

IE is essentially about supporting all learners irrespective of their abilities. This view is also supported by Ainscow, Booth and Dyson (2006: 25) who believe that IE is about the processes of restructuring the cultures, policies and practices in schools so that they respond to the diversity of students in their locality.

4.2.1.3 Inclusive education as support for all learners

Fifteen participants described IE as an education system that accommodates all learners in public ordinary schools. According to the participants these learners must be treated equally and be given human respect and dignity. As one participant describes:

Inclusive education is a system of education whereby learners are accommodated in one environment, not discriminated against and are all treated equally and given human respect and dignity. (Participant 16)

In addition to the above statement, IE is understood as a system which eradicates segregation of learners experiencing barriers to learning. In other words IE is that which challenges discrimination within the public ordinary school. As one participant elaborated:

Inclusive education is a system that eradicates the system of segregating learners experiencing barriers to learning from public ordinary school to special school. (Participant 3)

Contrary to the above statement, four participants viewed IE as a system that labels learners according to categories of disabilities like physical, sensory and intellectual disabilities. They explained that these learners are identified in their classrooms by teachers and after that those learners identified have to be referred to a certain class in order to respond to their barriers to learning. As one participant describes:

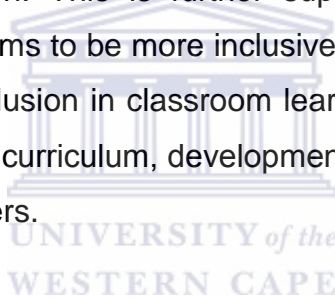
Inclusive education is a system that labels learners. These learners are identified by educators as struggling learners in their classrooms. After being identified educators have to refer these learners to attend a certain class within the school in order to

respond to their educational needs but not in their class grade that is why I personally say inclusive education is a system of labelling learners.(Participants 9)

Two participants regarded IE as a support system where struggling learners receive support that enables them to acquire skills like reading and writing. As one participant explains:

Inclusive education is a system of supporting learners who were identified by teachers in the classroom to attend unit class or LSEN class in my school to assist learners to improve in skills like reading and writing.(Participant 19)

According to Davis (2003) support in education is central to IE. The classroom is not the context in which the inclusion of learners is implemented. All activities taking place in the classroom need to be supportive to learners in their learning process, especially peer and teacher in interaction. This is further supported by Morgan (1998) who expressed the view for classrooms to be more inclusive and a need to develop teaching practises that lead to social inclusion in classroom learning activities. These eventually lead to increased access to the curriculum, development of a child's independence and equal opportunities for all learners.



4.2.1.4 Inclusive education as placement of disabled learners

Ten participants from special schools described IE as placement of disabled learners in mainstream classrooms. The participants further indicated that after a certain period of time the learner who is not showing improvement undergoes a certain assessment by the department for placement in the schools of skills and special schools. As one participant describes:

Inclusive education is about placement of learners with barriers to learning in mainstream classrooms with the necessary required support and assistance, this placement is done after an identification process by the educator in the classroom then other assessments are done by psychologists from the department to recommend further placement outside the school to schools of skills and special schools. (Participant 10)

Twenty participants in the study described IE as a process of integrating learners with disabilities in a mainstream learning environment irrespective of their diverse abilities. As one participant indicated:

Inclusive education means a process of catering for all learners, no matter what barriers these learners have. (Participant 18)

Both public ordinary and special school participants started with the assertion that IE is about integrating learners with disability or those categorised as special educational needs in public ordinary schools. While their understandings form part of IE philosophy, the limited understanding could have serious implications for the way IE will be implemented in these schools. One may regard this as a narrow view of IE. Ainscow, Booth, Dyson (2006: 15) questions the “usefulness” of an approach to IE that focuses on a “disabled” or special needs part of them and ignores all the other ways in which participation for any student may be impeded or enhanced. These authors propose the replacement of notions of special educational needs with barriers to learning. This does not redirect attention to the segregation of learners with disabilities whose rights have been violated.

Da Costa (2003) acknowledges that in South Africa there is a gap between conceptualizing IE and understanding how to implement it in the day to day life of the school which is apparent not only among teachers, but at all levels of the system. While it is acceptable to accommodate diverse understandings, there is a potential danger. The danger is to think that IE is a reform of special education (Barton, 2003a)

The problem with diverse understandings has to do with the possibility of framing the structures, policies, cultures and practices according to these understandings. Some of the cultures and practices might still be perpetuating the inequities that gave rise to the exclusion of learners experiencing barriers to learning. Stofile (2008) warns that in a context like South Africa, where exclusion and discrimination is deeply entrenched, allowing different interpretations might be dangerous because proponents of specialised education might deliberately mask special education practices by using IE concepts. This could be tantamount to what Slee (1998: 131) describes as a “linguistic adjustment

that presents a politically correct façade to a changing world”. As indicated earlier Armstrong, Armstrong and Spandagou (2011) argue that inclusion may end up meaning everything and nothing at the same time. What came from the participants is that it is crucial that School Based Support Teams be given adequate opportunities to learn about and fully understand their roles and the fundamental principles underlying IE.

4.2.2 Implementation of Inclusive Education in Schools

Participants were asked to explain how they implement IE in their schools. Participants from the public ordinary school indicated that they were expected to teach and address the needs of learners who experience difficulties in their classrooms. They also claimed that they had an added responsibility of providing support directly to educators by giving advice on the support strategies to be employed in the classroom. These participants also reported that they facilitate the provision of emotional, social and educational support from other stakeholders. Some participants indicated that they are expected to give advice on the selection and requisition of Learning and Teaching Support Materials for the school. Most participants claimed that they organise capacity-building workshops for educators and parents. These workshops are run by experts from the community, the district and Institutions of Higher Learning. Participants indicated:

I have to teach and support learners in my classroom and after school I sit in the School Based Support Team meeting to discuss how the case can be handled by the referring teacher (Participant 7).

We are expected to address the social related problems that are referred by the educators. Sometimes we address problems of literacy and numeracy (Participant 6).

