

**Experiences of technical vocational education and training college lecturers
with students living with special learning needs in a mainstream classroom
context in Kwa-Zulu Natal**

by

Nalini Pillay

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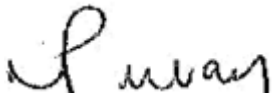
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

SUPERVISOR: PROF M.M DICHABA

CO-SUPERVISOR: PROF E.M NKOANA

DECLARATION

I, Nalini Pillay, student number 3068-315-7 declare that the study of 'Experiences of technical vocational education and training college lecturers with students living with special learning needs in a mainstream classroom context in Kwa-Zulu Natal' is my own work. All sources and quotes used in this study have been acknowledged via complete references.



_____ 12/02/2024

Signature

Date

DEDICATION

I give thanks to my Lord Jesus Christ who was with me every step of the way. Indeed, all glory to the Highest. Blood, sweat and tears is really an understatement on this journey; however, I am grateful to the many people who constantly and consistently persevered in keeping me motivated. This work is not just mine. This belongs to my precious parents who hold me in their prayers constantly, my best friend Rueban (my husband) who constantly motivated me through the most challenging period in my life (I will always be eternally grateful) my precious children Chanel and Tyler who tolerated my exhaustion (the source of my undying love and inspiration) and my loving siblings who kept me motivated (Valerie, Vanessa, Yougen and Rueban). My heartfelt gratitude to my supervisors Professor M.M. Dichaba and Professor E.M. Nkoana who went above and beyond the call of duty to keep me motivated and on track. I will not forget your investment in my welfare and always being tolerant in urging me on when I felt I could not. I will forever be indebted to you. To all the participants, it is because of your passion in this critical cause in social justice and humanity for all that has brought me thus far.

ABSTRACT

The right to education is optimally and deeply embedded in the South African Constitution. This includes people with special learning needs and other disabilities. TVET colleges, however, experience a myriad of challenges with inclusivity. Even though there have been some interventions, numerous challenges still plague the system. This study encapsulates the experiences of TVET college lecturers with students with deficits in learning capacity. The study was conducted at three campuses in the uMgungundlovu district in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa and exposes the struggle that exists with the understanding and accommodating students with special education needs. Lecturers' experiences expose the dire consequences emanating in mainstream classes. The focus of the study was to gauge the lecturers' experiences through a qualitative approach using an interpretivist paradigm. Interviews and observations were conducted to obtain primary data. Literature pertaining to the study was examined intensely and data was collected and analysed. A semi-structured interview guide was used for the senior management and lecturers which reveals the concerns of lecturers who have not been trained in the area of inclusive education and exposes the limitations of TVET colleges. Classroom observations were conducted to ascertain engagement with students.

Interviews were conducted with three senior management officials, three campus managers and twelve lecturers. Major concerns emerged regarding the readiness of colleges for special needs students, including the inability to assist students, a highly skewed curriculum, a lack of support structures, an inability to implement basic inclusive policy, and lecturers that are overloaded with paperwork which is stressful. Lecturers clearly stated that they were ill-prepared to take on special needs students and cope with their workloads, leaving students to cope by themselves. What is evident is that the views and perceptions that emerged indicated a lack of focus on inclusivity which leaves an indelible negative mark on the proper implementation of inclusive policy in the mainstreaming of students. Recommendations have been made to propose a number of viable solutions and a comprehensive framework has been designed for consideration to facilitate proper implementation of inclusivity and accountability within the TVET college.

KEY TERMS: Disabilities; Bronfenbrenner's model; inclusivity; lecturers; mainstream education; models of disability; special needs students; TVET colleges.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION.....	I
DEDICATION	II
ABSTRACT	III
LIST OF FIGURES	X
LIST OF TABLES	X
ABBREVIATIONS, ACRONYMS AND COMMON TERMS.....	XI
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND	1
1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM	4
1.3 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY.....	7
1.4 AIM OF THE STUDY	8
1.5 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY	8
1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS	8
1.7 OVERVIEW OF THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....	9
1.8 CONTEXT OF THE STUDY	9
1.9 DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	10
1.9.1 Research Paradigm	10
1.9.2 Research Approach.....	10
1.9.3 Research Design	11
1.9.4 Data Collection	11
1.9.5 Sampling.....	12
1.9.6 Data Analysis.....	12
1.9.7 Ethical Measures	13
1.9.8 Relevance of the Study.....	13
1.9.9 Trustworthiness	14
1.10 DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS.....	14
1.10.1 TVET (Technical Vocational Education and Training) Colleges	14
1.10.2 TVET Lecturer	14
1.10.3 Inclusive Education.....	15
1.10.4 Inclusive Classrooms.....	15
1.10.5 Students with Special Learning Disabilities.....	15
1.11 CHAPTER OVERVIEW	15
1.12 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER	16
CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	17
2.1 INTRODUCTION.....	17
2.2 MODELS OF DISABILITY	18
2.2.1 The Human Rights Model.....	18
2.2.2 The Social Model.....	18
2.2.3 The Medical Model	18
2.3. BRONFENBRENNER’S MODEL OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION	19
2.3.1 The Microsystem	22
2.3.2 The Mesosystem	23
2.3.3 The Exosystem.....	24
2.3.4 The Macrosystem	24

2.3.5 The Chronosystem	25
2.4 SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIVIST THEORY	27
2.5 RELEVANCE TO THE STUDY	30
2.6 CONCLUSION	31
CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW	33
3.1 INTRODUCTION	33
3.1.1 The Salamanca Views on Inclusion	33
3.1.2 South Africa's Adoption of the Salamanca Statement	34
3.1.3 South Africa's Constitutional Legislation	34
3.1.4 The Education White Paper 6: Special Needs Education	35
3.1.5 Exclusionary Practice	36
3.1.6 Human Rights	36
3.1.7 Global Strategies	37
3.1.8 Framework for Change	38
3.1.9 Barriers Impact on Inclusivity	39
3.1.10 Lack of Specific Legislation.....	40
3.1.11 Inadequate Support Structures	41
3.1.12 Conclusion	41
3.2. DEFINING AND UNDERSTANDING LEARNING DISABILITIES	41
3.2.1 Defining Learning Disabilities.....	41
3.2.2 Understanding Learning Disabilities	42
3.3 STRUCTURING AN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM	44
3.4 MAINSTREAMING, INTEGRATION AND INCLUSION	47
3.5 INCLUSION AND LEARNING DISABILITIES	49
3.6 CAUSES OF LEARNING DISABILITIES	51
3.7 TEACHER ATTITUDES TOWARDS LEARNING WITH DISABILITIES: GLOBAL OVERVIEW.....	52
3.7.1 Australia.....	53
3.7.2 Nigeria	54
3.7.3 India.....	54
3.7.4 Bahrain	55
3.7.5 South Africa	56
3.7.6 Ethiopia.....	56
3.7.7 New Zealand.....	57
3.7.8 Kenya	57
3.7.9 Zambia.....	58
3.8 STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES	59
3.9 SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS FACING BARRIERS	60
3.10 NEEDS OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES.....	62
3.10.1 Incorporating Technology and Assistive Devices in TVET Colleges	64
3.10.2 Incorporating Universal Design Learning Principles (UDL) in Colleges ..	65
3.10.3 Disability and Support Units.....	65
3.10.4 Scaffolding and Differentiation	66
3.10.5 Curriculum Modification	66
3.11 CHALLENGES TO INCLUSIVE EDUCATION.....	67
3.11.1 Access	68
3.11.2 Disabilities within Higher Institutions.....	69
3.11.3 Disabilities and Employment.....	70

