only start learning subjects in English in the Intermediate Phase.

P1"It is a challenge for learners who are not Zulu speakers"

P2 "They start learning in English in the intermediate phase"

P3" Learners struggle to understand English and it is time consuming'

Research by Lumadi (2013:116) postulates that the curriculum should be designed to meet the needs of the school by looking at the nature of the school. Many schools choose English as their LOLT but for the school where the study is conducted, they chose IsiZulu since the majority of the community speak IsiZulu and IsiNdebele.

The Language in Education Policy gives learners a choice of LOLT (Wetzel, 2016:109). Mainstream learners in South Africa have the right to choose their LOLT based on eleven languages. A recommendation by Motitswe (2012:102) postulates that LOLT should be based on the predominant language used in the community. In the case of this study, IsiZulu is the LOLT of the school. All learners should be supported and given the necessary attention (DBE, 2010:14).

4.3.2.16 Poverty

Poverty is a contributory factor towards a learner experiencing learning barriers throughout schooling years (Wentzel, 2016: 99).

P1"Most learners at this school come from poor backgrounds and poverty-stricken families.

P2" They are mostly orphans and cared for by their grandmothers and extended family members."

P3"The community is characterised by a high rate of unemployment, crime and instability"

Research postulates that poverty may have a negative effect of prolonging learners' schooling years, making them vulnerable to failure (Wentzel, 2016:99).

4.3.2.17 Demotivated learners

Teachers are faced with demotivated learners.

P1 "Sometimes I would think that they are arrogant, and do not want to do tasks not knowing that these learners experience learning barriers.

P2" Learners are reluctant to finish their work and this works against them"

P3"They regularly absent themselves from school

4.3.2.18 Inadequate Information Computer Technology (ICT) Skills and tools

The year 2020 is deemed to be the fourth Industrial Revolution where technology plays a pivotal role. The development of high technology puts demands upon teachers to be skilled to manage an inclusive classroom.

P1"Both teachers and learners can search for relevant information through the internet and save time"

P2". Poverty and unemployment make it difficult to access such resources"

P3" It would be a good thing to introduce learners to ICT at an early age"

This would empower learners to research at an early age and acquire new information as they get to the internet.

4.3.2.19 Theme 6: Low pass rate among learners.

The pass percentage is very low at times because of poor performance in both written work and tests. The following are sub –headings: Incomplete homework, slow pace in writing classwork, unfinished assignments and rigid examinations

4.3.2.20. Incomplete homework

Teachers assess learners by giving them homework. This is likely to have challenges because:

P1 "Most learners stay with their grandmothers and did not finish school or the tasks that are given are challenging to them that they find it difficult to assist their children"
P2" Some working parents work night shifts and only arrive home after their kids had left for school."

P3" Some parents help their kids with classwork and homework"

The involvement of stakeholders in the education of the learners makes it for them to improve their performance. The ISP demands a collective of all stakeholders to plan activities together DoE (2015:11).

4.3.2.21. Slow pace in writing classwork.

Policy expects the teacher to give a certain number of activities and finish the ATP on time. Learners are subjected to the same requirements of mainstream learners (Tatyana et al., 2018).

P1"The contextual factor of overcrowding makes it difficult to work. Individual care is time-consuming and I feel overburdened"

P2" There is little time to take individual care .Classes are overcrowded"

P3"It is difficult to apply individual care because of overcrowded classrooms".

As a researcher I find this to be a challenge since the teacher may not have time to plan separate activities due to overcrowding and insufficient knowledge. Policy expects the teacher to give a certain number of activities and finish the ATP on time. Learners are subjected to the same requirements of mainstream learners (Tatyana et al., 2018). The aim is to assist them to perform well academically at their own pace. The researcher disagrees with this statement because of the contextual factor of overcrowding it may be difficult to assist them individually.

4.3.2.22 Unfinished assignments

The teacher in the mainstream school is expected to comply with the assessment criteria, not to compromise the standard of written work and apply the same academic requirements for all (SIAS, 2014:17). Furthermore, the teacher is expected to accommodate all learners by assisting them to achieve.

P1 "They do not finish their classwork or homework"

P2" The work is challenging to them, hence they do not finish"

P3" We have no time, and must finish the ATP".

As a researcher, I feel that unfinished written work will disadvantage learners as they will not be well prepared for the examination.

4.3.2.23. Rigid examinations

The teacher in the mainstream school is expected to comply with the assessment criteria, not to compromise the standard of assessment and apply the same academic requirements for all (SIAS, 2014:14). Furthermore, the teacher is expected to assist all learners by addressing the challenges that they may experience.

P1" We are expected to comply with the assessment standards /criteria , not compromise it".

P2 "They need extra time for finishing their exams"

P3"They must have a separate time for writing and not mix with the learners without learning barriers.

 Teachers are real implementers of policies and need to be part of policymaking decisions. They are expected to comply and implement all policies without fail. This poses a challenge to them and makes them develop negative attitudes because they lack confidence and knowledge of teaching.

4.3.2.24 Theme 7: Lack of resources

As a researcher, I am of the opinion that resources play an important role in effective curriculum delivery and getting good results. The school in which this study was conducted lacks resources for full inclusive learners and those with learning barriers. The sub-themes are as follows: resources that do not respond to learners with learning barriers, mainstream resources and the role of School Based Support Team

4.3.3.17 Resources that do not respond to learners with learning barriers

Quality education depends on the efficient use of resources as voiced out by teachers that it is difficult to teach using current resources as they do not assist learners (Savolainen et al., 2019: 52).

P1" Current resources like textbooks do not respond to learners with learning barriers.

P2 "Some learners need equipment like hearing aids, resource rooms"

P3"They need special schools with their resources"

This indicates that resources that do not respond to the needs of the learners will highly contribute to poor performance, and likely to jeopardise the future of learners (Savolainen et al., 2019: 52). The findings showed that there is a need for continued support and sufficient resources for teachers to teach learners with learning barriers. There is a need to invest in resources to realise the objectives of learners with learning barriers (Price, 2018:15).

4.3.2.26. Mainstream resources

Teachers use mainstream provided material to teach learners with learning barriers (Yusof et al., 2014:1242).There is a shortage of resources and the content is tailored for mainstream learners (Yusof et al., 2014:1242).

P1" It is difficult to teach using current resources as they do not respond to the special needs of learners with learning barriers"

P2" There is a shortage of resources in our school".

Effective utilisation of resources is essential in the teaching and learning situation to achieve the desired goals and objectives. Shiimi,(2018:16). This includes barrier-free school buildings, hearing facilities, textbooks, resource rooms, equipment and materials for learners with special educational needs.

4.3.3.19. The role of the School-Based Support Team (SBST)

SBSTs have the responsibility of responding to the needs of teachers through its ISP in an endeavour to accommodate learners with special needs (DBE, 2014:18). This could be done through the provision of opportunities for teachers to collaboratively solve challenging areas of concern and facilitate support as needed.

P1" The SBST capacitated us to do the ISP but it is still a challenge to me"

P2" Some parents are not cooperative because they do not support their kids to learn"

P3 "Some parents do not respond when they are invited to school to discuss educational challenges of their kids."

The findings indicate that teachers together with relevant support structures, for example, parents, communities and SBSTs' have the responsibility to identify and address all learning barriers that may arise within the school (Maddock & Maroun, 2018:4). For example, identifying barriers and obstacles that learners may experience in an endeavour to access the curriculum. Furthermore, the DBST has a role and responsibility to manage SIAS (DBE, 2014:35). This will help to empower teachers to acquire skills and to share information openly, respect the opinion of others, and communicate with parents to assist learners with learning barriers.

4.3.2.28 Theme 8: Curriculum differentiation

Curriculum differentiation refers to accommodating diverse needs of learners with special needs by giving them respect and support, adapting the curriculum to their level and creating a conducive environment for them (DoE, 2010:32). The sub-themes are as follows: adapting the curriculum, individual support plan(ISP) and accommodations.

P1 "The curriculum is not differentiated because of a high number of learners"

P2 "Another challenge is that teachers have little knowledge of the diverse learning styles of modifying lessons,

P3"There is a need of adapting and extending the curricula to the level of learners."

The findings show that parents, teachers, SBST, DBST and other stakeholders in education need to support one another.

4.3.2.29 Adapting the curriculum

Teachers are expected to use a flexible curriculum to accommodate the demands of learners with special needs (Wentzel, 2016:2). This scholar agrees with the DBE

(2012:22) in that he curriculum may be difficult for the teachers because of overcrowding in schools.

P1" It difficult to adapt the curriculum for learners to practise individual care because of overcrowding".