As a coordinator of the School Based Support Team I liaise with the social workers or psychologist to address issues that relate to their expertise. For instance learners that are not coping in our classes as well as those that have been raped are assessed by the psychologist. (Participant 10)

Participants from special schools indicated that their responsibilities are threefold. They teach disabled learners in their classes, they feed those learners who are suffering from cerebral palsy and they have to develop Individualised Education Plans. Over and above this work, participants claimed that they had to support other educators by doing demonstration lessons and advising them on the support strategies. As the excerpts show:

In our school we teach, feed learners” and support other educators. This is what inclusive education policy expects us to do (Participant 20).

The School Based Support Team deals with behavioural problems, absenteeism and learners who have been identified by teachers in the classrooms (Participants 13).

As a School Based Support Team we assess learners for placement in skills programmes (Participants 19).

In summary, it seems that the way special schools' School Based Support Teams implement IE is different from that of the public ordinary school. The roles and responsibilities of the School Based Support Teams in the public ordinary school involved teaching, identification, assessment and the referral of learners who perform poorly as well as assisting other educators who experience difficulties in supporting learners in their classroom. Special school's School Based Support Teams' roles on the other hand, include teaching disabled learners, the development of Individualised Education Plans, feeding and dressing learners who have not developed these care skills. They also support other educators. While it is not the purpose of this study to make judgements about the extent to which these teams implement IE, it is worth noting that the special school support team continues with the roles they played in special education. The public ordinary school to some extent performs the role outlined in the Education White Paper 6.

4.2.3 Experiences of Inclusive Education

In this study, the experiences of inclusive education are consisted both successes and challenges of inclusive education.

4.2.3.1 Successes of inclusive education

Most participants reported experience of successes during the implementation of IE. Four key areas emerged from their responses and these include increased access and participation, improved teaching practices, established teamwork as well as the provision of assistive devices. Table 4.2 presents the summary of categories and the responses.



Table 4.2 A summary of categories and participants responses

Categories	Participants' responses
Improvement of access and participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement in learner performance • Improved participation in class activities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducive environment for all learners • Respect for all learners • Every learner attends school they are not kept at home
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusive admission policy formulated • Inclusive assessment policy formulated • Physically disabled learners are accommodated • School buildings are renovated to accommodate all learners
Establishment of teamwork	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of the School Based Support Team • Co-teaching in classes • Working with parents • Improved working relations with administrators
Improvement of teaching practises	Curriculum differentiation is implemented
Provision of assistive devices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hearing aids and tape recorders are used during lesson presentation • Wheel chairs, adapted computers and intercom

4.2.3.1.1 Improvement of access and participation

Five participants from the public ordinary school were impressed with their successes in teaching learners experiencing barriers to learning. Participants felt that learners who were referred for additional support were integrated into the mainstream classes because of the improvement in their academic performance. They claimed that these learners acquired knowledge during support sessions and as a result their participation in class activities improved. As participants explained:

I am very impressed with the outcomes of implementing inclusive education because learners are improving in the classroom because of the strategies of inclusive education and its systems. (Participant 5)

Three public ordinary school participants claimed that through their advocacy campaign for inclusion, some learners with disabilities in their community applied for admission to their school. Participants reported that they were no longer kept at home as before. Some of the participants reported that they have created environments that are conducive for learning and through their commitment they were able to address the needs of all learners in their classes. Some participants indicated that their school has revised their admission policy to increase access to all learners irrespective of disability. One participant claimed that the introduction of IE assisted her school in developing assessment policies that are inclusive. As participants explained:

As an educator I congratulate the fact that inclusive education prepared our school to become a conducive environment for all learners irrespective of their abilities'. (Participant 14)

I am very grateful for implementing inclusive education in my school now we are able to admit every learner regardless of disability. Our admission policy has been revised. (Participant 11)

As an educator I have not been able to accommodate learners that perform below their grade in my assessment. The school has at least developed an assessment

*policy that explains what educators can do if learners cannot read or write.
(Participant 9)*

Ten public ordinary school participants mentioned that their school had made renovations to school buildings to accommodate learners who use wheel chairs. They reported that since their school was built thirty years ago after the introduction of IE policy in schools, their school took the initiative to improve access to their school building by providing for example; ramps, adapted toilets and speaker systems in some classes where needed. As participant one explained:

Since my school was built before the integration of the education system and the introduction of inclusive education, it was the old style building that doesn't accommodate physically disabled learners but after the policy of inclusive education my school renovated the school building to accommodate everyone. (Participant 12)

4.2.3.1.2 Improvement of teaching practises

Six participants from the public ordinary school felt that the implementation of IE enabled them to plan lessons that accommodate all learners in their classrooms. They attributed this to the curriculum differentiation training they attended. These participants reported that they felt obliged to accommodate different learning styles and learner pace. Furthermore, participants acknowledged that they gained skills, knowledge, and confidence on their own by being able to demonstrate curriculum differentiation in their classrooms. They also claimed that when implementing differentiation there was an enormous decrease of behavioural problems displayed by learners in their classrooms.

As participants explained:

As an experienced teacher of eighteen years, I regard inclusive education as an eye opener to me because now I'm able to plan my lessons that accommodate every learners need in my classroom. I am also able to accommodate different learning styles to suit the learner needs. (Participant 20)

I normally get frustrated when it comes to writing of exams by learners experiencing barriers to learning. This inclusive education program has made our job easier than before, as educators we now do things differently, record findings, support and do the intervention where needed. As educators we have moved away now from labelling learners now that we understand that each learner is different from each other and they learn differently. (Participant 14)

One participant indicated that they were better equipped to intervene with the learners in mainstream classes because they were provided with a tool that guides you on how to support learners experiencing barriers in each focus area. One participant explained:

I am so pleased with the implementation of inclusive education because now our learning support advisor has given us the tools that we can use in our school to do interventions rather than before whereby the educator was expected to think for a tool, it is working because it is adapted from the national curriculum statement. (Participant 13)

According to Mentis, Quinn, Ryba (2005) and Westhood (2008), differentiation refers to doing things differently to target the observed differences among learner behaviour and learning patterns. A differentiated curriculum is regarded as a programme of activities that offers a variety of activities for students who differ in abilities, knowledge and skills. In a differentiated curriculum, teachers offer different approaches to *what students learn, how students learn and how students demonstrate what they have learned*, (Department of Education,2003). Westhood (2008) suggests that in order to achieve optimum learning in an inclusive classroom, educators must implement differentiated strategies.