3.11.4 Gender Inequality	71
3.11.5 Parental Involvement	72
3.11.6 Adults and Disability	73
3.11.7 Teacher Readiness in Identifying Students with Barriers.....	73
3.11.8 Policy Challenges	75
3.11.9 Educator Challenges	76
3.11.10 Disabilities and Resource Centres.....	78
3.12 LECTURER COMPETENCE IN DEALING WITH STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES	79
3.13 TEACHERS AS AGENTS OF CHANGE.....	81
3.14 SPECIFIC LEARNING DIFFICULTIES.....	85
3.15 INTERNATIONAL AND DOMESTIC POLICY AND PRACTICES, MODELS, THEORIES AND RESEARCH.....	88
3.15.1 International Experience	89
3.15.2 Inclusive Education in South Africa.....	91
3.16 INCLUSION AND DISABILITY IN SOUTH AFRICA.....	93
3.17 FULL-SERVICE SCHOOLS IN SOUTH AFRICA.....	96
3.18 LECTURERS AND DISABILITIES.....	98
3.19 SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES	99
3.20 CHAPTER SUMMARY	99
CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY.....	101
4.1 QUALITATIVE AND INTERPRETIVE RESEARCH DESIGN.....	101
4.2 CASE STUDY METHOD	102
4.3 POPULATION AND SAMPLING	102
4.3.1 Purposive Sampling.....	103
4.3.2 Sample Size.....	103
4.4 INSTRUMENTATION AND DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES	104
4.4.1 In-depth Interviews	104
4.4.2 Observation	104
4.5 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION	105
4.6 COMPARABILITY, CREDIBILITY, REFLEXIBILITY, RELIABILITY, TRANSPARENCY AND TRUSTWORTHINESS	106
4.7 RESEARCH ETHICS	108
4.7.1 Protection from Harm.....	108
4.7.2 Informed Consent	109
4.7.3 Confidentiality and Anonymity.....	109
4.7.4 Right to Withdraw	109
4.7.5 Limiting Researcher Bias.....	109
4.7.6 Risk Minimisation COVID-19	110
4.8 LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY.....	110
4.9 CHAPTER SUMMARY	111
CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION.....	112
5.1 INTRODUCTION.....	112
5.2 PRESENTATION OF THEMES.....	114
5.2.1 Understanding and Defining Inclusive Education.....	115
5.2.2 Deficient Functioning	123
5.2.3 Misconceptions Plaguing the TVET College System	134

5.3 UNDERSTANDING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION	135
5.3.1 Lecturers' Understanding of Inclusive Education	135
5.3.2 Challenges.....	137
5.3.3 Structural Deficiency	152
5.4 CONCLUSION	153
5.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY	154
CHAPTER 6: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	155
6.1 INTRODUCTION.....	155
6.2 SUMMARY OF CHAPTERS.....	156
6.2.1 Chapter 1	156
6.2.2 Chapter 2.....	156
6.2.3 Chapter 3.....	157
6.2.4 Chapter 4	158
6.2.5 Chapter 5.....	158
6.3 SUMMARY OF THE LITERATURE REVIEW	161
6.4 LIMITATIONS.....	162
6.5 CONCLUSIONS.....	162
6.6 RECOMMENDATIONS	164
6.6.1 Establishment of a Unique Framework	164
6.6.2 Intervention and Monitoring	165
6.6.3 Recruitment of Suitable Lecturers.....	165
6.6.4 Curriculum Adaptation	166
6.6.5 Procedures for Proper Access.....	168
6.6.6 Intervention through Varied Pedagogies and Simulation Centres.....	168
6.6.7 Parental / Guardian Engagement	169
6.6.8 Ensure Quality Assurance of Programmes, Courses and Curriculum	170
6.6.9 The Establishment of Disability Units Within TVET Colleges.....	170
6.6.10 The 70:30 Rule	170
6.6.11 Funding and Resources Barriers	171
6.6.12 Time Constraints.....	172
6.6.14 Policy	173
6.6.14 Overcoming the Stress of Lecturers'.....	173
6.6.15 Inclusion of Specialists	174
6.6.16 Professional Development of TVET Lecturers	174
6.7 THE PROPOSED FRAMEWORK	176
6.8 AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH	177
6.9 FINAL REMARKS	179
REFERENCES.....	181

APPENDICES	218
APPENDIX A: REGISTRATION APPLICATION.....	218
APPENDIX B : ETHICS APPROVAL FORM	219
APPENDIX C: PERMISSION FROM CENTRAL OFFICE.....	220
APPENDIX D: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT THE UTVET COLLEGES IN KWAZULU-NATAL	222
APPENDIX E: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT THE UTVET COLLEGES IN KWAZULU-NATAL	224
APPENDIX F: OBSERVATION CHECKLIST	225
APPENDIX G: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS: MANAGERS.....	226
APPENDIX H: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS: LECTURERS.....	227
APPENDIX I: TURNITIN REPORT	228
APPENDIX J: CONFIRMATION OF PROFESSIONAL EDITING	229

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1: Bronfenbrenner’s ecology of inclusive education	21
Figure 2.2: Social constructivism theory	28
Figure 2.3: The knowledge transformation processes in social constructivism	30
Figure 3.1: Timeline of the rights framework for inclusion	37
Figure 3.2: Levers for change	39
Figure 3.3: Framework for building an inclusive school.....	47
Figure 3.4: Steps from exclusion to inclusion	50
Figure 3.5: Education through the inclusion lens.....	63
Figure 3.6: Specific learning difficulties	86
Figure 6.1: Proposed IE framework for TVET colleges	177

LIST OF TABLES

Table 3.1: Mainstreaming, integration and inclusion	48
Table 3.2: Inclusive pedagogical approach	83
Table 3.3: Aspects of teacher agency and inclusive pedagogical practices	84
Table 5.1: Details of the participants who were interviewed.....	113
Table 5.2: Findings from managers.....	114
Table 5.3: Findings from lecturers	135
Table 6.1: Advantages and disadvantages of inclusion and mainstreaming	178

ABBREVIATIONS, ACRONYMS AND COMMON TERMS

ADHD	Attention deficit Hyperactive disorder
AU	African Union
CET	Community Education and Training
CII	Confederation of Indian Industry
CNC	Computer Numerical Control
DBE	Department of Basic education
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
DOE	Department of Education
ECDD	Ethiopian Centre for Disabilities and Development
EU	European Union
EWP 6	Education White Paper 6
FET	Further Education and Training
HEI	Higher Education Institutions
IE	Inclusive Education
ILO	International Labour Organisation
LMS	Learning Management System
NCV	National Certificate Vocational
NEETS	Not in Education Employment or Training
NCLB	No Child Left Behind
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NSDP	National Skills Development Policy
NSDS	National Skills Development Strategy
NSF	National Skills Fund
NSFAS	National Student Financial Aid Scheme
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PSET	Post School Education and Training
QCA	Qualitative Content Analysis
SA	South Africa
SAHE	South African Higher Education
SEN	Special Education Needs
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authority

SMT	Senior Management Team
SSRC	Social Science Research Council
STEM	Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics
TDM	Tool Die and Mould Making
TVET	Technical Vocational Education and Training
UN	United Nations
UNCRPD	United Nations Convention on The Rights of Persons with Disabilities
UNESCO	United Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

“Through perseverance many people win success out of what seemed destined to be certain failure”-Benjamin Disraeli

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a local and global overview of inclusion with a focus on various forms of policies and legislation. TVET colleges currently house a diverse contingent of students. These include students with special learning needs who attend mainstream classes. Students with special learning needs have been a point of contention for many years in the education system. An outline of South Africa’s stance on the mainstreaming of students with special learning needs is provided. In addition, the chapter expounds the statement of the problem, rationale of the study, aims and objectives, and the research questions. Furthermore, a theoretical framework of the study as well as research methods are briefly outlined as used in the study. The context of the study is outlined, afterwards key terms are also defined. Finally, in subsequent chapters the outline of the study is presented.