P2 "I help learners during break, but it is not enough"

P3" I find it difficult to practice because of the overcrowded classes".

Curriculum adaptation allow teachers to adjust the activities accordingly, assist learners to work on tasks that are of their level, at their own pace and achieve the desired goal.

4.3.2.30 Individual Support Plan (ISP)

ISP refers to planning for learners who need extra support from teachers in mainstream classrooms in consultation with parents and the SBST of the school (White Paper 6, 2010:49).

 P1"Some parents do not assist their kids because of working till late of they do not understand the complex work"

P2" Some parents are cooperative, but also lack knowledge to assist learners in some tasks"

P3"The SBST assists teachers with ISP, but they also have limited knowledge"

SIAS addressed the needs of learners with special needs because they felt not being supported and dropped out of school or repeated grades. It is expected that teachers should become part of teams like SBST and DBST to successfully support learners. This needs teachers to be skilled. SBST has to assist teachers with the ISP as stipulated.

4.3.2.31 Accommodations

 Accommodations refer to how tasks or tests are changed without altering their standards to enable learners with special needs to have access to the mainstream curricula (Meadows, 2012:13)

.P1" I still need help on how to identify learners with learning barriers"

P2"I need help on how to adapt lessons that will accommodate learners"

P3"I need to be trained how to identify such learners"

The findings showed that teachers should be capacitated on the characteristics of learners with learning barriers, be able to identify them and adapt lessons that will accommodate them. Learners are unique (Tatyana, 2018:2). Their inability to identify learners with learning barriers often makes teachers to label them as arrogant, lazy, disruptive and disobedient (Wentzel, 2016:4). They can further collaborate in their teaching by sharing knowledge and expertise to provide opportunities for all learners to progress (Wentzel, 2016:2).

4.3.2.32 Theme 9 : Teacher attitudes

Initially, teachers had a positive attitude in teaching learners with learning barriers, but as they encounter problems that they cannot solve or discover that they are unable to help, then some of them develop negative attitudes and feel that these learners are a burden. The sub-themes are as follows: lack of skills and overburdened.

P1"These learners are a burden to us, I don't know how to assist them"

P2"I need help on how to adapt lessons that will accommodate these learners"

P3"I still need training regarding these learners"

From these findings, it is clear that teachers still need extra assistance to help learners with learning barriers.

4.3.2.33 Lack of skills

The successful implementations of inclusive policies depend largely on the attitude of teachers towards learners with special needs (Dapudong, 2014:1). The impact of interrelationships between stakeholders enhances grounds for positive relationships and a decline of barriers (Conway, 2017:26).

P1" I am trying my best and don't have skills to assist these learners"

P2"I am 3 years in the teaching profession and still need still need help"

P3"I really need to be assisted on teaching learners with learning barriers'

Teachers are real implementers of inclusive policies. Therefore, they need to be committed when they engage with learners so that they can be able to identify learners experiencing learning barriers in the classroom (Tatyana et al., 2018:2). Stakeholders like teachers, psychologists, healthcare specialists, parents, learners and district officials need to collaborate to successfully support learners with special needs (Conway, 2017:43).

4.3.2.34 Overburdened

Psychological barriers like attitudes are some of the challenges in the implementation of inclusive policies in mainstream settings.

P1'Teachers feel that they are overburdened with learners with learning barriers. They feel that these learners do not belong to mainstream school and must be moved to special schools where they will learn at their own pace, get relevant trained teachers for inclusive schools, get relevant curricula and be assessed according to their capabilities and avoid wasting time in the mainstream classroom".

P2 "Classes are overcrowded and we don't have time, but I still assist some learners during break"

P3" They don't belong in mainstream schools, they must be taken to special schools"

The findings show that teachers need to develop positive attitudes towards learners with learning barriers so that they may develop positive self-esteem and actualise their potential to the fullest (Tatyana et al., 2018:1).

Teachers believed that they have little professional skills and knowledge regarding teaching learners with learning barriers (Savolainen et al., 2019: 51). Studies by Soodak, Podell and Lehman postulate that when teachers are well trained, they may feel confident, change their attitudes and successfully implement policies on inclusion (Avramidis, 2010:140). Furthermore, they need continuous training and support from external specialists. However, time factor and flexibility regarding the timetable is needed. There will be insufficient time for planning special activities and implementing differentiated materials. The researcher agrees with the statement as is the case with teachers as they lack skills.

Well-trained teachers are needed in classes to teach, not to develop negative attitudes towards learners with special needs as it destroys participation and psychological aspects of learners in the classroom setting, and lowers academic performance (Dapudong, 2014:1). This further indicates that attitudes can be one of the barriers in the successful implementation of inclusive policies. These attitudes are influenced by the following factors: the level and nature of disabilities of learners, teachers' readiness in terms of knowledge and qualifications on how to teach learners with learning barriers, the confidence they have to teach such learners, and the restructuring of the curriculum to accommodate learners with special needs (Njoronge, 2015:11).

The restructuring of the curriculum should be in parallel with capacity building on inclusion for teachers. The changes should embrace the attitudes of teachers, in-service training, and re-training of teachers (Njoronge, 2015:11-16). Stakeholders like DoE, teachers, parents and the community at large need to be committed for the successful implementation of inclusive policies (Sharma, 2006:80). Negative attitudes impede the implementation of inclusive policies, learning and performance; hence there is a need for stakeholders in education to work together for inclusion to be implemented. For example, the teacher identifies learners with learning barriers, SBST further assists teachers with ISP and SNA 1&2, DBST psychologists conduct tests and referrals and provide appropriate services (Njoronge, 2015:16).

4.3.2.35 Theme 10: Lack of parental support

Some parents are not playing their role in helping their children to learn. This is quite disturbing and compromises their education. Parents are expected to play a significant role in assisting their children to learn (White Paper 6, 2010:18). The sub-themes are as follows: illiteracy among parents/guardians, Child headed families/absent parents.

P1"Themajority of parents do not play their role to assist their child learn"

P2"Some parents are struggling to assist their kids learn because they sometimes find the work challenging"

P3"The parents are cooperative with the teachers to assist the kids"

The findings indicated that the parents, teachers and all other stakeholders in education need to work together to help the child learn and to overcome some of the barriers.

4.3.2.36 Illiteracy among parents/guardians

Studies by Sandra (2000) and Miedel and Raymond (2000) postulate that parental involvement improves learners' academic performance. It plays a major role in shaping them towards learning, achievement, school attendance and completion of tasks (Ngeow, 1999:14).

P1 "Some kids are heads of the families and find it difficult to cope with school work and being responsible as heading the family"

P2" The work is challenging to some parents and they find it difficult to assist their kids "

P3' There are parents who are trying to assist their kids towards schoolwork".

The findings indicated that demotivated and ill-disciplined learners, illiteracy of most parents, poverty and unstable socio-economic backgrounds as well as coping with curriculum change make it difficult for teachers to implement inclusive policies. Learners can develop academically when all stakeholders are aware of their intellectual development and be guided to reach a more complex level of performance; therefore, there is a need for collaboration on the side of teachers, parents, community and all educational stakeholders.

4.3.2.37 Child headed families /absent parents

Some children are heading families because they are orphans, and stay with their grannies /guardians as a result of the pandemic HIV/AIDS and Corona Virus. The community is characterised by a high level of illiteracy, unemployment, lack of role models, ignorance and poverty. This has a negative impact on the performance of learners because they are not supported with homework /classwork and other basic needs.

P1"Some children head families and some are vulnerable"

P2"Some stays with their grannies that also need to be assist as the schoolwork is challenging "

P3"They need to be supported or take the kids to after care for assistance"

The findings show that parents are willing to assist their kids, but due to some challenges regarding knowledge becomes a problem. For example when the parents find that the schoolwork is challenging and does not have other options of taking the child to aftercare due to lack of funds.

4.4 Results from Documents

Data was collected from documents such as schedules, a summary of results and School-Based Support Team file on SNA forms. The researcher obtained information from SNA 1 & 2, and diagnostic letters of referrals from a psychologist. Documents and records are significant and valuable sources of information and evidence in research (Wentzel, 2016:68). The researcher focused on relevant information in the study using data collection tools (Creswell, 2007:82). The table below shows data collected from documents.