4.2.3.1.3 Establishment of teamwork

Seven participants highlighted that team-building was one of the successes in their schools. These participants described a team as a group of people made up of individuals who each contribute their individual knowledge and skills. They reported that they were able to establish a functional School Based Support Team within their school setting. The participants claimed that teamwork was the initiative of inclusive education policy. According to the participants, they supported other educators in their school because of the training they received from the district. Most participants reported that the District Based Support Teams facilitated good working relations among staff members, administration and parents. The schools have developed cultures which promote a sense of belonging and connectedness especially with parents and where everyone feels as if they are treated as valued individuals. Most participants indicated:

We are able to identify the needs of the learners and support other colleagues in our school because of training we received from the district. (Participant 7)

In our school now we have a great improvement in parental involvement; at least now parents understand that learners can learn differently". (Participant 4)

Inclusive education has helped us to have a strong administrative team which is supported with records of interventions done in the classroom. All the paperwork and supporting documents are now available. (Participant 19)

According to the Education White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001), one of the key levers of IE is the establishment of Institutional Level Support Teams and the District Based Support Teams. One of the benefits of working together as a team involves the sharing of individual perspectives, experience, and skills that can be utilised to solve complex problems.

This policy assumes that the team work will facilitate the provision of appropriate support for educators and learners in a school environment. The above statement has been supported by Raymond (2008), who argues that IE cannot be achieved by individuals. This author believes that it is necessary to build a team of teachers, parents

and professional bodies to work together in meeting the needs of learners in an inclusive setting. Park, Henkin and Egley (2005: 462) posit that the success of school reform depends, in part, on the effectiveness of teacher teams. These authors claim that “teams can be places where teachers establish and strengthen dispositions required for positive change and innovative approaches to the solution of complex problems.”

4.2.3.1.4 Provision of assistive devices

Two participants from the special school were impressed with the fact that the school had been provided with appropriate assistive devices like hearing aids for learners who need them, tape recorders that they use during lesson presentation, adapted computers for learners with visual disabilities, wheelchairs for physically disabled learners, and walkers as well as standing frames to assist those with physical challenges. One participant explained:

I feel very proud about inclusive education because now we have devices like ramps, wheelchairs, speakers, adapted computers, recorders and the intercom at school”. (Participant 20)

According to the assistive devices Act 1998 (Reid, 2001), the term “assistive device” means a piece of equipment or product system whether modified or acquired commercially that is used to increase, maintain or improve the functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities. According to Muthukrishna, Hill and Hall (2005)), teachers do not need to wait for learners to be assessed instead they need to bring specific devices into their classrooms.

According to Jendren (2008) and Reid (2001) assistive devices increases the use of learners’ senses and personal independence. This enables learners experiencing barriers to learning to engage in activities with their peers. Kingdom, (1995) believes that assisting devices are fundamental in the implementation of inclusive education because learners are able to engage in activities with their peers as well as other

learners who experience barriers to learning. According to this author, the use of assistive devices grants autonomy to learners as they possess a sense of control over decision making. Jendren, (2008) also argues for the use of assistive devices to accommodate learners who experience difficulties in performing tasks. This author identifies the use of computers for learners who struggle with writing.

4.2.3.2 Challenges of implementing inclusive education

While participants reported positive gains during the implementation, they also reported challenges. This section presents the challenges experienced by School Based Support Teams during the implementation of inclusive education. These include lack of capacity, lack of resources, problem behaviour, unrealistic workloads and lack of support. Table 4.3 presents a summary of categories that emerged as well as participants' responses.



Table 4.3: A summary of categories and participants responses

Categories	Participants' responses
Lack of capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A lack of understanding of how to implement inclusive education
Limited resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inadequate assistive devices
Problem behaviours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disruptive learners in the classrooms
Unrealistic workload	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional administrative work • Big classes • Overcrowding
Lack of support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotional support • Protection
Language of teaching and learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language of learning and teaching as a barrier

4.2.3.2.1 Lack of capacity

Most participants from the public ordinary school indicated that they were unable to teach learners experiencing barriers to learning because they were not trained to implement IE and to teach learners that perform below the grade. Consequently, learners' educational needs and the needs of their colleagues were not adequately addressed. More specifically, participants indicated that they did not think they were adequately skilled to support other educators when they themselves experienced difficulties in their classrooms. Participants felt that they did not have adequate knowledge about when and how referrals should be done to the district officials and social workers. These participants explained:

I really do not think I am skilled enough to support my colleagues. I also experience problems in my own classroom. (Participant 10)

We did training that adequately prepared us for the job we are expected to do in our team. (Participant 17)

I feel that I cannot provide the support learners need because I don't have sufficient knowledge about learning disabilities. (Participant 13)

These findings show that having educators who do not feel they have the knowledge and skills necessary to effectively teach learners in inclusive classrooms creates an inevitable barrier to the implementation of IE. The findings also suggest that while the establishment of School Based Support Teams is an essential component in the implementation of IE, policy assumes that once established, these teams will automatically know what to do.

Moreno (2007: 172) contends that “teaching challenging content to learners who bring very different experiences to the classroom depends on the capacity of practitioners to create diverse learning experiences and connect to what students know and how they effectively learn. According to Stofile (2008), Stofile, Raymond and Moletsane (2013) the success of any public policy, including IE policy, rests on the capacity to implement it. These authors further argue that without the necessary skills and knowledge, educators are likely to feel less confident about their ability to effectively include learners with diverse needs. This will also affect their confidence in supporting other educators. This resonates with the NCNET and NCESS report (Department of Education, 1997) which argues that if capacity is lacking then the teaching and learning will not be effective.