1.2 BACKGROUND

The South African Constitution of 1996 (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996) protects the fundamental rights of all citizens and forbids discrimination in any form. This, according to Article 5 and 24(1) of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), includes a non-discriminatory stance towards persons with disabilities regarding access to further education and training, which is based on the equality of opportunity. Various pieces of legislation promulgated to effect fair access for persons with disabilities have been implemented as a direct response to the 1994 Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education developed in Spain (UNESCO 1994).

Some of the legislative reforms and initiatives that include standards of equity for all students include the reform of primary education regardless of the level of development, special education needs (SEN) or first language, which directly improves the systemic equity. The legislation applies to students identified with

learners with special education needs (LSEN) who find it difficult to cope with learning and to make progress (UNESCO 1994; 2000; Ainscow, Slee & Best, 2019).

Monitoring guidelines for inclusive quality provide standards for teaching and school development, and inclusive classroom practice. Inclusion in the curriculum content for student teachers is regarded as mandatory in the reform of teacher education.

Countries within the European Union have made great strides in their commitment to inclusive education. Countries such as Austria have various measures, laws and directives in place to ensure that inclusive education is embraced and addressed within mainstream education Buchner & Proyer (2020). Austria's policy initiatives have a clear focus on inclusivity. Instruction is laid out in guidelines for practising and monitoring quality standards of inclusive teaching of students with disabilities in a manner that makes way for students with SEN or disabilities to acquire the maximum level of support to enhance student integration into normal society and which contributes to their individual development (Buchner & Proyer, 2019).

The Czechia Republic has implemented an impressive programme referred to as 'The Fair School Project' of the League of Human Rights, to directly target fair and quality education with a special emphasis on inclusive education which promotes social cohesion (Vařurová & Pančocha, 2023). Encapsulated within are the 'Fair School Standards', which integrate a set of criteria that schools are mandated to fulfil. This is to ensure that the Czech Republic fulfils the directives of a good and inclusive school system. In addition, training and other courses are offered for principals and teachers including workshops. These place a direct emphasis on the commitment to embrace inclusive and non-discriminatory education.

Other countries such as Finland and Denmark do not have any specific legislation regarding the education of students with disabilities or special needs (Schwab, 2020). General policy, however, is that education must be made accessible to everyone. Highlighted further is that teaching must be conducted with consideration for the different needs of students. Implementation of a national higher education accessibility project from 2006–2011 provided an opportunity for barrier-free and equal opportunities in institutions for students with disabilities or learning difficulties (Ahola et.al, 2014).

Similarly in the African Union (AU) the realisation of the fundamental inclusion of the rights of people with disabilities was adopted as a critical component by the UNCRPD (Fernandez, Rutka & Aldersey, 2017; Mittler; 2015; Katsui, 2012; UN, 2006). Despite the critical focus on people with disabilities, in theory, policies in Africa suggest, that practical implementation of inclusivity remains problematic. An in-depth analysis and observation of disabilities were made by the AU leading to a trajectory focusing on future improved policy and practice. There is anticipation that there will be improvement and implementation which will be progressive and form a component that is integral to social and economic policy inevitably impacting progress from national, international and ultimately at continental levels (Lang et. al, 2019).

Various pieces of legislation and directives on inclusive education in South Africa are a direct response to the international imperatives of the Salamanca Statement, and to the post-apartheid state of special needs and support services within education and training. These laws and policies include:

- The South African Schools Act (Department of Education, 1996),
- The White Paper on an Integrated National Disability Strategy (Ministerial Office of the Deputy President, 1997),
- The Higher Education Act (1997), the Further Education and Training Act (1998), and the Adult Basic Education and Training Act (2000),
- The Skills Development Act (1998), and
- The Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act (2000).

In redressing the unequal, exclusionary and discriminatory apartheid era stance on the fragmented and segregated education system, South Africa is attempting to forge ahead with policy for students with disabilities (Mampane, 2022). This makes provision for all students including those with learning disabilities to access the education system. Broadly speaking, legislation and policies indicate that students with disabilities should not be looked at as problems within the education sector, but rather as individuals like any other with a unique set of skills and needs, which should be adequately addressed (Tugli, 2013; McKenzie, 2021). The South African education system remains bound by the injunction of the Constitution regarding

inclusivity. Thus, the interpretation of promoting social justice and human rights must be deeply rooted and embedded in inclusivity.

Hence, the rationale for this study is to understand lecturers' experiences of accommodating and understanding students with special learning needs within mainstream classrooms in technical vocational and training (TVET) colleges and the complexities which exist within this scenario.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The Education White Paper 6: Special Needs Education (EWP6) (DOE, 2001) makes provision for all students with disabilities including those with special needs to be part of the normal education system. As a radical departure from traditional teaching methods for special education, the EWP6 proposed a number of interventions for students with disabilities. It proposed institutional level support teams whose primary function is to integrate coordinated support services for students and educators. Support services should work towards identifying systemic issues and educator, learner and institutional needs. District support teams would provide a comprehensive range of educational support services including professional curriculum development (DOE, 2001).

This policy, however, focuses predominantly on schools, with little mention of how TVET colleges should support students with disabilities. Schools have a responsibility to direct Grade 9 students to TVET colleges. The policy is clear that students with special needs, including those with learning disabilities should be accommodated in all further education institutions as part of their inclusionary measures. Students have the option of remaining in school or entering TVET colleges but lack adequate information about what college courses entail. The adjustment for students on entering TVET college is huge as they struggle to adjust to a vocational stream with markedly different subjects and levels of difficulty within the curriculum. The policy creates a gateway for acceptance in to TVET colleges irrespective of SEN or whether TVET staff are adequately trained and equipped to deal with them.

Thus, the primary responsibility of addressing the inadequate state of TVET colleges, both in terms of accommodating students with physical disabilities and

meeting academic needs, lies in fostering an applied interactive discourse among all stakeholders. This dialogue is essential for achieving equality, social justice and human dignity. Although this research mentions physical disabilities, its main focus is on students with mental impairments placed in mainstream classes, who face significant challenges in keeping up academically with their peers.

The policy places emphasis on converting colleges into full-service institutions. Aligning this to TVET college needs, students with disabilities will benefit greatly from fully equipped resource centres, disability-friendly classrooms, a flexible curriculum, adjusted assessment strategies and comprehensive counselling and support services. Furthermore, classrooms should be equipped with assistive devices to help these students keep up with their peers. TVET colleges currently struggle with the accommodation of students with both physical and mental impairments

It has become incessantly necessary to effect change for a universal design for all students. This change is embedded in the definition of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities(UNCRPD) that a universal design includes, services, programmes, design of products for all persons, which includes technology and assistive devices without the need for adapting or specialised design (DHET, 2020). In order for effective and practical transformation to take place, classrooms need to be redesigned and realigned in its entirety to integrate and accommodate all students.

The challenge arises from the fact that even though EWP6 (DOE, 2001) suggests practical interventions on paper these are not actively implemented in TVET colleges. I have watched students with disabilities struggle to read from the board, battle to read from question papers and books, take longer times to read speeches and other texts, barely complete tests and struggle with the understanding of the curriculum. All these observations point to the urgency to reassess the methods of assessment, curricula and types of learning materials used to ensure that no student is left behind.

Planning is now underway in a document entitled Technical Vocational Education and Training Colleges' 2020 Student Support Services Annual Plan (DHET, 2020) which formally admits that TVET colleges were not initially built to accommodate or provide access to students with disabilities. It has now, however, become imperative

that when the planned implementation of Disability Rights Units within TVET colleges emerges “the process of considering and implementing (where possible) the principles of universal access and design” materialises (DHET, 2020:8). Universal access remains a fundamental human rights concern. In acknowledging the seriousness of the demand for justice, EWP6 encapsulates the urgency in acknowledging that such a policy “will also lead to a reduction in the government’s fiscal burden as the inclusive education and training system increases the number of productive citizens relative to those who are dependent on the state for social security grants” (DHET, 2001:25).