Theme	Sub- themes
4.4.1 Theme 1 No improvement in learner performance	4.4.1.1 Inability to complete tasks 4.4.1.2 Low attention span 4.4.1.3 Teaching strategies
4.4.2 Theme 2 Poor performance in promotional schedules	4.4.2.1 Abnormal number of learners in the classrooms

Theme 1

4.4.1 No improvement in learner performance

From documents SNA 1 and 2, the researcher discovered that learners with learning barriers were over-aged (15, 16, 17) for Senior Phase class. The documents showed that there was no improvement in learner performance**.**

Sub-theme

4.4.2 Inability to complete tasks

From teachers' records, the researcher found that learners struggled to complete tasks without teachers' assistance. They experienced barriers in reading and writing. From observations by the teachers, they failed to follow instructions. It is now the third term and the learners are still struggling. They cannot spell words correctly during formal and informal assessments. They have very supportive parents and honour assistance or taking them for check-ups.

Although teachers try to give individual support by making them sit at the front row, learners find it difficult to copy correctly from the chalkboard to assist them individually during teaching and learning. They have a low self-concept and are demotivated.

4.4.3 Low attention span

The documents revealed that learners have a low attention span, their pace of learning is slow, are struggling to understand lessons, experience difficulty in everything, feel bored during lessons and are playful and restless during lessons. This is very disturbing to learners without learning barriers, and consumes much teaching time. Oral assessments are done so that they can answer but, takes time as their thinking is too slow; this is frustrating because of the high number of learners.

4.4.1.3 Teaching strategies

Teaching strategies have been adjusted to accommodate learners with learning barriers, but it is too difficult to work with them because of time and their level of difficulty as teachers have little knowledge and training.

Evidence from documents show that psychologists visit the school to assist with cognitive assessment, counselling, emotional support and on academic aspects to learning, especially in the foundation phase. The psychologist also renders support in the form of interviews and referrals. Some parents were in a denial stage when approached with the state of their children and would question teachers, and become difficult to accept the position of their children as learners who experiencing barriers to learning. The DBST also guides the SBST regarding processes of referrals and assistance towards learners.

Theme 2

4.4.5 Poor performance evident in promotional schedules

Learners fail all subjects as a result of abnormal numbers in classes and the language of learning and teaching.

4.4. Abnormal number of learners in the classes

The results from promotional schedules of the years 2018 to 2019 show consistent failure on the side of learners with learning barriers. They repeat grades and will only go to the next grade on account of age-cohort. This result in them not performing well in their work and fail all subjects. Another aspect is the issue of the mother tongue IsiZulu, which they begun to learn in the Foundation Phase and then English in grade 4, the Intermediate Phase. A learner learns Izibalo (Mathematics in IsiZulu) in the Foundation Phase and learns it as Mathematics in grade 4. This is frustrating and contributes towards poor performance as the learner will start learning new concepts in English.

Results from interviews

The main themes and sub-themes that emerged from the study are presented in the table below.

Themes	Sub themes
4.3.1 Theme 1 Poor performance of learners with learning barriers in mainstream classrooms	4.3.1.1 Learning content that does not accommodate learners with learning barriers 4.3.1.2 Use of material provided for mainstream learners in teaching learners with special needs 4.3.1.3 Lack of inclusive knowledge 4.3.1.4 Lack of continuous support from officials 4.3.1.5. Unacceptable social behaviour
4.3.2 Theme 2 Ineffective teaching strategies used by teachers to teach in inclusive classrooms	4.3.2.1 One-on-one strategy 4.3.2.2 Lecture method 4.3.2.3. Extra classes 4.3.2.4 Peer-tutoring
4.3.3 Theme 3 CAPS Curriculum that does not accommodate learners with learning barriers in the mainstream classroom	4.3.3.1 One-size fits all curriculum 4.3.3.2 Annual Teaching Plan (ATP) and lesson plans that do not accommodate learners with learning barriers 4.3.3.3 Assessment requirements
4.3.4 Theme 4 Teachers' capabilities in teaching learners	4.3.4.1 Incompetent teachers 4.3.4.2 Curriculum implementation (failure) 4.3.4.3 Untrained teachers

with learning barriers	
4.3.5 Theme 5 Challenges faced by teachers in teaching learners with learning barriers	4.3.5.1 Overcrowded classrooms 4.3.5.2 Language of Learning and Teaching (LOLT) 4.3.5.3 Poverty 4.3.5.4 Demotivated learners 4.3.5.5 ICT skills and tools unavailable
4.3.6 Theme 6 Low pass rate	4.3.6 1 Incomplete homework 4.3.6.2 Slow pace in writing classwork 4.3.6.3 Unfinished assignments 4.3.6.4 Rigid examinations
4.3.7 Theme 7 Lack of resources	4.3.7.1 Resources that do not respond to learners with learning barriers. 4.3.7.2 Mainstream resources 4.3.7.3 The role of School Based Support Team (SBST)
4.3.8 Theme 8 Curriculum differentiation	4.3.8.1 Adapting the curriculum 4.3.8.2 Individual Support Plan (ISP) 4. 3.8.3 Accommodations
4.3.9 Theme 9 Teacher attitude towards learners with learning barriers	4.3.9.1 Lack of skills 4.3.9.2 Overburdened

4.3.10. Theme 10 Lack of parental involvement	4.3.10.1. Illiteracy among parents/guardians 4.3.10.2 Child headed families /absent parents

4.4.5 Conclusion

The chapter focused on the analysis and interpretation of data collected to answer the research questions, which deal with alternative strategies to improve the performance of learners with special needs in education, especially in the Senior Phase. The chapter started with the introduction, followed by the discussions based on the qualitative data collected and analysed into themes. Documents that were used to collect data were viewed, analysed and discussed.

CHAPTER 5

5. DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1   Introduction

In chapter 4, the researcher presented results of interviews with participants about their experiences of teaching learners experiencing learning barriers in the mainstream classes. Data collected from interviews and documents were analysed and interpreted. The objective of this chapter is to discuss the results and its implications in the study informed by the findings, to draw conclusions and to make recommendations of the study.

5.2   Summary of results

This study aimed to investigate teaching and learning strategies used by teachers to improve the performance of learners experiencing barriers to learning. Furthermore, the study sought to determine attitudes of teachers towards inclusion in mainstream classes as well as the social behaviour of learners with learning barriers in regular schools in Mpumalanga. This study followed the qualitative approach and adopted semi-structured interviews along with purposive sampling of participants. In addition, thick data was obtained from various documents about the subject under scrutiny. The overall findings suggest that of the total number of fifty-six teachers in the mainstream schools studied, only three (teachers) apply effective strategies to teach learners with learning barriers. This study revealed that most of the teachers do not apply effective strategies in their teaching and learning practice. One of the contextual factors is overcrowding. This poses a challenge to learners with learning barriers as it impedes their learning. It also hinders the few teachers that apply the strategies in their practice. The rest of the findings become clearer as I explore individual themes.

5.3   Discussion of individual themes

5.3.1 Teachers' capabilities in teaching learners with learning barriers

Analysis of the collected data showed that teachers lack inadequate skills to teach learners with learning barriers in mainstream classrooms.

These findings are consistent with other studies. For example, Lamport, Graves & Ward (2012:65) postulate that the successful implementation of inclusive policies depends on skills, attitudes and knowledge of teachers, cooperation with colleagues and relevant resources to accommodate the needs of learners. The preceding assertion is corroborated by Donohue & Bornman (2014:2), who point out that the successful implementation of inclusion globally requires teachers to have adequate training and enough support coupled with positive attitudes towards inclusion. Teachers feel that they are not equipped to teach learners with learning barriers as they were not trained enough and did not receive relevant support to mitigate the demands of learners with learning barriers in the mainstream classrooms, including common problems emanating from inclusion in the school (Engelbrecht et al., 2007:157).

The researcher's view regarding the above statement is that the negative attitudes may be aggravated by the fact that teachers have not received enough training to teach learners experiencing learning barriers, as well as lack of follow-ups. Therefore, they feel that those learners are a burden; they fear the unknown and think that the learners are lazy. White Paper 6 (2010:10) argues that inclusion is a process rather than an event. This means that teachers need continued support and not a once-off or a three-day workshop. This has to be coupled with follow-ups by all structures like the DoE, parents, teachers and learners. A study by Lumadi (2013:116) postulates that teachers were trained haphazardly with no follow-ups. Some teachers are highly qualified, but there is a need for them to undergo training to deal with learners with learning barriers in order to equip them to meet any challenge that they may face in their mainstream classrooms.

It is significant to start with a small scale of information in training teachers than to bombard them with a lot of information which they will not be able to understand and implement (White Paper 6, 2010:10). It is safe not to over-plan (White Paper 6, 2010:13). Constructivists maintain that teachers' lack of knowledge contributes to poor knowledge of a variety of inclusive strategies and collaboration with other stakeholders such as psychologists, counsellors, the community and all other partners in education.