There is a general view that formal training is an important factor in improving educators' views and actions toward the implementation of inclusive education (Mentis, Quinn & Ryba, 2005). According to Brian and Ryba (2005), without a coherent plan for educator training in the educational needs of learners with barriers to learning, attempts to include them in regular schools will be difficult. The NCSNET and NCESS Report

(Department of Education, 1997) argued that the absence of on-going services training and upgrading training of teachers often leads to a lack of innovative practices in the classroom. Walton and Lloyd (2012) also affirm that a lack of appropriate pre and in-service training and preparation for inclusive classrooms constrain the implementation of inclusive education in South Africa. .

This resonates with Donald and Hlongwane (2003), Hay (2003), Luseno (2000) Salend and Duhaney (1999) who argue that effective implementation of inclusive programmes requires that the educators know the characteristics of children with disabilities, the special education laws, strategies for assessing the learners needs, and strategies for teaching and structuring instruction to individual learner needs, if they are to successfully educate exceptional learners in inclusive settings. Johnstone and Chapman (2009) indicate that any innovation increases the complexity of educators' work lives because they are expected to learn new content, teach and assess differently or use different teaching materials. These authors' view is that complexity can be altered by providing educators with sufficient training that allows them to master, and feel confident about the new approach advocated.

UNESCO (2005) rejects claims for the need for special skills and expertise, viewing them as misconceptions. UNESCO argues that these claims are obstacles to adopting an inclusive approach. While UNESCO's position cannot be dismissed I do think an inclusive approach needs to be mediated to participants in order for them to understand and this can be done through training but should not be limited to training.

4.2.3.2.2 *Lack of support*

The participants viewed support as critical for the implementation of inclusive education. Fourteen participants indicated that they did not get support from parents, school management teams and experts from the Department of Education. This, according to the participants, made it impossible to effectively provide support to learners who experience barriers to learning and to other educators as expected by the Education White Paper 6. The participants expressed the need to receive psychological and educational support from different stakeholders. Some of the participants claimed that they suffered from secondary trauma because of the cases they listened to during their School Based Support Team meetings. They felt that they could have been provided with counselling services by the psychologists or school counsellors after the meetings. One participant expressed that:

Our job as School Based Support Teams is hectic. We need counselling services sometimes. We listen to serious cases and we are sometimes traumatised.
(Participant 8)

The majority of the participants expressed the need to be protected from the threats they were subjected to by the perpetrators who did not want them to report and refer cases of neglect, and physical and sexual abuse to the social workers. As participants explains:

I feel that the Department of Education does not support or protect us from hostility when we report cases of abuse to social workers. We stay with the perpetrators in our communities and there are possibilities that we could be killed when we report crime. I sometimes wonder whether this is really our responsibility to listen to some of these cases. (Participant 9)

I need administrative support, parental support, and support from experts in the Department of Education and School Management Teams in order to do what is expected of us in assisting our learners in the classrooms. (Participant 9)

The majority of participants from the public ordinary school also indicated that they need

assistance from professional experts (e.g. medical practitioners, psychologists, speech and language therapists, occupational therapists, etc.) to effectively deal with the physical and psychological problems experienced by learners and educators. While one should not under-estimate the teaching experiences of participants and their passion for supporting learners and educators, it is clear from these findings that this responsibility is quite challenging.

The results of this study confirm what is already known, that the lack of on-going support does not lead to effective implementation.

The need for protection and psychological support by participants in the study stands out as a critical issue to be explored by policy makers. Policy seems to assume that School Based Support Teams are adequately skilled to address the complex social problems that South African learners and educators experience. The participants' experiences of threats and secondary trauma reveal that the well-being of the members of School Based Support Teams is under siege. School Based Support Teams, unlike psychologists and social workers, are ordinary teachers who have not been trained in the ethics and strategies of addressing sensitive psychosocial problems. It is not surprising that they would feel traumatised and overwhelmed by some of the cases they seek to address. Supporting members of these teams through debriefing sessions becomes critical if they have to provide support to other people.

These findings resonate with other research studies. The study conducted by Stofile (2008) showed that lack of support for the implementation of IE can impact negatively on the implementation process. A study by Dreyer (2008) on the provision of learning support in an inclusive system concluded that support aimed at addressing barriers to learning in mainstream schools is not effectively implemented. According to Caputo and Langher (2014), Donohue and Bornman (2014) lack of support to successfully integrate students with disabilities into the general education classroom leads to negative attitudes, which can constrain the implementation of inclusive education. Bojuwoye, Moletsane, Stofile, Moola and Sylvester (2014: 1) posit that in order to ensure learner success, education support services must be strengthened and placed at the centre of

teaching-learning relations as a key strategy for addressing challenges to teaching and barriers to learning.

According to Beyer, Boyer and Gillespie (2009) it is imperative to think about different ways to support teachers in coping with the challenges of inclusive classrooms. Many researchers support Beyer et al and argue that some countries have addressed the issue of support through task force; long term professional development and even short term pay incentives. Support in IE is described as a complex and multi layered phenomenon (Boyer, 2011). Pillay and Di Terlizzi (2009) contend that while IE has been accepted, the reality is that South Africa, as a developing nation, is not equipped with resources and facilities required to meet the needs of inclusion. In reality if positive results are to occur for both educators and learners, better monitoring and support should be provided. Johnstone and Chapman (2009) support the idea of continuous support for implementers and they argue that one-off workshops with little or no follow-up support usually do not yield to widespread implementation.