My lived experience as a lecturer in a TVET college for the past 16 years has shown that more often than not, lecturers brand students as weak, lazy and unable to learn and opt to ignore them during the teaching and learning process due to incompetence or lack of training on how to teach them. The challenge of accommodating these students is evident in lecturers’ conversations and meetings with the opinion among academic staff being that students with disabilities and SEN are simply a contributory factor to the high failure rates within their classrooms.

The researcher has taken cognisance of the influx of students into TVET colleges arriving from vastly different socio-economic, cultural and family backgrounds. Among these students are those who have not qualified with the minimum requirements for university entrance, some who by choice, have entered the TVET system, and a large number from special needs schools that have various learning disabilities and special needs. My concern is that all students are taught and assessed using standardised methods irrespective of what SEN or disabilities may have been identified. There are no differentiated curricula nor teaching strategies currently being employed, resulting in many students failing and exiting the system in the first year of study. The knock-on effect is the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) funding losses for students that drop out especially in the first year.

Students are also faced with a very complex curriculum and all assessment methods/strategies are prepared for the ‘normal student’. Even though inclusive policies are clear that there needs to be equality in inclusivity, this remains an area that is ignored for assessment purposes. The general chalkboard and lecture

method is one that is most popularly used. Other methods include the lecture method where the lecturer speaks and the student listens, questions are asked and very few students with disabilities respond. There is no adjustment made for the student with auditory or visual problems.

Worksheets with standard fonts are used meaning the student with visual problems cannot work at the same pace as the other students and remain disadvantaged, lagging behind their peers. Activities in textbooks are also problematic as the font and graphics are small and the slower students take much longer to complete them. Most of the time these activities are not completed due to timetabling issues. Classroom boards that are used are barely visible with the poor lighting in the classroom. There are no audio recorders or assistive devices for slower students. Lessons are taught at a normal pace, leaving out any student that cannot keep up. Assistive devices have never been discussed nor included as an option for students with impairments in TVET colleges. The visible lack of commitment for vital resources to facilitate effective understanding of class work prevents students with SEN from succeeding. The actual learning environment is not conducive with large, cramped classrooms that do not leave any extra time for one-on-one assistance, so ultimately students cannot be accommodated individually, thereby contributing to the large failure and dropout rate.

1.3 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

Considering the problem, I have realised the need for an investigation into the experiences of lecturers who teach students with SEN within the TVET college system of South Africa. This was undertaken in order to suggest interventions for inclusion of all students in mainstream classes, in line with inclusive education principles. This investigation will also serve to inform policymakers to work towards assisting TVET colleges in making appropriate changes to the training and development needs of lecturers, to the curricula and assessment strategies so that lecturers are better equipped to serve students with disabilities and special needs. Currently TVET colleges do not have any assistive devices for students with SEN.

Current literature on the inclusion of students with SEN in TVET colleges is sparse. Where some universities have established disability units within their institutions and schools receiving the bulk of support from the government in terms of students with

special needs, TVET colleges remain in limbo as to how these students can and may be adequately accommodated. TVET colleges are currently expected to operate as 'full-service' institutions with little being said about how this can be achieved in terms of support, teaching, learning and assessment.

1.4 AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to investigate the experiences of TVET college lecturers with students with disabilities within a mainstream classroom.

1.5 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of this study are to:

- Understand lecturers' experiences with students with special learning needs in a mainstream classroom setting.
- Examine how lecturers accommodate students with special learning needs during teaching and learning.
- Examine whether additional teaching methods and technical support is currently provided for students with special learning needs in the TVET sector.
- Determine which strategies and interventions could equip TVET college lecturers with competencies and skills to educate students with varying special learning needs are being employed.

1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

RQ1 What are the experiences of TVET college lecturers with students with special learning needs in a mainstream classroom setting?

RQ2 How do TVET college lecturers accommodate students with special learning needs during teaching and learning?

RQ3 Which additional teaching methods and technical support are provided for students with special learning needs to ensure success in classes?

RQ4 What strategies or interventions should be undertaken to deal with students with special learning needs?

1.7 OVERVIEW OF THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study is underpinned by two theoretical views. These include the ecological systems theory of Urie Bronfenbrenner (1979) who advocates that an individual's development is largely influenced by interconnected environmental systems. He articulates that these systems include the immediate surroundings like family, schools which cascade into the broader societal influences of issues involving their cultures. Bronfenbrenner places a clear emphasis on the fundamental importance of children being studied within multiple environments. The second perspective is the social constructivism theory. Social constructivism places emphasis on the importance of context and culture and requires understanding of what occurs in society and constructing knowledge (McMahon, 1997). It is important to understand that there are three areas of focus within social constructivism. These are reality, knowledge and learning (Kim, 2001).

Reality is constructed through human activities. For the social constructivist, this reality is not merely discovered nor does it exist prior to its social invention (Kim, 2001). Kukla (2000) agrees that properties of the world of the world are invented by members of society collaboratively. Hein (1991) posits that learning is a social activity associated with casual acquaintances, peers, family and people. In the consideration of learning as a premise, McMahon (1997) expounds that social constructivism has the view that it is a social process, which does not depend on individualistic learning, nor does it entail the passive development of a person's behaviour that is impacted by external forces.

Both the bio-ecological and the social constructivist theory take cognisance of the vital impact of the environment and social interactions that extend to knowledge formation. The gist of both theories mesh into the dynamics of this study where there is much that needs urgent attention regarding mainstreaming and lecturer issues to promote a fully transformed, adapted environment preventing the marginalisation of students with special needs.

1.8 CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

This study was undertaken in the province of KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa. Three campuses of five colleges were chosen, all of which fall under the auspices of the

Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET). The study is centred on the experiences of lecturers with students that have SEN within mainstream classes. A myriad of issues exists within these campuses with regard to the qualifications of lecturers and readiness of the colleges in terms of implementation of inclusive practices. The aim of this study was to extract information from both lecturers and management on the status quo of inclusivity within the public TVET institution.

1.9 DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section addresses the methodology and research method used in the investigation. A brief overview of the research design, paradigm, sampling and data analysis is provided in the sections that follow.

1.9.1 Research Paradigm

An interpretivism paradigm was adopted with a view to ascertaining the experiences of lecturers with students with SEN in mainstream classes. Davies and Fisher (2018) assert that a research paradigm comprise of a distinct set of assumptions of reality, the creation of knowledge and of what is important and valuable to learn. Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) concede that it is the conceptual lens via which the researcher ascertains and examines the research methods and indicates how the analysis of data will occur. This interpretivist paradigms elucidate the need for this study where participants chosen were directly involved from the student registration process to teaching. By using these paradigms, the researcher could gauge from the views of participants the actual experiences within mainstream classes and the notions of management on issues of inclusivity. Morgan (2007) makes special reference to research using the interpretivist paradigm, as exhibiting characteristics such as context which is vital for knowledge, that knowledge is created by the findings which can be value laden and that these values must be explicit. They further maintain that there is a vital need for individuals to be understood and underscore the notion that beliefs and realities are multiple and socially constructed.

1.9.2 Research Approach

A qualitative approach was engaged for the study. The researcher employed a qualitative approach as it provides a thick, rich description of data directly from the participants. Qualitative research places its fundamental core on the post-positivist or

constructivist beliefs (Teherani, et al., 2015). There is an alignment between the belief system underpinning the research question and the research approach which contributes to a rigorous process emanating from qualitative research (Teherani et al., 2015). The dynamics of the study via the qualitative method provide a multi-dimensional, multi-faceted approach for extracting information from participants. This includes all lecturers and management from whom the information obtained can be from interview transcripts.