5.3.2 Curriculum Differentiation

The curriculum should be simplified in terms of content, lesson plans, methods of teaching, class and home activities, assessment procedures, and examination to suit diverse abilities in the mainstream classroom (Wentzel, 2016:110). The curriculum can be a barrier to learning for learners with learning barriers in the mainstream classroom. This emanates from the subject matter taught, the language of instruction, classroom setting and its management, teaching and learning strategies, management of time to finish tasks as per the ATP, the LTSM, assessment and how the progress of learners is reported (White Paper 6 ,2010:29).

Consistent with the preceding contention, Wentzel (2016:110) argues that the greatest challenge in the implementation of a successful inclusion is that teachers are not skilled to identify learners with learning barriers and the implementation thereof. Through the differentiated curriculum, relevant assessment and teaching strategies, diverse needs of all learners are addressed.

The Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) is viewed as overloaded with lots of work to be done. There is no space and time for learners with learning barriers. These learners are expected to do the same work as mainstream learners regardless of their capabilities. However, Wentzel (2016:111) postulates that flexibility is pivotal in differentiating the curriculum in terms of lesson planning, assessment criteria, class and home activities, and teaching and learning encounter to accommodate learners.

The significant way of addressing curriculum differentiation is to ensure flexibility during the teaching and learning encounter so that it accommodates all learners (White Paper 6, 2001:20). The SIAS policy states that the curriculum, assessment and tasks need to be adjusted to suit differentiated levels of learners with learning barriers. This is going to be difficult and almost impractical with large numbers of learners in the mainstream classrooms. The envisaged support and accommodation will not be realised, hence learners with learning barriers will be compromised and repeat grades.

5.3.2 Teachers' attitudes and beliefs towards learners who experience barriers to learning in mainstream classrooms

Participants were asked the question regarding attitudes of teachers towards learners with learning barriers in mainstream classrooms. The responses pointed towards negative and positive feelings. In the case of this study, social attitudes will be shown towards learners with learning barriers. Some may have negative attitudes towards inclusion (Engelbrecht et al., 2007:71). Two of the three well-experienced teachers welcomed the notion with the following statements:

Enrolling learners experiencing learning barriers in mainstream classrooms may be welcomed with both negative and positive attitudes but varies with individual experience and background (Lumadi, 2013:118). Teachers' negative attitudes and beliefs towards learners with learning barriers in the mainstream classrooms may be aggravated by the fact that they do not have knowledge and skills to teach these learners (Westwood, 2007:17). Experienced teachers portrayed positive attitudes towards learners with special needs better than less experienced teachers who appeared to be more frustrated (Mavuso, 2015:182). Lack of continuous support may result in mainstream teachers being the most negative towards inclusion (Brady & Woolfson, 2008:528). The attitudes may impede learning and teaching; hence the objectives of inclusion may not be realised.

Contrary to the above views, Brady and Woolfson (2008:528) postulate that it is not only lack of knowledge and training that contributes towards negative attitudes on the side of teachers towards learners with learning barriers, but lack of resources and overcrowded classrooms. This leads to frustration and demotivation. In terms of this thinking, Brady and Woolfson is supported by Lumadi (2013:18), who says that teachers support inclusion though they find it difficult to implement because of challenges relating to proper training, over-crowded classrooms, resources, lack of proper infrastructure, lack of parental involvement and other challenges that may arise as far as inclusion is concerned. From the research conducted above, it is crystal clear that teachers are demoralised as they do not have the necessary skills to teach learners with learning barriers. This means that if their concerns and fears were addressed, it would be possible to achieve the desired results.

Furthermore, SIAS posits that the successful implementation of policies on inclusion like the White Paper 6 requires a changed thinking by teachers and principals (A-Shammari et al., 2019:2). Constructivists consider teachers as facilitators of teaching and learning, and for organising content for learners to discover their learning (Al-Shammari, 2019:6). In contrast, Hulgin and Drake contend that regardless of the context of learners' background and interests, learning is socially constructed. For example, active learning (Al- Shammari, 2019:7).

5.3.3 Lack of parental support

Parental involvement is key in supporting children to learn (White Paper 6, 2010:18). Involving parents in education is of paramount importance and makes inclusion successful. Collaboration with parents on how they should contribute in all activities of their children, taking of decisions, counselling and support should be organised (White Paper 6, 2010:17).

Teachers act in- loco- parentis, which implies that they take the role of parents in the absence of parents. This indicates that in addition to their teaching roles, teachers play other roles such as pastoral and support for learners. They play an important role in involving themselves in their children's education, and may be of help in shaping their kids to learn, advice on their behaviour, make input as far as the teaching strategies that can assist learners and in the implementation. They are also expected to assist with the provision of resources when learners are given projects, class and home activities (Vogel, 2012:27). For example, in Mathematics when learners are given a project on 3d shapes, the parent can assist in providing material for designing the project. Although parents are summoned to the school if there is misconduct by learners, they are often not well informed of the progress of their kids. This further disadvantages parents as they are deprived of their right to participate in the education of their children (DBE, 2010:14).

Parents do not participate in their children's education. A lack of parental involvement will negatively affect the academic performance of learners (Sedibe, 2012:158).

The above findings further confirmed that parents whose children are experiencing learning barriers are reluctant to support their children at home. When they are invited to visit on open days where they will be accorded the opportunity to discuss learners'

progress, conduct and challenges with teachers, they are unavailable. Several letters are sent with no response. This worsens barriers to learning and teaching (Motitswe, 2012:108).

Similar challenges are shown by other studies whereby interviewees confirm that several parents do not participate in their children's education; they do not even know how they cope. Responsibility is shifted to teachers and the school. This puts stress on teachers, impedes teaching and learning, and slows down the development of the learners as well as planning and implementation of the curriculum differentiation in the inclusion process (Geldenhuis & Wevers, 2013:11).

Parents and guardians collaborate with teachers towards the implementation of inclusive education in support of learners with learning barriers. Schools should make arrangements to involve parents in decision-making processes, counselling and development towards self-actualisation and supporting their kids to learn (White Paper 6, 2010: 17-18).

The South African Schools' Act (SASA) (1996) and DBE (2010:15) postulate that parents have an equal role to play along with teachers by providing support to their children.   This will help to expedite the process of decision-making in respect of the types of activities and the level of support. Participants pointed out issues of child-headed families which impede the implementation of inclusive policies. Most learners are orphans and stay with their siblings or guardians who are illiterate or do not prioritise education.

This kind of background information of affected learners makes it difficult for teachers to assist learners because there are no parents who will play a supportive role for these learners to receive better education and improve their academic performance. The situation of child-headed families might be contributed by the scourge of the pandemics such as HIV/AIDS and Coronavirus. Some parents work far from home and cannot be with their children daily. They only come home after a month, three months or during Christmas day. The majority of parents work mine shifts, are always tired from work and do not make time to support their kids or communicate with teachers or come to meetings whenever invited.

Adherents of the Constructivist approach embrace social integration or collaboration with stakeholders in education like parents, psychologists and the community. This allows learners to get assistance from different stakeholders in education, minimising barriers to learning and teaching (Al-Shammari et al., 2019:7). If there is no effective collaboration within these structures, effective implementation of inclusion of learners with learning barriers will not be realised.

5.3.4 Teaching strategies used by teachers to teach learners experiencing learning barriers

This study discovered that teachers used different teaching strategies to teach learners with learning barriers in mainstream classrooms. This includes the one-on-one strategy, lecture method, peer-tutoring and extra classes. White Paper 6 contends that all learners can succeed if they are well supported (Wentzel, (2016:88). In teaching learners with learning barriers, a high level of flexibility and creativity is needed in respect of each learner's cognitive development (Vogel, 2012:2). This involves Lev Vygotsky's Social Constructivist Approach, whereby the teacher constructs or adjusts activities for learners with learning barriers (Landsberg, 2005:48). Teaching strategies vary from teacher to teacher and largely depend on experiences and preferences of teachers.

The one-on-one strategy is employed by teachers when they give individual attention to learners with learning barriers. This strategy is deemed to be ineffective because of overcrowded classrooms. The teacher becomes demotivated as he/she finds it difficult to implement this strategy in classrooms, hence the rising number of learners who are not progressing. It is suggested that teachers may change the duration of support to individual learners during the lesson (Westwood, 2007:197). The researcher disagrees with this assertion as it may be difficult to allocate time, what if the learner is not able to grab the learning content? He/she will need extra time and disadvantage other learners.