4.2.3.2.3 Unrealistic workload

The unrealistic workload emerged as a challenge to the participants' roles in School based Support Teams. The participants felt that the implementation of IE is an additional workload because of its call for addressing the needs of learners who experience learning difficulties. They indicated that in their school ever since they were nominated as members of the School Based Support Team, numbers of learners in need of support in the classrooms have increased. They claimed to have received many referrals from the classroom teachers, which has led to feelings of being overloaded. According to the participants, School Based Support Teams were expected to lead the process of developing Individual Support Plans for learners who performed poorly academically. One participant explained:

I am becoming negative towards inclusive education. It makes our work as educators more difficult and more stressful. We are expected to help other educators to develop individualised support plans. This is not an easy process.

(Participant 11)

I have an overcrowded class. This is overwhelming and stressful and I am expected to serve in this structure as well. (Participant 10)

Most participants claimed that they attempted to meet all the learners' needs with limited time for consultation as well as serving in a School Based support Team. They indicated that they felt overstretched. Participants attributed their frustration to the Department of Education's pressure to produce good literacy and numeracy results. Some participants confessed that they wanted to resign from the school Based Support Team. As participants explains:

I think inclusive education itself is a barrier to teaching. I am expected to give individual attention for each learner experiencing barriers to learning without being given the tools to support those learners in my classroom. (Participant 7)

To be honest I want to resign from this team. It's too much. I have to improve my learners' literacy and numeracy results. There is just no time for meetings and trying to solve problems.(Participants 15)

Given the South African Department of Education's call for good literacy and numeracy results, it is not surprising that participants felt that serving in another structure like School Based Support Team adds more responsibility. Hay and Malindi (2005) acknowledge that overcrowded classes may jeopardize the implementation of IE. Dupoux, Hammond, Ingalls and Wolman, 2006; Hay and Malindi, (2005) assert that the inclusion of learners with barriers to learning into mainstream classrooms could be regarded as an additional burden, especially in the context of large class sizes. It is often argued that IE does not add new responsibilities but rather requires a different way of thinking and creativity in organising teaching. As Bartlett (2007) and Veen, Slegers and van der Ven (2007) note, teachers are expected to be more involved in activities in the school and outside their classrooms. This extension of their roles and responsibilities is a barrier to effective teaching and therefore to implementation of IE.

4.2.3.2.4 Language of teaching and learning

Thirteen participants indicated that the language of teaching and learning is a challenge to the effectiveness of the implementation of IE especially when English is a medium of instruction. This, according to the participants, poses a challenge to the learners and parents whose mother tongue is isiXhosa. These learners experience challenges in learning other subjects because they do not understand the medium of instruction. Parents also experience challenges in supporting their learners because they do not understand the language of instruction. This situation has led to the increase of learners who are referred to the School Based Support Teams. One participant explained that:

Learners we teach do not benefit much from the curriculum because they receive their education in their second language and so they need lots of support.

(Participant 5)

In support of the participants' view, Ntombela and Raymond (2013), Department of Education (1997) argue that mismatches between learners' home language and language of teaching and learning have serious implications for learning. This resonates with Stofile, Raymond and Moletsane (2013); Department of Education (1997) who assert that learners who have limited ability to understand and communicate through the language of teaching and learning are likely to experience difficulties in learning. Brocke-Utne (2000: 15) regards the imposition of a second or third language as a "violation of the structure of thinking." This suggests that learners will not have the tool for thinking that is required in learning.

4.2.3.2.5 Problem behaviours

The participants regarded problem behaviours as a huge challenge in their classrooms. These include bullying, truancy and failure to complete tasks. Participants indicated that some learners' behaviours made it impossible to manage classrooms. This in return, made it difficult to teach all learners in the classroom effectively. These participants felt that the strategies they advised educators to use to address problem behaviours were

not effective. As one participant explains:

Learner discipline is a problem especially the ones who are cognitively challenged, they tend to lack discipline and behaviour by disturbing others in the classroom.
(Participant12)

Lim (2006) supports the view that learner behaviour in an inclusive classroom can create a challenge for teachers. According to Hallahan and Kauffman (2004), learners who experience barriers to learning tend to have emotional problems and poor self-concepts. This sometimes leads to rejection by their peer group which could lead to exclusion. Many of the behaviours that have caused concern to the participants include shouting in class, bullying, hurting others, and failure to complete tasks, are the result of conditioning and/or the result of inappropriate behaviour modelled by other peers in the learner's environment. Bartlett (2007), Slegers and Van der Ven (2007) support that, teaching learners with behavioural challenges can be a burden to some teachers especially if they are not fully trained to deal with those challenges. Bornman and Rose (2010) also acknowledge that challenging behaviour is a major obstacle to independent living and educational and employment opportunities.

4.2.3.2.6 Limited and inappropriate resources

Although participants acknowledge the availability of resources in their schools, they claimed that these were inadequate and sometimes inappropriate for the learners in their contexts. They reported the shortage of appropriate instructional materials needed for teaching learners with disabilities. These include mathematics and science kits for each class, computers, software, food, graded readers, a professional nurse who can administer medication and sanitary pads. Participants indicated that this constrained their efforts in teaching learners effectively. As participants indicated:

In theory, inclusive education is a fantastic idea; but the reality of the classroom dictates what can be done. There are not sufficient resources to make it work, although perhaps this will only improve when there is more awareness and visibility.
(Participant 1)

Bornman and Rose (2010: 247) acknowledge that one of the greatest challenges that face many schools is that the resources to accommodate children with disabilities are not in place, which leaves teachers to cope on their own. These authors argue that in order to make inclusion a reality, appropriate resources should be provided. Ntombela et al (2013) also appeals for the provision of materials that are appropriate to the learners' cognitive level, curriculum content, learning environment, learners' language proficiency and socio-cultural identities. Tikly and Barrett (2011) regard different kinds and levels of resource inputs as critical for enabling educators to provide effective intervention. One may argue that the provision of adequate and appropriate resources does not guarantee successful inclusion. Tikly and Barrett (2011: 9) further argue that "learning materials do not work in isolation to enhance learning outcomes but rather are dependent on and need to be compatible with teachers' pedagogical practices, professional values and language proficiency.