1.9.3 Research Design

A case study design was used as it succinctly focuses on the social and lived experiences of individuals. Feagin, Orum and Sjoberg (2016) assert that a researcher employing a case study approach can closely observe actual people, understand what motivates them and make informed claims about how their collective and personal lives have been shaped. Thus, a case study is a useful strategy for social analysis. Creswell (2014) contends that case studies in a qualitative design where the researcher investigates an event, programme, process or one or more persons can elicit detailed information through the use of a range of data collection procedures over a sustained time. The case study method was chosen to comprehensively explore the experiences of all participants, aiming to understand how lecturers handle learners with special learning needs in mainstream classes. It also explored the answer to the “what” questions besides the “why” and “how” (Crowe et al., 2011; Adam, 2021).

1.9.4 Data Collection

Data collection was comprehensive and the researcher paid careful attention to the data collection process. The study was done using interviews and observations with field notes.

Interviews were conducted with all participants and recordings made for further reference. Interviews using semi-structured interview questions allowed for probing where a follow-up question was required, or information was unclear (Appendix G and H). Field notes were taken in an unobtrusive manner so as not to distract participants. Field notes allow for observation of non-verbal communication which the researcher has access to for cross-referencing purposes. Predominantly, field

notes provide for the construction of rich, thick descriptions of interviews cementing the context of the study (Phillipi & Lauderdale, 2018). Class visits were conducted to observe the engagement of lecturers and students (Appendix F). It was imperative that the researcher understood the dynamics of mainstream classes and whether any interventions or changes in strategies occurred for the special learning needs students.

1.9.5 Sampling

The researcher chose purposive sampling as participants selected were information-rich staff who dealt with students on a daily basis. The sample included senior management and campus managers to glean an understanding of inclusivity together with the experiences within the TVET college. The sample consisted of three senior managers based at the central office, three campus managers and 12 lecturers. The sample allowed the researcher to ascertain a critical and deep understanding of the research problem (Creswell, 2012). Ames, Glenton and Lewin (2019:1) contend that purposive sampling mitigates the impact of collecting too much data and state that this technique is a means of “achieving a manageable amount of data”.

1.9.6 Data Analysis

This study used the qualitative content analysis (QCA) method. The idea is to work in a systematic fashion in order to proceed through the mass of data for the identification of themes and sub-themes and for the establishment of patterns and trends. The researcher noted the overwhelming amount of data collected and took time to sift through it to get to the core issues. QCA is a method that proved most viable approach for the current study. This is a process which is meaningful for the coding and categorising of data obtained.

Elo and Kyngas (2008:107) maintain that when one uses QCA, the idea is to “build a model in conceptual form” for the description of the phenomena under study. For purposes of this study, the researcher noted that QCA may be both deductive and inductive and comprises of three distinct phases, “preparation, organising and reporting”. The preparation phase embraces both the deductive and inductive. The inductive content analysis is from where concepts emerge as deductive content is

ascertained when “the structure of analysis is operationalised based on prior knowledge held” (Elo & Kyngas, 2008:107).

1.9.7 Ethical Measures

Ethics is a defined set of concepts that should be adhered to, to ensure validation of the study. Permission was obtained via a clearance certificate from the UNISA ethics board. Once permission was obtained the TVET central office was approached and permission was received from the academic head authorising the study to be undertaken. All three campuses received letters to participate in the study which were positively reciprocated. Equally all participants received letters that were signed approving their willingness to participate in the study.

Ethical measures are a profoundly sustained method of following correct procedures, especially in this study as the study occurred within the COVID-19 pandemic. The researcher took cognisance of this critical period and ensured that requirements and measures be taken for the compliance with COVID-19 protocols, including sanitised venues, social distancing, sanitisers and masks. In meeting the ethical requirements, the researcher ensured that there was informed consent given by all participants. Participants were advised of their rights to withdraw at any time without penalty, confidentiality, beneficence, protection from harm and the communication of results.

The study used pseudonyms to ensure that all participants were protected from being identified.

1.9.8 Relevance of the Study

As a lecturer immersed within the TVET sector for the past seventeen (17) years it has become apparent that many students with special learning needs attend college classes without being able to receive education that is provided by trained IE lecturers. Conversations have continuously arisen around the difficulty of providing relevant and adequate attention to meet the needs of students with special learning needs within mainstream classes. This is where core issues of the frustration of lecturers have emanated from. Lecturer experiences have inevitably a direct negative impact on mainstreaming students with SEN. Even though EWP6 exists, little direction is provided as to how learners with SEN should be accommodated within a mainstream TVET college system. The researcher’s motivation for the study

stems from the observation as to while there is access to students with special needs to study at Colleges, other fundamental issues like adaptation and provision of relevant materials is problematic. Another critical area is the training of lecturers in the area of IE remains largely neglected negating the success of students. This contributes to teaching and learning being extremely difficult for both lecturers and students in mainstream classes. The researcher felt motivated to conduct a study with the aim of creating awareness around current issues of practice, implementation of policy and accountability to integrate all students within a mainstream class effectively

Trustworthiness

Eryilmaz, Ö (2022) believes that trustworthiness is the most critical factor which influences the rigour in qualitative studies. In enhancing trustworthiness, Haq et al., (2023) asserts that appropriate data analysis procedures, connection with theories, various data collection techniques remain fundamental to comprehend for application of trustworthiness in a qualitative study. Triangulation, member checking transcription that are detailed, coding and systematic planning are means for ensuring rigour and trustworthiness (Gunawan, 2015). Due cognisance of elements of trustworthiness to ensure a study embodying quality was undertaken. The researcher expounds further on this element in chapter 4.

1.10 DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS

1.10.1 TVET (Technical Vocational Education and Training) Colleges

TVET colleges previously referred to as FET (Further Education and Training) colleges are post-school institutions that offer vocational and skills courses. Vocational courses allow for students to work towards an NQF Level 4 Certificate for articulation purposes while other courses are industry-based qualifications that prepare students for employment possibilities.

1.10.2 TVET Lecturer

Lecturers are employed by TVET colleges to teach the programme offerings of the institution. These lecturers have different qualifications ranging from Certificates in Education to Master's and Doctoral degree qualifications.

1.10.3 Inclusive Education

The EWP6 (DOE, 2001) refers to inclusive education as a means of creating single institutions to accommodate all students. Inclusive education provides for students irrespective of race, gender or disabilities to learn in a conducive environment that is responsive to individual needs.

Artiles, Kozleski, Dorn and Christensen (2006) and Russell, Scriney and Smyth (2023) regard inclusive education as the placement of students with SEN in mainstream settings, with other students without disabilities. Inclusivity should be a thriving phenomenon and new concept. It has become necessary to deliberate around issues of effectiveness of mainstreaming students with disabilities with the 'normal students', and work towards supporting lecturers.

1.10.4 Inclusive Classrooms

Inclusive classrooms are classrooms wherein students with or without learning disabilities learn together without any discrimination (Penner,2018). Lecturers/educators within an inclusive classroom are at all times responsive to the varying needs of students whether it involves the adaptation of strategies for learning or adaptation of curricula (Otukile-Mongwaketse et al.,2016).

1.10.5 Students with Special Learning Disabilities

Differentiated teaching methods are required for students with disabilities as this may include any learner that may have previously been placed in special institutions or schools and are now in a mainstream TVET college system (Strogilos et al., 2020).

1.11 CHAPTER OVERVIEW

The chapters for this study is laid out as follows:

Chapter 1: Overview of the entire study

Chapter 2: Provision of the theoretical frameworks underpinning the study which include Bronfenbrenner's ecological system theory and Vygotsky's social constructivist theory.

Chapter 3: A comprehensive account of global and local literature is encapsulated in this chapter.

Chapter 4: The research design and methodology is critical for this study and is contained in this chapter. An explanation of the paradigm is articulated together with the methodology, design, sample selection, collection of data and final analysis

Chapter 5: This chapter formulates a presentation of the interpretation of the findings and analysis

Chapter 6: Here is where policy, theory, conclusions and the implications for practice are discussed. Recommendations arising from this study are presented.