With the lecture method, the teacher mediates the content narratively, but this does not suit everybody. It becomes like telling a story which could be difficult for learners to understand. It may be of the level of learners without learning barriers. This therefore waste learners' time and highly contributes towards non-progression. The other disadvantage is that learners with learning barriers may have a low attention span and

will be disadvantaged as some important knowledge might not reach them. This implies that the teacher should prepare practical and thought-provoking activities. The envisaged tasks must be meaningful such that learners can be involved (Al-Shammari et al., 2019:216).

Extra-classes may seem to be a solution to all participants, but has its challenges. Firstly, learners who are commuting will face a problem of scholar transport, leaving them behind and arriving very late at home. On Saturdays, the challenge will be the safety of learners as they will not be commuting. Teachers do not want an extra burden of becoming responsible for learners even on weekend and getting home very late. They are human beings with kids who need time with them.

Peer-tutoring relates to when the teacher chooses a more competent learner to tutor the others. A learner will understand and assist them as required in their children's language. Scholars with a constructivist perspective maintain that both formal and informal activities may offer the opportunity for learners to learn from cooperative learning and peer tutoring in the real world. Vygotsky emphasises that activities should be designed in such a way that they are learner-centred (Wentzel, 2016:48). In his theory of Social Development, he argues that learning is stimulated when 'prompts' and 'cues' are taught by the teacher to some learners so that they teach other learners (Vygotsky, 1978:1).

Learners understand each other better than when taught by a teacher. With the Constructivist Theory, teaching strategies should be geared towards enabling learners to explore complex topics from known to unknown employing real life-situations e.g. debate, discussion and modelling. This is to allow learners to socialise as they interact and satisfy the social role (Vygotsky, 1978:1). Scholars with constructivist thinking discourage the memorisation of content; instead they encourage collaboration, reflection, understanding and self-actualisation.

Furthermore, Constructivists emphasise that teaching is maximised when learners understand the content or instructions. It encourages a two-way process in which creative decision-making is encouraged, including questioning (Conway, 2017:40). The constructivist theory believes that learners learn from real-life situations and experiences in the classroom (Al- Shammari et al., 2019:7). The teaching and learning

strategies discussed above fit well with the Constructivist theory in that teaching and learning will be facilitated effectively, and learners would benefit from it.

5.4 Implications of the findings

The implications of findings are presented under the following: teachers, policymakers, government officials and the researcher in the future.

5.4.1 Implications for teachers

Teachers need to read to update themselves with the current information needed for teaching learners with learning barriers and inclusion as a whole as supported by Ainscow in the policy document (Guidelines for Full-Service/Inclusive Schools, 2010:29). They should understand that teaching these learners is a process and not once-off activity, therefore more time is needed to comprehend all that is needed for learners to improve academically. Teachers should liaise with the SMT to arrange for orientation week for parents to be worshipped on the expectations of inclusive policies, and plan together with the school as promulgated by the policy that parents play a significant role in supporting their children to learn (White Paper 6, 2010:18). They should therefore, collaborate with the school. Teachers, SMTs', SGBs' and principals should encourage parents to register for ABET for literacy purposes, which will better equip them towards involvement in the education of their children.

5.4.2 Implications for policymakers and government officials

Policymakers should involve teachers in policy formulation since they are real implementers of policies and understand its implications in the classroom better. The top-down strategy of introducing and implementing policies in full-service schools is not working. It is confusing and stresses teachers. Stressed teachers are likely not to realise the set objectives because everything is imposed on them. The government should resource full-service schools for teachers to be able to teach learners with special needs, especially those with learning barriers. Equipment such as gadgets and overhead-projectors are needed for the teacher to conduct the lesson effectively. The technological world during the Fourth Industrial Revolution requires technological skills from teachers who must implement policies on inclusion, especially for learners with special needs in the mainstream classrooms.

The government should continually train and re-train teachers in Inclusive Education. It should not be a once-off training because inclusion is a process on its own. Therefore, it takes time to adjust to all the requirements and challenges brought by it to the mainstream classrooms. ICT centres need to be established for teachers to learn to work on technology so that they could develop work that will suit the level of learners. Learning barriers may include, for example, learners with hearing or sight problems. If the school is equipped with overhead-projectors, learners with sight problems could benefit because class activities could be enlarged, thereby making it easy for them to see unlike making them sit at the front, because this could worsen the barrier if the teacher's handwriting is not clear.

The provision of audio-speakers could assist those with mild-hearing impairment as the voice will be clearer to them, unlike the teacher's voice in front of an overcrowded classroom that is not able to practise individual care. Some teachers may not pronounce words as required as there is no master of pronunciation. This could further worsen the learning barriers in learners. In such an instance, audio-listening could serve a purpose.

5.4.3   Implications for researchers

Researchers should consider doing comparative studies in Sub Saharan Africa and worldwide to know what other successful or developed countries are doing to better their education systems and support teachers. This will assist to support learners with learning barriers. Researchers could engage in research on how to further support learners with learning barriers in mainstream classrooms. They could investigate how to involve parents in supporting kids to learn better.

5.5   Limitations of the study

This study was limited to one circuit only while many schools are experiencing the same challenges in other circuits on how to teach learners with learning barriers in the mainstream classrooms. Some managers could not allow entry into the school because of the instability and threats of the COVID -19 pandemic, hence more schools could not be visited. The researcher respected the rules and regulations of the COVID-19 pandemic and collected data in one school. This hampered the research findings and overall analysis.

5.5.1 Recommended alternative strategies to improve the academic performance of learners with learning barriers

The three-tier pyramid of support and intervention postulates that learners with learning barriers will require preventative and proactive interventions (Conway, 2017:34).

- The teacher may compliment the behaviourist strategies with constructivist strategies. For example, when the teacher uses behaviourist strategies like prompting and reinforcement, he/she could adapt this to constructivist strategies such as questioning, creative decision-making, and mutual and voluntary activities.

- The teacher could use the inclusive strategy of on-going assessment for academic success.

- The institution of resource centers could be introduced where assistant teachers or parents could assist learners to read and write to improve academic learning.

- Develop a partnership that could foster mutual learning. This enhances self-esteem and encourages creative thinking for learners to develop and utilise problem-solving skills as a strategy for learning.

- Develop differentiated individual or group tasks for learners according to their abilities and to manage situations.

- Develop tasks in which learners will explore and discover solutions for the problem.

- The use of visual, audio-teaching and overhead projectors could make teaching and learning interesting. Audio speakers could improve hearing and make the teacher's voice clearer.

- Information Computer Technology (ICT) could be useful. A lesson plan presented through the use of an overhead projector could be interesting to learners in terms of fostering learning.

- Scaffolding of activities by the teacher or a more competent learner or teacher assistant could make the learners follow the lesson, and they may improve academically.

- The use of the internet by learners could evoke interest as they explore assignments or projects.
- A collaboration of teachers, parents, guardians and other stakeholders in education could improve academic results as stakeholders would share information and be geared towards one common goal.

5.6 Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to investigate alternative strategies used by mainstream teachers to improve the performance of learners with barriers to learning in the Senior Phase in Khulunolwazi Primary School, Mpumalanga Province. Furthermore, the study sought to determine attitudes of teachers towards inclusion in mainstream classes as well as the social behaviour of learners experiencing learning barriers. Literature was reviewed in the second chapter to obtain views from other authors and scholars in relation to this study. The third chapter dealt with the research design, methodology and sampling method used to conduct the research.

Furthermore, tools used to collect data were discussed. Data presentation and analysis was done in chapter four. The collected data was categorised and presented in themes. Chapter 5 is the final chapter and presents the summary and conclusions together with recommendations for stakeholders that are involved in education regarding alternative strategies to improve the performance of learners with learning barriers in the Senior Phase. Expanded opportunities afforded to learners experiencing learning barriers were discussed. The objectives were that all educational stakeholders should work together to realise the objectives to harmonise teaching and learning. This final chapter discussed the themes and findings of the data collected. Recommendations for future study were made.

REFERENCES

Agbenyega, J. (2007). *Examining teachers' concerns and attitudes to inclusive education in Ghana.* International Journal of Whole schooling 3 (1).

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

Akinbote, O. & Ogunranti, C.M. (2004). *Nigerian teachers' perception of creativity among pre-school children.* West African Journal of Education, xxiv: 14-107.

Akpan, D., Hussein, E.K., Agyem, J.A. (2018). *Mandatory ingredients of a quality research department of educational innovations in science and technology.* International Journal of Scientific Research Theoretical and Conceptual Framework. 7.

Al-Shammari, Z.N. Forlin. C. & Faulkner, P. (2019). *Theories –based inclusive education practices.* Education Quarterly Reviews, 2 (2):408-414.