4.3 CONCLUSION

The findings in this study reveal that School Based support Teams had negative and positive experiences during the implementation of IE. The positive experiences shed light on the possible strategies that can be used to develop functional and effective School Based Support Teams. The negative experiences suggest that the IE policy's assumption that educators can play a role of teaching in their classrooms as well as supporting teaching and learning at the level of the school is unrealistic and therefore, rethinking of the role of this team is necessary. The following chapter makes recommendations based on the findings of the study.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

As outlined in the previous chapters, this study explores educator's understandings and experiences of Inclusive Education, examining particularly the challenges and the successes of implementing IE. Chapter 4 presented a descriptive analysis of data. This chapter presents a discussion of the findings described in the previous chapter. In order to bring the discussion into perspective, this chapter begins with a summary of findings and proceeds to the discussion under two topics: Educator's challenges and successes of implementing inclusive education.

5.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.2.1 Educators' understanding of Inclusive Education

As indicated in the findings chapter, participants in this case study have different understandings of what IE means and how it should be implemented. Some of the understandings show that participants have not shifted from the medical model or explanations of special education. In order to avoid confusion, it is recommended that the districts and the schools organise colloquia where the common meaning of IE is negotiated. This can be done in schools by clustering schools and sharing the information.

5.2.2 Successes of implementing Inclusive Education

Participants reported that they experienced success in the implementation of inclusive education in their schools. These include established teamwork, increased access and participation, improved teaching practices as well as the provision of assistive devices. These experiences are described in detail in Chapter 4 and are summarised in the section below.

5.2.2.1 *Established teamwork*

Participants in this study reported that through their service in the School Based Support Team, they establish good relationships with other educators and parents. They claimed to have established a solid team and they worked together harmoniously. Through this practise, teachers indicated that they gained a better understanding of leaners' needs and they could more easily identify learner's needs and support them. In order to sustain these working relations, it is recommended that the School based Support Teams ensure that all members including the new members understand what their role is and what their responsibilities are. It is also recommended that School Based Support Teams continue to create environments where problem-solving and decision-making are done in a collaborative and participative manner.

5.2.2.2 *Increased access and participation*

Participants felt that through their engagement in advocacy for IE, their schools managed to encourage parents to bring learners with disabilities into their schools. They further claimed that their schools developed inclusive assessment policies. The participants reported that they made efforts to motivate learners and parents to participate in school activities. They also celebrated the fact that IE prepared their school to become more conducive for all learners irrespective of their abilities. If IE on is desirable in schools, it is recommended that more inclusive policies be developed in the

school, and inclusive cultures and practices be created in order to increase access and participation.

5.2.2.3 *Improved teaching practises*

In this study, participants were satisfied with the training they received on curriculum differentiation strategy. Participants indicated that the strategy enabled them to intervene in the public ordinary schools. While a school that reaches this milestone has much to celebrate, it is necessary to maintain or even continuously improve the status of IE. It is recommended that on-going professional development opportunities are provided to the entire school staff to update and enhance teaching strategies in working with diverse students. Secondly, when new staff members join the School Based support Team, it is recommended that they be orientated on the school's inclusive practices and expectations to enhance implementation. Lastly, applicants for positions within the schools should declare their position on IE and should be provided with information about the schools commitment to IE practices.

5.2.2.4 *Provision of assistive devices*

In this category, participants felt very proud of IE because the schools have devices like wheelchairs, adapted computers recorders and intercoms. They felt that the availability of the above devices like recorders makes their lesson presentations more easily understood by learners especially those who are partially hearing impaired. Some felt that the availability of adapted computers accommodates those learners with visual impairments.

5.2.3 Challenges of Implementing Inclusive Education

5.2.3.1 *Lack of capacity*

Some participants claimed that they were not adequately trained to implement IE; as a result they lacked the skills and knowledge of how to fully implement IE. Specifically, they indicated that they experienced difficulties in teaching learners that perform below the grade with other learners as well as supporting and addressing the needs of their colleagues. Based on this finding, it is recommended that school districts, in collaboration with educator training institutions provide School Based Support Teams with in-service training to enhance their knowledge of strategies that relates to their role and teaching learners experiencing barriers to learning. Further training on IE needs to be provided to bring about a mind shift and the acquisition of new skills for educators. Educators should also take responsibility for keeping themselves abreast with the latest developments in inclusive practices through upgrading and reskilling courses.

5.2.3.2 *Challenging behaviours*

Participants regarded discipline in their classrooms as challenging. They indicated that some disciplinary and behavioural problems make it difficult for them to manage the class activities. Instead of teaching, participants reported that they are sometimes restricted to addressing behavioural issues in the classroom. It is recommended that behaviour management strategies be implemented in schools and these should focus on identifying specific situations that trigger the behaviour.

5.2.3.3 *Language of teaching and learning*

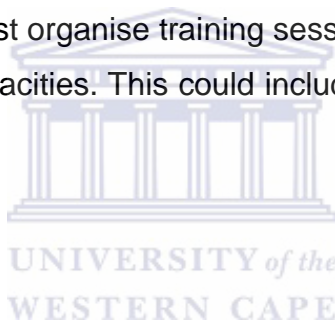
Teachers indicated that the language of teaching and learning militated against the implementation of IE in their schools. Participants reported that some of their learners were denied access to the curriculum content and could not participate in class activities because they did not understand the language of instruction. It is recommended that the school governing bodies and school management teams establish language enrichment programmes to enhance the acquisition and development of the language of teaching and learning.

5.2.3.4 *Lack of support*

The participants viewed support as critical for the successful implementation of IE. They claimed that they did not get psychological, educational, administrative and parental support from experts. This, according to the participants, limited their ability to provide effective support to educators and learners. Continuous professional development is recommended for the structures like School Based Support Teams and other relevant stake holders to empower them to perform their roles effectively. It is also recommended that the District Based Support Teams establish structures that can provide psychological support for the traumatised members of the District Based Support Teams. In terms of the threats for reporting crime, the school should liaise with the community policing forums so that incidences of this nature are curbed. It is also important and beneficial to have on-going monitoring and review to determine how policies are being implemented on the ground. This would help in detecting challenges and becoming aware of what works in terms of implementing polices.