1.12 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER

The chapter provides a glimpse into what follows in the subsequent chapters. The focus is on the experiences of lecturers with students with special learning needs within mainstream classes in TVET campuses. Highlighted factors draw on staff training, an inability to accommodate students effectively due the lack of knowledge on what to do. The establishment of viable structures is a problem, as is the student registration process with the knowledge that campuses are not equipped for mainstreaming without the necessary resources. The research aims, questions, objectives and rational of the study were presented. The bio-ecological theory and the social constructivist theory make up the theoretical framework. The qualitative approach was introduced and the use of a case study was highlighted. Ethical principles provide for the integrity of the study. In essence, this brief summary provides a trajectory for the chapters to follow. The chapter further lends itself to a comprehensive notion that there is still much to be done within TVET campuses. The next chapter outlines the theoretical framework for the study.

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

“Any fact facing us is not as important as our attitude toward it, for that determines our success or our failure”- Norman Vincent Peale

2.1 INTRODUCTION

According to Wentzel (2016:15) “in the context of research, a theoretical framework refers to theories that are formulated to explain, predict and understand phenomena and, in many cases, to challenge and extend existing knowledge within limits of critical bounding assumptions”. Rosenbaum (2010) extends his view on the existence of many theories that emerge in childhood. This explains ideas surrounding behavioural, cognitive and biological and development of personalities. Rosenbaum (2010) further refers to traditional theories of development including Piaget’s theory on cognitive development (Inhelder, Sinclair & Bovet, 1974), Gesell’s Ethological theory (Gesell & Amatruda, 1947), Erikson’s psychosocial theory and learning theories (1964), all of which focus on the development in normal individuals. Erikson (1964) agrees that these theories place their focus on environmental, parental and biological factors which results on a ‘right’ path of development and ignores issues of disability.

Christenson (2016: 22) argues that in

Defining your own values is often difficult as they are deep inside yourself. Your selective perception is an unaware consequence of the variety of information which characterises our surrounding environment. A frame of theories and methods as well as empirical observations chosen when looking at specific objects is highly dependent on the result of the selective process which every human being undergoes in his or her upbringing, working life, education etc. We see limited parts of reality, partly what we want to see and observe. Some problems are chosen, and others ignored.

Before we look at the theoretical frameworks for this thesis, it is important to understand how disability is classified as this will give us a greater understanding of the application of the theories that follow. The next section highlights the theoretical and conceptual framework underpinning this study and comprises the models of disability associated with the research.

2.2 MODELS OF DISABILITY

2.2.1 The Human Rights Model

The human rights approach to disability is underscored by the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities United Nations (2006) while the White Paper on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Department of Social Development, 2016) acknowledges that all human beings have equal rights in society. This view advocates that persons with disabilities must be protected and that their human rights are realised and not violated (DHET, 2018).

2.2.2 The Social Model

This social model is viewed as identifying people living with disabilities as an integral and indispensable part of society (Mutanga, 2015). As a model that has its roots in human rights, the model firmly entrenches the belief that it is society that places restrictions or barriers on people with disabilities, regarding participation in all spheres of life. Mutanga (2015) also advocates for the significance of this model in higher education with regards to the ability to promote access and inclusion within the system.

2.2.3 The Medical Model

Shakespeare (2006) concedes that the medical model remains enshrined within the general consensus that disability which is impairment of the individual is attributed to the thinking of society. This creates further oppression which cascades into educational institutions. The medical model creates obstacles referring to conditions that should be cured which remains a fatal flaw in human thinking. This model has been met with much criticism as it may contribute to people with disabilities feeling a sense of inferiority, which may prevent them from participating or contributing to society.

Models of disability with specific reference to the education realm allow an understanding of disabilities. Stoyles (2022) asserts that these frameworks provide an intricate lens to accessibility and inclusion. With special reference to the medical and social models of disability, he believes that an understanding of these models 'curate' lessons that embrace the multi-faceted experiences and identities of

individuals who have a disability. Stoyles (2022) views the models as a roadmap for an inclusive classroom where the needs of all students are met.

Often there may be a level of disengagement between students and lecturers. Students with disabilities are viewed as unable to learn. These students may face isolation or total exclusion within the mainstream class. Students presenting some type of disability may also feel unequal to their peers, affecting their social interactions, with the notion that may affect their ability to participate effectively.

Two theories form the theoretical framework of this study, namely, Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological systems theory and Vygotsky's social constructivist theory. Crotty (1998) espouses that knowledge is constructed and is achieved during the interaction of people where it is developed and transmitted in a social context. The underlying construct of interactive learning remains a common element in social constructivism. Below the researcher discusses the two theories.

2.3 BRONFENBRENNER'S MODEL OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Urie Bronfenbrenner (1917-2005) is regarded as one of the greatest theorists in developmental psychology. His work defined the critical role between the interplay of the child and the structures that exist around him. Bronfenbrenner's (1979) framework offers insight into the crucial aspects of child development, which are influenced by the positive or negative interactions the child experiences with those around them.

Bronfenbrenner in his 1976 seminal publication 'The experimental ecology of education' adapted the theory to embrace the field of education (Anderson, Boyle & Deppeler, 2014). To understand the experiences of lecturers and students in TVET colleges in mainstream classrooms, Bronfenbrenner identifies two determinants of student learning. These are the characteristics of the student and the environment in which he exists and the interconnections and relationships that are contributory factors to the development of the student.

Bronfenbrenner (1976) as cited in Anderson et al. (2014:6) refers to the environments in which a student exists as a "nested arrangement of structures", which includes five systems. These five systems include the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem and the chronosystem. The focus later

changed and was reconceptualised as the bio-ecological system (Anderson et al., 2014).

These changes revealed a major focus on the effect of the environmental influence on the development of the child, subsequently changing it to focus on the experiences a human being through during his life course (Anderson et al., 2014). Bronfenbrenner (1976) noticed that the ecological systems theory model presented far more, than the relevant characteristics of the developing individual. Anderson et al. (2014) posits that inclusive education is not a local problem, and that globally, very few educational institutions including schools, embrace the provision of a fully inclusive system.

Lippard, Paro, Rouse and Crosby (2018), using Bronfenbrenner's theory, conducted an investigation on teacher–child relationships through classroom observations and reports by teachers. The findings revealed that these relationships played an integral role in the academic achievement of the classroom behaviour, indicative of the importance of the ecological systems theory for the student's development (Guy-Evans, 2020). Schools with a positive ethos that embraces inclusivity and diversity significantly impact all stakeholders within the institution. Such an environment positively influences students, creating an atmosphere that should mitigate negative behaviours. Students, being impressionable, will internalise the prevailing ethos, which can profoundly affect their development, either positively or negatively.