Ary, D. Cheser, C, Sorensen, J.C. Razavieh, A. (2010*). Introduction to research in education* (8th edition).

Avramidis, E. & Norwich, O. (2010). *Teachers attitudes towards integration /inclusion: a review of literature.* European Journal of Special Needs Education, 17(2):129-147.

Bandura, A. (2006). *Guide for constructing Self-Efficacy scales. In F.* Pajares & T. Urdan (Eds).*Self –efficacy beliefs of adolescent*, (Vol.5pp.307-337), Greenwich, CT Information Age Publishing

Bandura, A (2016) *Social learning theory: Simply Psychology* www.simplypsychology.org/bandura.html SAGE Publication. Date accessed 25.11.2020 .09:00

Ben-Shlomo, B.S. & Hickman, M. (2013). *Lecture notes: epistemology evidence-based medicine and public health.* (6th Ed). Oxford: Wiley Blackwell.

Brady & Woolfson, L. (2008*). What teacher factors influence their attributions for children's difficulties in learning?* British Journal of Educational Psychology, 78

(40):527-544   www.researchgate.net   publications.   Date   accessed 21.11.2020.13:11

Cohen, L. Manion, L. & Marrison K. (2007). *Research methods in education*. 7th ed. London, New York: Routledge Falmer.

Conway, C. (2017*). Teacher perspectives of learner support in a full-service school: a case study faculty of education.* Stellenbosch University

Creswell, J.W. (2001*). Qualitative inquiry and research design: choosing among five approaches.* (2nd d.) Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications

Creswell, J.W. (2008*). Educational research: planning, conducting and evaluating qualitative and quantitative research. (3rd edition*). Upper Saddle River, N. J: Pearson M. Education.

Creswell, J.W. (2009*). Research design, qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches.* Fourth edition**. Los Angeles London, New Delhi.

Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Research design, qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches.* Third edition. London: SAGE.

Creswell, J.W. (2014). *Research design: qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches.* 4th Ed Thousand Oaks, California CA: Sage publications*.*

Dapudong, R.C. (2014). *Teachers' knowledge and attitude towards inclusive education: basis for enhanced professional development program*. Macrothink Institute.

David, L. (2014*). Social development. https://www.learnitheories.com/ Vygotsky's social-learning theory.html.*

Demerath, P.W. (1994). *Relationships between mainstreamed special needs students and their peers in an urban middle school: A case study Paper presented at the annual meeting of American Educational Research Association* New Orleans, L.A. 4-8 April ERIC ED 376660*.*

Department of Education. (2001)*. Education White Paper 6: Special Needs Education: Building inclusive education* South Africa

Department of Education, (DoE). (2001b). *Republic of South Africa Directorate: Inclusive Education and training system,* South Africa*.*

Department of Basic Education (2015). *Special Education Needs: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System South* Africa.

Department of Education (DoE) (2012) *The relationship among deficiency needs and growth,* South Africa

Department of Basic Education. (2014). *Policy Framework: PLC'S in the ISPFTED, integrated strategic planning framework for teacher education and development in South Africa Department of Education White Paper 6: 2014 on Special Education Needs: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System,* South Africa

De Vos, A.S., Strydom, H., Fouche, C.B. & Delport, C.S.L. (2002). *Research at the grassroots for the social sciences and human service professionals. 2ⁿᵈ ed.* Pretoria: JL Van Schaik Publishers.

Donohue, D & Bornman, J. (2014). *Challenges of realising inclusive education in South Africa.* South African Journal of Education. Centre for Augmentative and Alternative Communication, University of Pretoria, South Africa

Dreyer, L. (2016*). Inclusive education: education studies for initial teacher development. Action on special needs education,* Chapter 26-38.

Engelbrecht, P., Swart, E., Eloff, I. & Forlin, C. (2007*). Identify stressors for South African teachers in the implementation of inclusive education.* Http: // www. I sec 2000.org.uk|abstracts|papers|Eloff I. htm 31 July 2006].

Fischler, A. S. (2008). *Writing Chapter 3: Qualitative research Southern University,* Nova, School of Education*.*

Fischler, A.S. & Creswell, J.W. (2008). *Educational research: planning, conducting and evaluating qualitative and quantitative research.* (3ʳᵈ ed). Upper Saddle River: Pearson Education.

Government Gazette.19 December. (2014*). Screening Identification Assessment & Support (SIAS) Policy*: No.38356 South Africa

Johnson, W. L., L.M.F.T., Johnson, A.M., Jared, W. & Johnson, B.S. (2014). *Strategies for improving school performance,* Curriculum Conference*. Texas*

Killen, R. (2004). *Teaching strategies for outcomes based Education*. Cape Town: Juta.

Kuhn, K. (1970). *The concept of a paradigm* Chicago. 2nd edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Langkos, S. (2014*). Athens as an individual tourism destination: An empirical investigation to the city's imagery and the role of local DMO'S.*

Lance, P. & Hattori, A. (2016). Sampling and evaluation*. Web: Measure Evaluation,* 6 (8): 62-64.

Leepo, S. (2015). *Strategies to deal with academic underperformance in Grade 12 in the Free State.* Central University of Technology, Free State (Welkom Campus)

Lumadi, T.Z. (2016). *Teaching Strategies that teachers use to improve reading and writing in English as First Additional Language: a case study.* School of Education, University of Limpopo.

Maciver, D., Hunter, Adamson, C., Grayson, A., Forsyth, Z., McLeod, K. (2018). *Disability and rehabilitation. Supporting successful inclusive practices for learners with disabilities in high schools: a multisite, mixed method collective case study.*

Maddock, L. & Maroun, W. (2015). *Exploring the present state of South African education: challenges and recommendations.* University of Witwatersrand*.*

Mahlo, D. (2013). *Learning Support teachers' views on the implementation of Inclusive Education in the Foundation Phase in Gauteng.* South Africa University of South Africa www.researchgate.net publications. Date accessed 22.11.2020, 13:11

Mandela, N. (2018). *Introducing Nelson Mandela: The official exhibition learning resources, supporting cultural education.* England: Artsmark Partner.

Mavuso, M.F. (2015). *Identification of specific learning difficulties in the classroom and assessment adaptation in Dunbar –Krige.* Van Schaik

Meadows, M.P. (2012*). Teacher attitudes towards the use of accommodations in the classroom and on standardized tests.* The University of Southern Mississippi.

Motitswe, J.M.C. (2012*). Teaching and learning methods in inclusive classrooms in the foundation phase.* University of South Africa URI: http://hdl. Handle.net/10500/6037

Mpya, G.N. (2007*). Managing Inclusive education in the classroom with reference to the Nkangala Region in Mpumalanga.* University of South Africa

Mzizi, N.A. (2014*). Curriculum adaptations for learners with learning impairments in the foundation phase in Thabo Mofutsanyana Education District, Free State Province.* Central University of Technology, Free State.

Nassaji, H. (2015). *Qualitative and descriptive research: Data type versus data analysis. Article in Language Teaching Research* University of Victoria, Canada, 19(2): 129-132.

Nel, M., Savolainen, Engelbrecht, P. Malinen, O.P. (2013). Understanding teachers' attitudes and self –efficacy in inclusive education: Implications for pre-service and in-service teacher education. *European Journal of specials needs education,* 33, 34-44.

Neuman, W.L. (2014). *Social research methods; qualitative & quantitative approaches.* 7th edition. Pearson New International Edition Pearson Education Limited.

Ngeow, K. H. (1999). *Online resources for parent/family involvement.* EDNO.214. Eric Digest.

Njoronge, K. B. (2015). *Institutional Related factors affecting performance of learners with special needs in Kamukunji Public Primary School in* Kenya

Patton, M. (2012) A utilisation-focused approach to contribution analysis. Journal SAGE Publication

Pit-ten Cate, I.M.M., Markova, M., Richler, M., Schwerdt, S.K. (2018). *Insights into learning disabilities promoting inclusive education: the role of teachers' competence and attitudes. 15 (1): 49-63.*

Policy Handbook for Educators, (2003*). ELRC. Education Labour Relations Council* (ELRC). Universal Print.

Ponterotto, J.G. (2020). Qualitative research in counselling psychology: a primer on research paradigms and philosophy of science. Journal of Counselling Psychology 52(2):126-136.

Price, R. (2018). *Inclusive and Special education approaches in developing countries.* Institute of Developing Studies.

Resnik, D.B. (2014). *What is ethics research & why it is important?* National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences.

Reynolds, K., Ezumah, N. Mangesho. (2011*). Quality assurance of qualitative research: A review pf the discourse: health research policy and systems.* Sheffield Hallam University Department of Psychology, Sociology and Politics 9 (1)43.