5.2.3.5 *Unrealistic workload*

Participants claimed that they were often stressed because of the workload they have in their classrooms. According to the participants they were expected to teach, write reports about each learner and to have an individualised support plan for each learner. Some participants felt that IE is a barrier on its own because educators are expected to include learners experiencing barriers to learning in classes with big numbers. To alleviate this problem, it is recommended that the schools find creative strategies for dealing with large classes. In terms of the increase in numbers that are referred to the School Based Support Teams, educators should be encouraged to address problems in their own classrooms and provide evidence of the intervention strategies they have employed. It is also recommended that School Based Support Teams in collaboration with District Support Teams must organise training sessions to address the needs of the educators and to build their capacities. This could include the explanation of the referral process to be followed.



5.2.3.6 *Limited resources*

Participants mentioned their schools have inadequate resources. They reported the shortage of appropriate instructional materials needed for teaching learners experiencing barriers to learning. It is recommended that the school should raise funds in order to be able to buy resources that will assist in improving teaching and lowering learner's barriers effectively in the classroom. It is difficult to implement IE if the vital resources are not available. It is therefore important that the Department of Education provides these for the smooth implementation of IE. It is recommended that teacher development should include training on the use of resources.

5.2.4 Limitations and Implications for Future Research

It is important to note that this study was conducted in the mid years of implementing inclusive education in South Africa. It is anticipated that there might be further changes in policies and practical implementation of IE. An on-going study to develop best practice models for the implementation of IE in resource constrained settings is recommended. Based on the findings of this study, the following are limitations and implications for future research.

This study is limited in scope, as only two schools were sampled. It may be helpful to determine if the experiences of School Based Support Teams in this study are similar to those responding to the same issues in other similar schools in the Western Cape Province and in South Africa as a whole. Another limitation of this study is that the sample size was small, which makes it difficult for the findings to be generalized to the whole population of educators working in schools where IE is being implemented in South Africa.

The researcher recommends that for future research on this topic and/or relevant topics, the sample size should be bigger. It might also be helpful to conduct a study on the challenges of inclusion, taking into account type and severity of the learner disability. In-depth qualitative studies that would look specifically at the factors that have shaped the educators experiences could be informative. A study by Lieber *et al.* (2000) found that inclusion was a success where school principals initiated inclusive programmes.

Therefore, further focus on the characteristics of principals could throw insight onto inclusion. All participants in this study were working at the primary school level. It may be interesting and beneficial to determine if educators working at the high school levels have similar experiences about IE. As there is little research addressing the effectiveness of inclusion in the Western Cape Province, it is suggested that this area is researched in the near future. It is crucial to determine if educating learners experiencing barriers to learning in mainstream classrooms has quantifiable benefits for educators and for learners with and those without barriers to learning. It might also be interesting to consider the participants level of education.

5.3 CONCLUSION

The study found that most educators have different experiences of IE. Some educators have not been trained in inclusive and special education especially those educators with less than five years teaching experience. Some educators felt incompetent and some felt the education system is failing to provide the necessary support needed to perform their functions. Knowledge of change management is an important ingredient if we are to be successful in our attempts at educational transformation.

The School Based Support Teams' positive experiences suggest that they can make a difference in schools if appropriate support and continuing professional development are provided. The findings also revealed challenges that cannot be ignored if these teams are to provide effective support to learners and educators. The Education White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001) assumes that educators who serve in the School Based Support Teams would have expertise in learning support and counselling, however, the lived realities in the study reveal that educators in both contexts do not have the capacity to perform the stipulated functions.

Although one cannot generalise, the findings are alarming. Of concern is that if educators continue performing counselling roles they were not trained for, they might do more harm to the learners or other educators they seek to support. It can be argued that educators are expected to perform six roles which include pastoral care. The reality in South Africa is that the teacher pre-service training curriculum does not include counselling modules and ethics. Given the complex social problems learners experience in their communities, it would be dangerous to think that educators can address these problems without the guidance and support of experts that are trained in the area.

The findings revealed the dangers that School Based Support Teams are exposed to when reporting cases of abuse, neglect and crime. It is often argued that it is illegal for

educators not to report crime. The study argues that failure to provide protection is detrimental to the educators.

This study concludes that if the School Based Support Team is critical in the implementation of IE in South Africa, the Department of Education as well as the schools need to rethink these roles or develop a Human Resource Development Strategy that will empower educators with the knowledge and skills necessary to play the role. Secondly, the Department of Education should seriously consider ways in which educators can be protected from perpetrators. Lastly, based on the lived experiences of the School Based Support Teams in the study, educators should continue with the good work but be allowed to provide support in ways that work within their capacity and broader socio-cultural contexts.



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APPENDIX A: Permission Letter to the Western Cape Department of Education

University of the Western Cape
Robert Sobukwe Drive
Bellville
7535
14 November 2014

Sir/ Madam

Re: Request for permission to conduct research in your school

I am a Masters in Education student at the University of the Western Cape, conducting a research project titled: **'School- Based Support Teams' understanding and experiences of inclusive education in the Western Cape'** I would like to explore the School Based Support Teams' understandings and experiences of inclusive education.

I humbly request your assistance in this research project by being granted permission to conduct my study in your school. The participants in my study will be members of the School Based Support Team. They will be required to participate in individual interviews that are expected to last between 45 to 60 minutes after school.

Please note that:

- The schools and participants will not receive material gains for participation in this research project.
- The teachers will be expected to respond to each question in a manner that will reflect their own personal opinion.
- The schools' or the participant's identity will not be divulged under any circumstance.