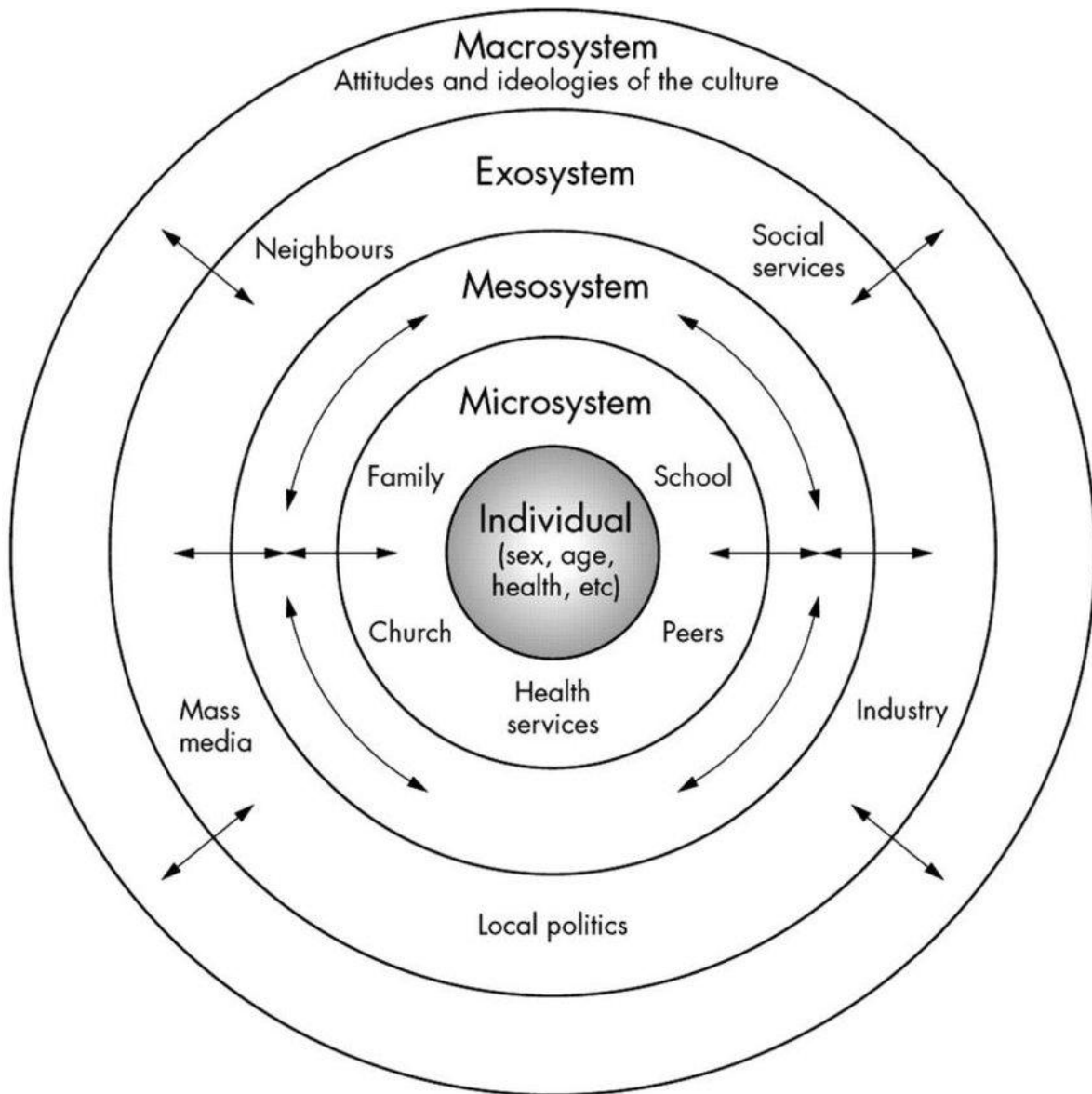


Figure 2.1: Bronfenbrenner's ecology of inclusive education

Source: (Anderson et al., 2014).)

The current study seeks to move away from the suggestions underpinning the medical model which simply sees disability as something that is “wrong with the person’s mind or body where little can be done to ‘fix’ the child”. In essence, that is where the child becomes a non-functional entity with nothing to contribute to society. However, the bio-ecological theory views this scenario differently, explaining emotional disturbances as resulting from negative interactions between a person and their environment. It highlights how the environment affects the person and vice versa, showing a bi-directional influence.

In understanding the complex struggles of students and lecturers, the bio-ecological model provides a lens through which the study can be understood. This study is an appropriate means for the understanding of the various interrelated and influential aspects in the implementation of inclusive education in mainstream schools. This study also analyses the implementation of inclusive education in mainstream classes in TVET colleges, where daily interaction occurs among a diverse contingent of students.

Since Bronfenbrenner's (1979) publication, the ecology of human development had widespread influence on how psychologists and other scholars have approached the study of human beings and their environments. From the family to political and economic structures, this ground-breaking work focusing on human ecology has been espoused as a part of the course of life from childhood to adulthood.

The fundamental tenet of Bronfenbrenner's theory (1979) is the development of the child within the many systems that exist. In essence, the student does not exist in isolation but is exposed to a number of outside influences that are embedded within his existence and interrelated with aspects outside of himself. Bronfenbrenner identifies the systems through which human beings traverse, leading to their shaping and development. This notion places an even greater duty on structures within Bronfenbrenner's systems theory to ensure that students with disabilities will require time to adjust from a system of exclusion to one of inclusion. In 1992, Bronfenbrenner extended his work to include children with disabilities and how they interact in a normal system whether it is home or school.

2.3.1 The Microsystem

The first level of Bronfenbrenner's theory is the microsystem. These are the elements that have direct contact with the child who is an active participant and forms part of the immediate environment. Examples include peers, siblings, teachers and parents that have an impact on the child in this immediate area. Relationships in this area have a bi-directional influence, where the child can be influenced by others and equally is capable of having an impact by changing the beliefs of others (Guy-Evans, 2020). Guy-Evans (2020) refers to the microsystem as being one that is personal and critical to fostering and nurturing the child. Examples include parents who exhibit strong, positive and loving relationships towards their children, whereas

on the other hand, parents who display little or no affection have a negative effect on the development of the child. Bronfenbrenner reflects on the unpredictability and the instability of family lives that has been created by economics and regards it as a destructive entity concerning the development of the child (Addison, 1992).

Anderson, Boyle and Deppeler (2014) describe the microsystem as one that envelops the learner directly and experiences both formal and informal learning, including the social aspects of the educational institution. They provide examples of staff, teachers, non-teaching staff, peers, learning spaces, classroom routines and cultures, playground and resources. In the context of the current study, the implementation of inclusive education will result in the development of interactions between students, peers and lecturers with a special focus on relationships within a mainstream classroom.

2.3.2 The Mesosystem

The mesosystem encompasses the activities between the microsystems of the child. It is here that interactions take place between teachers and parents, school peers and siblings (Guy-Evans, 2020). The microsystems of the child do not function independently but are connected to each other, each one having an impact on the other. The mesosystem points to the functionality of the factors in the microsystems which do not work in isolation. Instead, there is a constant and dynamic change in relationships, reflecting a continuous and fluid interconnectedness among the students within the system. An example given by Guy-Evans (2020) is that if teachers and parents of the child maintain a good relationship, the child will absorb the positive effects of this interaction. On the other hand, the negative effects will be evident in poorly maintained relationships between a child's parents and schoolteachers. In addition, the child may fail to maintain healthy, positive relations as they develop. In TVET colleges, this could affect relationships and interactions between the LSEN and their counterparts that do not. Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory at this level creates a viable platform for understanding the need for collaboration between parents or caregivers of students in ascertaining the academic position of a student in an inclusive classroom. It provides a means of offering the necessary support where students experience barriers. In a mainstream classroom, lecturers may offer additional assistance with a view to assist in elevating students'

levels of confidence and self-esteem that assist their capability towards success. Lecturers must also be sensitive to the backgrounds of the student in order to make informed decisions on what assistance is appropriate for the students in an inclusive setting. Parents or caregivers of students with special needs will play an integral role in liaising with lecturers on the behaviour, characters and problems of students. Parents and caregivers have the necessary information as they live with the student. Critical information can be conveyed to lecturers to assist in the proper and necessary preparation for accommodation purposes. Collaboration should be ongoing with the necessary feedback to assist the student adequately.

2.3.3 The Exosystem

The exosystem is the sphere where the child is not a direct participant; however, they can be affected by the actions of others. Even though the child is not recognised as a direct participant in the exosystem, Bronfenbrenner (1979) and Guy-Evans (2020) contend that this component is inclusive of formal and informal structures of the DOE which is not directly dealing with the child but indirectly has an effect that is influential on one of the microsystems. External experiences, such as the parents' workplace, the neighbourhood, and mass media, are environments where the child is not directly involved but may still profoundly affect them. For example, a parent who has had a stressful episode at work or is unable to provide adequate nutrition for their child due to job loss might take out their frustrations on the child, leading to negative developmental outcomes. Other influential factors include authority and collaboration patterns, values and ideology, school culture, leadership structures, policies and procedures, school rituals, and the overall school community (Anderson et al., 2014). Lecturers need to be aware of student behaviour. Where students exhibit poor or changing academic performance, additional attention and support must be offered to these students.