Richland, L.E., Frausel, R., Begolli, K.N. (2016). *The SAGE Encyclopedia of theory in psychology, chapter: cognitive development, SAGE Publications,* In, Editors: Harold L. Miller, pp.143-146.

Savolainen, H., Engelbrecht, P., Nel, M. & Malinen, O.P. (2019*). Understanding teachers' attitudes and self-efficacy in inclusive education: implications for pre-service and in-service teacher education.* 51-68.

SIAS Policy: Screening Identification Assessment and Support. (2014).*Government Gazette No. 38356.* Full Inclusive Service School.

Singal, A.G. (2014). *A primer on effectiveness and efficacy trials American College of Gastroenterology.* www.researchgate.net publication. Date accessed 21.11.2020. 15:30

Sharma, U. (2006). *Pre-Service teachers' attitudes, concerns and sentiments about inclusive education: An international comparison of novice pre-service teachers*. Monash University.

Shiimi, H.N. (2018). *A case study of inclusive education practices employed by schools in the Engela Cluster of the Ohangwena Region Namibia.* The University of Namibia.

Swart, E. & Pettipher, R. (2006)*. Educator's journeys in implementing inclusive education: a case study of a South African school.* Http: //www.ispaweb.org|Collaquia|collaquim|Nyborg| %20 Presentations |swa [02 December2006].

Spencer, J. S. & Laurel, G.D. (2016). *The impact of inclusion on students with and without disabilities and their educators: remedial and special education.* Pennsylvania State University.

Tatyana, A. Y., Masalimova, A.R., Vasbieva, D.G., Grudtsina, L.Y. (2018). *The development of a training model for the formation of positive attitudes in teachers in teachers towards the inclusion of learners with special educational needs into the educational environment Education.*

Tsisindu, *O. Joel, O, Edward, K. (2016) Inclusive Teaching-Learning Strategies to Meet Academic Needs of Learners with Special Nee.ds in Kenya. A case of Kakamega East Sub Country.* IRA International Journal of Education and Multidisciplinary Studies (ISSN2455-25265 (2) 119128.DOI:http//dx. doi. or/10.21013/jerms.vs.n2.p7

Taylor, N. (2012). A five-year plan for South African Schooling*.* A report commissioned by the National Planning Commission.

The Mirriam Webster Dictionary and Thesaurus, *(2009).*Fogware Publishing c.net.com 19 December 2020.

Van der Berg, S., Taylor, S., Gustafsson, M., Spaull, N. & Armstrong, P. (2011). *Improving quality education in South Africa. A report prepared for the National Planning Commission.* Technology Volume 7, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology.

Vygotsky, L. (1978). *Mind in society: the development of higher psychological processes.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Wanjiku, W.R. (2014). *Teaching Strategies used by teachers to enhance learning to learners with multiple disabilities in four selected countries in* Kenya. School of Education of Kenyatta University.

Wentzel, V.D. (2016). *Primary school teachers' experiences with mild intellectual abilities.* University of South Africa

Yusof, A.M., Daniel, E.G.S., Low, W.Y, Aziz, K.A. (2014). Teachers' perception of mobile edutainment for special needs learners: The Malaysian case. *International Journal of Inclusive Education,* 18:12, 1237-1246.

Yip, C., Han, N.R. & SNG, B.L. (2012). *Legal and ethical issues in research*. Indian Journal of Anaesthesia, 60 (9): 684-688.

Zigmond, N.J., Jenkins, L.S., Fuchs, S., Deno, D.J.N., Barker, L.J and M. Couthino. (1995). *Special Education in restructured schools.* Findings from multiyear

Appendix A

University of Limpopo
Department of Research Administration and Development
Private Bag X1106, Sovenga, 0727, South Africa
Tel: (015) 268 3935, Fax: (015) 268 2306, Email: anastasia.ngobe@ul.ac.za

TURFLOOP RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE
ETHICS CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

MEETING: 16 September 2020

PROJECT NUMBER: TREC/178/2020: PG

PROJECT:

Title: Alternative strategies to improve the performance of learners with special needs in Senior Phase: A Case of Khulunolwazi Primary School
Researcher: A Maphanga
Supervisor: Dr JM Mamabolo
Co-Supervisor/s: N/A
School: Education
Degree: Master of Education in Curriculum Studies

PROF P MASOKO
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)   This Ethics Clearance Certificate will be valid for one (1) year, as from the abovementioned date. Application for annual renewal (or annual review) need to be received by TREC one month before lapse of this period.
ii) Should any departure be contemplated from the research procedure as approved, the researcher(s) must re-submit the protocol to the committee, together with the Application for Amendment form.
iii) PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER IN ALL ENQUIRIES.

Finding solutions for Africa

Appendix B

PO Box 1332
Middelburg
1050
24 September 2020

Enquiries: Maphanga A
Cell: 0827400099
Email: annamaphanga28@gmail.com
_____

The Director: Strategic Planning and Research Directorate
Cc: Head of Department- Education
Ikhamanga Building
Government Boulevard
Riverside Park
Mpumalanga Province
1200
Dear Sir/ Madam

RE: APPLICATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE PROVINCE

I hereby apply for permission to conduct research in schools under Middelburg Steve Tshwete 2 Circuit in Mpumalanga Province. I am Maphanga Anna and currently studying for a Master's Degree in Curriculum Studies with the University of Limpopo. I am supervised by Dr Mamabolo. My research title is Alternative Strategies to improve the performance of learners with Special needs in Senior Phase: A Case of Khulunolwazi Primary School.

The research will include interviews in sampled schools and documentation in the Circuit Office. Participants will include teachers, principals and the Circuit Office which will provide primary documents regarding performance of schools in Steve Tshwete 2 Circuit. The interviews will be conducted after contact time so as not to disturb normal class teaching and learning. Ethical procedures will be adhered to in order to observe and protect the rights of all participants, and confidentiality will be maintained.

I therefore request your permission to conduct this research in the schools, including the Circuit Office.
I hope my request will be taken into consideration.
Thank you in advance.

Yours Sincerely
Maphanga Anna
24/09/2020
Appendix C

Ms Anna Maphanga
PO Box 1332
Middelburg
1050

RE: Alternative strategies to improve the performance of leaners with special needs in Senior Phase: A case of Khulunolwazi Primary School

Your application to conduct research study was received and is therefore acknowledged. The tittle of your research project reads: **"Alternative strategies to improve the performance of leaners with special needs in Senior Phase: A case of Khulunolwazi Primary School"**
I trust that the aims and the objectives of the study will benefit the whole department especially the beneficiaries. Your request is approved subject to you observing the provisions of the departmental research policy which is available in the department website. You are requested to adhere to your university's research ethics as spelt out in your research ethics.

In terms of the research policy, data or any research activity can be conducted after school hours as per appointment with affected participants. You are also requested to share your findings with the relevant sections of the department so that we may consider implementing your findings if that will be in the best interest of the department. To this effect, your final approved research report (both soft and hard copy) should be submitted to the department so that your recommendations could be implemented. You may be required to prepare a presentation and present at the departments' annual research dialogue.

For more information kindly liaise with the department's research unit @ 013 766 5124/5148 0r n.madihlaba@mpuedu.gov.za
The department wishes you well in this important project and pledges to give you the necessary support you may need.

MR JR NKOSI
[A] HEAD: EDUCATION

_5 / 10 / 2020_
DATE

Appendix D

PO Box 1332
Middelburg
1050
6 October 2020

Enquiries: Maphanga A
Cell: 0827400099
Email: annamaphanga28@gmail.com

The Circuit Manager
Mpumalanga Education Department
Steve Tshwete 2 Circuit
Private Bag x 1824
Middelburg
1050

Dear Sir

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN STEVE TSHWETE 2 CIRCUIT

I humbly request your permission to conduct research in your Circuit.

I am a Master of Education student in Curriculum Studies at the University of Limpopo. My research topic is: Alternative strategies to improve the performance of learners with special needs in Senior Phase: A Case of Khulunolwazi Primary School.

I intend to interview the principal, three Senior Phase teachers and one School Based Support Team member. I will also request collect data from documents in the Circuit Office. All ethical procedures will be adhered to protect participants and the office of the Circuit Manager. Interviews will be conducted in schools after hours so as not to disturb teaching and learning. It will last for 30 minutes each. Identified participants will receive notification letters and will be briefed on ethical principles prior to the start of the interviews. My research findings will be made available to the Department of Education and other stakeholders.

I hope that my request will receive your favourable consideration.