- There is no right or wrong answer.
- All teachers' responses will be treated with strict confidentiality.
- Pseudonyms will be used (real names of the participants and the institution will not be used throughout the research process).
- Participation is voluntary; therefore, participants will be free to withdraw at any time without negative or undesirable consequences to them.
- The participants will not, under any circumstance, be forced to disclose what they do not want to reveal.
- Digital recording of interviews will only be done if the permission of the participant is obtained.
- Data will be stored in the Universities locked cupboard for a maximum period of five years thereafter it will be destroyed by means they deem fit.



Thanking you,

Yours faithfully

B. Rulwa - Mnatwana

0734842181

babalwarulwa@gmail.com

Supervisor: Dr.Sindiswa Stofile

021 959 2925

sstofile@uwc.co.za

APPENDIX B: Consent Form for a Western Cape Department of Education

If permission is granted to conduct the research in the District schools, please fill in and sign the form below.

I, (Full Name)
hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project. I hereby grant permission for the researcher to conduct the research project within the schools in the Western Cape District. I understand that teachers are free to withdraw from the project at any time, should they so desire.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: ___/___/2014



APPENDIX C: Letter to the Principal

University of the Western Cape
Robert Sobukwe Drive
Bellville
7535
14 November 2014

Sir/ Madam

Re: Request for permission to conduct research in your school

I am a Masters in Education student at the University of the Western Cape, conducting a research project titled: **'School- Based Support Teams' understanding and experiences of inclusive education in the Western Cape'** I would like to explore the School Based Support Teams' understandings and experiences of inclusive education.

I humbly request your assistance in this research project by being granted permission to conduct my study at schools in your district. The participants in my study will be special school teachers from two schools in the district. They will be required to participate in individual interviews that are expected to last between 45 to 60 minutes after school.

Please note that:

- The schools and participants will not receive material gains for participation in this research project.
- The teachers will be expected to respond to each question in a manner that will reflect their own personal opinion.
- The schools' or the participant's identity will not be divulged under any circumstance.

- There is no right or wrong answer.
- All teachers' responses will be treated with strict confidentiality.
- Pseudonyms will be used (real names of the participants and the institution will not be used throughout the research process).
- Participation is voluntary; therefore, participants will be free to withdraw at any time without negative or undesirable consequences to them.
- The participants will not, under any circumstance, be forced to disclose what they do not want to reveal.
- Digital recording of interviews will only be done if the permission of the participant is obtained.
- Data will be stored in the Universities locked cupboard for a maximum period of five years thereafter it will be destroyed by means they deem fit.



Thanking you,

Yours faithfully

B. Rulwa - Mnatwana

0734842181

babalwarulwa@gmail.com

Supervisor: Dr.Sindiswa Stofile

021 959 2925

sstofile@uwc.co.za

APPENDIX D: Consent Form for a Principal

If permission is granted to conduct the research in the District schools, please fill in and sign the form below.

I, (Full Name)
hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project. I hereby grant permission for the researcher to conduct the research project within the schools in the Western Cape District. I understand that teachers are free to withdraw from the project at any time, should they so desire.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: ____/____/2014



APPENDIX E: Letter to a member of School Based Support Team

University of the Western Cape
Robert Sobukwe Drive
Bellville
7535
14 November 2014

Sir/ Madam

Re: Request for permission to conduct research in your school

I am a Masters in Education student at the University of the Western Cape, conducting a research project titled: **'School- Based Support Teams' understanding and experiences of inclusive education in the Western Cape'** I would like to explore the School Based Support Teams' understandings and experiences of inclusive education.

I humbly request your assistance by being a participant in this study. The interview will be conducted in your school premises at your convenient time. The interview is expected to last between 45 and 60 minutes

Please note that:

- The schools and participants will not receive material gains for participation in this research project.
- The teachers will be expected to respond to each question in a manner that will reflect their own personal opinion.
- The schools' or the participant's identity will not be divulged under any circumstance.
- There is no right or wrong answer.

- All teachers' responses will be treated with strict confidentiality.
- Pseudonyms will be used (real names of the participants and the institution will not be used throughout the research process).
- Participation is voluntary; therefore, participants will be free to withdraw at any time without negative or undesirable consequences to them.
- The participants will not, under any circumstance, be forced to disclose what they do not want to reveal.
- Digital recording of interviews will only be done if the permission of the participant is obtained.
- Data will be stored in the Universities locked cupboard for a maximum period of five years thereafter it will be destroyed by means they deem fit.



Thanking you,

Yours faithfully

B. Rulwa - Mnatwana

0734842181

babalwarulwa@gmail.com

Supervisor: Dr.Sindiswa Stofile

021 959 2925

sstofile@uwc.co.za

APPENDIX F: Consent Form for a Member of School Based Support Team

If permission is granted to conduct the research in the District schools, please fill in and sign the form below.

I, (Full Name)
hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project. I hereby grant permission for the researcher to conduct the research project within the schools in the Western Cape District. I understand that teachers are free to withdraw from the project at any time, should they so desire.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: ____/____/2014



APPENDIX G: Interview for School Based Support Team Members

The purpose of this interview is to gather information on your understandings and experiences of implementing inclusive education. To ensure anonymity, you are not required to write your name on the questionnaire. Please answer all the questions as accurately and fully as you can.

PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS BY PLACING AN (X) IN THE RELEVANT BLOCK/S OR WRITING YOUR ANSWER IN THE SPACE PROVIDED.

SECTION A: BIOGRAPHICAL DATA



1. Age: 20 -30yrs 30-40yrs 40-50yrs 50 and over
2. Gender: Male Female Declined
3. Teaching experience: less than 5years 5-10years 10-20years more than 20 years.
4. Number of years at this school: less than 5 years 5-10 years 10-20

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4. What challenges do you experience in implementing inclusive education?

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5. What success do you experience in implementing inclusive education?

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6. What challenges do you experience in teaching learners experiencing barriers in your class?

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7. What challenges do you experience in in facilitating support for your colleagues in your school?

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8. What successes have you experienced in teaching learners experiencing barriers in your class?



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9. What successes have you experienced in facilitating support for your colleagues in your school?

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