Yours Sincerely

Ms A Maphanga

Appendix E

DEPARTMENT EDUCATION
MPUMALANGA PROVINCE

STEVE TSHWETE 2

www.besteducation.co.za

Private Bag X 1824
Middelburg, 1050
Beta Building
59 SADC Street
MIDDELBURG
Mpumalanga Province
Republic of South Afr

Litiko le Temfundvo Department of Education Umnyango weFundo Departement van Onderwys Ndzawulo Ya Dyondz

Enq: Madonsela J.S.
Tel: 013 249 8504

07 October 2020

TO	:	**MS A. MAPHANGA** **KHUL'UNOLWAZI PRIMARY SCHOOL**
FROM	:	**THE ACTING CIRCUIT MANAGER** **STEVE TSHWETE 2 CIRCUIT**
SUBJECT	:	**REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE** **STEVE TSHWETE 2 CIRCUIT.**

1. Your letter dated 06 October 2020 refers.

2. Permission is hereby granted to conduct a research in our circuit on condition that it doesn't interfere with the teaching and learning process.

3. You are also urged to adhere to Disaster Management Act to ensure that all participants are protected at all times.

4. I want to take this opportunity to wish you all the best in your studies.

Yours faithfully,

(A) CIRCUIT MANAGER
MR M.D. MAKUSE

DEP   DE EDUCATION
M   PROVINCE

0 7 OCT 2020

STEVE TSHWETE 2 CIRCUIT
P. BAG X1824, MIDDELBURG 1050

Appendix F

<div align="right">
PO Box 1332
Middelburg
1050
6 October 2020
</div>

Enquiries: Maphanga A
Cell: 0827400099
Email: annamaphanga28@gmail.com

The Principal

Dear Sir

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH AT YOUR SCHOOL

I humbly request your permission to conduct research in your school under Steve Tshwete 2 Circuit Office.

I am a Master of Education student in Curriculum Studies at the University of Limpopo. My research topic is: Alternative strategies to improve the performance of learners with special needs in Senior Phase: A Case of Khulunolwazi Primary School.

The process of data collection will start as soon as my application for ethical clearance is approved by the Ethical Committee of the University of Limpopo. My research findings will be made available to the Department of Education and other stakeholders.

I hope that my request will receive your favourable consideration.

Yours Sincerely

Ms A Maphanga

Appendix G

KHUL'UNOLWAZI PRIMARY SCHOOL

7754 EXT 24 MIDDELBURG 1050		P.O BOX 1332 MIDDELBURG 1050

Enquiries	: MC Masilela
Contact	: 072 284 9204 / 072 254 8081
Email	: khulunolwazi@gmail.com / manzini06@gmail.com

07/10/2020

TO : MS.Anna Maphanga

FROM : THE PRINCIPAL

KHULUNOLWAZI PRIMARY SCHOOL

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

We hereby acknowledge receipt of your application/ request to conduct research on your approved research topic at our school.

Your application is hereby approved with the following conditions:

- Observing the provisions of the departmental research policy as explained to yourself in our meeting.
- Focusing your research on the approved 'Alternative strategies to improve the performance of learners with special needs in the Senior Phase : A case of Khulunolwazi Primary School
- Adherence to the university's research ethics as spelt out in your research ethics
- Your research will not tamper with the teachers' daily teaching and other administrative duties i.e. your research will be conducted after school hours as shall be agreed between yourself and your research participants.

As indicated in your application and the research objectives, you are further requested to share your findings with the research section of the department of education for improvement performance.

We wish you all the best in your studies and our support throughout is guaranteed.

Yours truly
PRINCIPAL

Masilela M.C.(Principal)

Appendix H

CONSENT FORM

I_____ (your name),

Agree   Do not agree

(Cross the relevant choice)

To take part in the research entitled: Alternative strategies to improve the performance of learners with special needs: Senior Phase: A case of Khulunolwazi Primary School. I understand that I have to give information relevant to the study and will be interviewed using an interview schedule and a tape recorder.

I understand that the researcher subscribes to the following ethical principles of research:

Voluntary participation in research meaning that participants may withdraw from the research at any time.

Informed consent, implying that research participants must at all times be fully informed about the research process and purposes, and must give consent to their participation in the research.

Safety in participation: to be precise, human respondents should not be placed at risk or harm of any kind.

Privacy, meaning   that confidentiality and anonymity of human respondents should be protected at all times.

Trust, which means that respondents will not respond to any acts of deception or betrayal in the research process or its published outcomes.

Signature of participant: _____

Date: _____

Appendix I

Interview Schedule for Respondent

I. **Opening**

A. (**Establish Rapport**) [Greetings] My name is _____
and I am a teacher at Khulunolwazi Primary School in Steve Tshwete 2 Circuit. I thought it would be a good idea to interview you so that I can better inform the rest of my colleagues, parents, stakeholders in education and the Department of Basic Education.

B. (**Purpose**) I would like to ask you some questions about your background, your education, some experiences you have had, and some of your hobbies and interests in order to learn more about you and share this information with my colleagues and other stakeholders in education.

C. (**Motivation**) I hope to use this information to help equip teachers who are teaching learners with special needs in their mainstream classrooms: Senior Phase, parents, stakeholders in education and the Department of Education to help improve the performance of these learners.

D. (**Time Line)** The interview should take about 10 minutes. Are you available to respond to some questions at this time?

II **Body**

(**Transition to the next topic:**
_____

B. (Topic) Alternative strategies to improve the performance of learners with special needs in Senior Phase: A Case of Khulunolwazi Primary School.

1. (a) What strategies do you regularly use to teach learners with learning barriers in mainstream classrooms?
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

 (b) In your view, are the strategies working or require improvement?
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

 (c) If so, which strategies are working and which ones need improvement?
_____
_____

_____

_____

(d) In your opinion, what could be alternative strategies that teachers use to improve the performance of learners with special needs in mainstream classrooms?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. What is the school currently doing to improve the performance of learners with special needs in mainstream classrooms?

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. What is the nature of assessment for learners with learning barriers?

_____

_____

_____

4. How do you determine the progression of learners with learning barriers?

_____

_____

_____

(**Transition to the next topic:**

_____

 C. (Topic) Experiences

(a). What is your experience and qualifications in teaching learners with special needs?

_____

_____

(b). How will your experience(s) help you improve learner performance in class?

_____

_____

_____

(c) What are teachers' attitudes and concerns about teaching learners with special needs?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

(d) What are attitudes of learners without learning barriers towards learners experiencing learning barriers?

_____

_____

_____

_____

(e)What are teachers' beliefs about learners with special needs?

_____

_____

_____

_____

(**Transition to the next topic:**

_____

III **Closing**

A. (**Summary**) you are teaching in a fully Inclusive School. Do you plan to pursue studies in Special Needs Education? _____. Your hobbies and interests are _____-_____.

B. (**Maintain Rapport**) I appreciate the time you took for this interview. Is there anything you think would be helpful for me to know so that teachers can best improve the performance of learners with special needs in mainstream classrooms?_____

_____

_____

_____.

(**Action to be taken**) I should have all the information I need. Would it be alright to call if I have more questions? Thanks again. I look forward to further get assistance regarding information in case it is needed.

Appendix J

DOCUMENT ANALYSIS SCHEDULE

A. Information on the summary of Circuit reviews on Steve Tshwete 2 showed that learners with learning barriers do not perform well in their subjects. They are over-aged and always progressed to the next grade due to age cohort.

B. Information on SNA forms indicated that learners with special needs are assisted by teachers in individualised tasks, but still there is no improvement. District Psychologists do visit the school to assess learners and make referrals of learners who need help.

UNIVERSITY OF LIMPOPO

FACULTY HUMANITIES

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

CHANGE LOG: EVIDENCE OF IMPROVEMENT

MEd Dissertation

TITLE OF DISSERTATION / THESIS : Alternative strategies to improve the performance of learners with special needs in Senior Phase: A Case of Khulunolwazi Primary School
STUDENT'S NAME : ANNA MAPHANGA
STUDENT NUMBER : 201834600

Type the remarks of the reviewer in this column. (Copy the suggestion under the appropriate heading as it was given by the reviewer/assessor	Assessor's query (Show the change as it has been made in the dissertation/thesis) **Assessor 2**	Student's response Comment or sign off on the change)
(e) Dissertation layout / format, presentation, language and references.	a. All references with web pages must also indicate the date they were accessed. b. Some structural editing must be done such that each chapter starts on a new page.	That was done .Refer to pages 89, 92 & &94. That was done .Refer to the whole document/dissertation

_JM MAMABOLO_____   __07.02.2022_____

SIGNATURE SUPERVISOR / PROMOTER   **DATE**