2.3.4 The Macrosystem

The macrosystem places an emphasis on the attitudes and ideologies of culture. According to Malahlela (2017: 14) citing Hárkönen (2007) define the concept of the macrosystem as a concept that has changed:

to consist of the overarching pattern of the micro-, meso and exosystems characteristics of a given culture, subculture or other broader social context, with particular reference to the developmentally-investigative belief systems, resources, hazards, life styles, opportunity structures, life course options and patterns of social interchange that are embedded in each of these systems.

Anderson et al. (2014: 7) add that:

It encompasses the varying contexts in which the school exists – social, political, historical and global – as well as other factors such as the education system or systems, current agendas (standardisation of student achievement and professional performance; increased accountability), and, if applicable, a mandated curriculum

The cultural elements of ethnicity, poverty, wealth, socio-economic status affect the development of the child (Guy-Evans, 2020) and seeks to expose how the immersion of a child within his culture may have an influential impact on how the child perceives certain events that transpire during the course of his life. Guy-Evans (2020) expounds on how the macrosystem consists of an already established society and environment. The attitudes and ideologies of culture are slowly ingrained in the child as he develops and absorbs what is happening around him. An example illustrating the child's experience within the macrosystem is the difference in development between a child raised in an affluent family and a child raised in poverty. In this context, the contrasting backgrounds and lifestyles can significantly influence the development of the child in an inclusive classroom.

2.3.5 The Chronosystem

The chronosystem is the final level of Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory. This system makes up the environmental changes that take place over time which influences the development of the child, including historical events and other transitional life events (Guy-Evans, 2020). Examples include normal life events like entering a new grade and non-normative transitions like parents divorcing (Guy-Evans, 2020). According to Anderson et al. (2014), this system succinctly considers the movement of time, and how this influences the learner. "As the ecology of inclusive education framework has been designed with the learner at its centre, the

timeframe for this system is that of the learners' enrolment within formal education – the years of primary and secondary schooling” (Anderson et al., 2014: 7).

In keeping with the theory, Paquette and Ryan (2001) agree that interactions which occur during the maturing of the child, the environment, communities and immediate family, together with the societal landscape steer and fuel his development. The understanding of the ecological system is fundamental in ascertaining how a child receives support from the structures from within the education system. The development of the child is also observed by surrounding members of the community including his interaction with the environment (Paquette & Ryan, 2001).

Children admittedly need to be brought up holistically. Relationships to enhance interconnectedness must be formed to create interdependence among children, the community, teachers, family members and other social structures. An incident occurring in a single area invariably has a ripple effect on all other systems. Bronfenbrenner's theory underpins the effects of a child with a disability being integrated in a normal school will inevitably create the need for vital changes to be made, whether it be to the curriculum or simply accommodating all students equally.

It remains imperative that no child should be brought up in isolation. Healthy and functional development depend on relationships. Paquette and Ryan (2001), referencing Bronfenbrenner's work, note that child development occurs holistically, emphasising children's reliance on interactions with those around them. Schools, colleges, and universities are deeply embedded in their surrounding communities, creating a constant interdependence that significantly contributes to a child's development

The DHET ultimately remain the policymakers for TVET colleges, and the body that is responsible for qualified and well-trained teachers, provision of adequate resources, the presentation of an adapted curriculum for all students and, most importantly, the monitoring of institutions to ensure their provision of education to students with disabilities. Higher education institutions need to embrace the concept of collaboration together with all stakeholders that play a critical role in the holistic development of the students.

The ecological systems theory delves into the dynamics of the relationships of the child and the interconnectedness with the structures in the environment surrounding him. In the instance of LSEN, the dynamics may change and produce an unequal system where little or no attention is offered within schools. However, not all LSEN achieve positive outcomes. Anderson et al. (2014) question the ramifications of unequal outcomes, claiming that exclusion affirms higher levels of unemployment, poorer housing, rising crime rates and the individual being totally excluded from society. They also mention other critical issues, among them an increase in mental health issues, substance abuse, higher levels of teenage pregnancy and a lower life expectancy.

In essence, Anderson et al. (2014) concede that excluding people from education clearly negates any chance of advancing towards a just society, but could very well be the antithesis of such a society. In order to strive towards equality and to increase economic viability, inclusive education must contribute to increasing the skills of the LSEN and enhance productivity.

2.4 SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIVIST THEORY

Social constructivism is the second theory underpinning this study. Many scientists today agree that cognitive development is shaped by culture, how and what will be learned and the impact on psychological processes. It remains deeply rooted in the works of the post-revolutionary Soviet psychologist Lev Vygotsky known as the father of cognitive learning. Vygotsky made the assumption that functions in a child's development appear twice: firstly, on a social level and then later on the individual level.

Social constructivism has a clear focus on learning being a social process. Groups are integrated for meaningful learning to take place. Social constructivism shifts the responsibility of knowledge acquisition from the teacher to the student and transforms the student from a passive listener to an active participant and a co-creator of knowledge among co-learners (Akpan et al., 2020). In as much as Vygotsky aligned himself within the field of Piaget and Perry as astute cognitive scholars, there were distinct differences in how each one believed learning took place. The researcher for purposes of this study places a direct emphasis on the social constructivist theory of Vygotsky. Vygotsky rejected the intimation of Piaget

and Perry that the possibility existed that learning could be separated from the social context.

Vygotsky (1978) argued that learning did not simply emanate from the knowledge of learners through assimilation and accommodation but must be looked at as originating from social interactions. The diagram below dictates the narrative of Vygotsky on the many facets surrounding social constructivism.

SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIVISM THEORY



Source-wordpress.com

Figure 2.2: Social constructivism theory

Source: Wordpress.com (n.d.)

Akpan et al. (2020) assert that constructivists like Vygotsky endorse language as fundamental as it remains a social construct and a co-construct for purposes of communication. The co-constructed elements are what is internalised by the person.

Additionally, behaviourists like Botha and Kourkoutas (2016) argue that adopting a constructivist approach can effectively support innovative perspectives for children

with behavioural difficulties. They highlight that children with behavioural issues often face social withdrawal, lack of motivation, learning difficulties, disengagement and other psychological symptoms. This can have serious consequences for special needs students entering TVET colleges, as social withdrawal may lead to alienation, making it difficult for them to engage in learning. The crux of social constructivism is that interactive learning and sharing of ideas may present difficulties. Al-Shammari, Faulkner and Forlin (2019) concedes that ultimately educators must be well-equipped with a thorough understanding of suitable constructive approaches to provide the necessary support for LSEN attending mainstream classes. However, TVET college lecturers do not have the necessary relevant training to address teaching and learning (Van der Bijl et al., 2019). Basic academic qualifications are the norm within the sector, even though mention of policy re-direction towards students with disabilities is being addressed.

Al-Shammari et al. (2019) further refine this idea by recommending an eclectic approach, suggesting that inclusive education practices should combine constructivism, cognitivism and behaviourism when developing instructional strategies and theory-driven curricula. However, the focus on social constructivism deepens the understanding of conscious engagement. This engagement takes place through interacting with others.

The dilemma remains that there are integral issues facing staff and questions the feasibility of inclusion within mainstream classes. Botha and Kourkoutas (2016) argue that the classroom teacher demands, the practical feasibility of inclusion and the quality of support provided for students are largely dependent on the expertise and knowledge of educators.

The Figure below provides a profound indication of how human beings construct their individual knowledge of their experiences of the world around them. This is a process of reflection where new encounters are reconciled with new experiences and a process of reconciliation occurs, often changing their existing beliefs. (Akpan et al,2020). Gredler (1997) postulates that social constructivism in classes should be an emergent process as and when the need arises. According to (Cobb, 1995; Gredler,1997) meaning, understanding and knowledge of the world are proponents

activities have to take place and co-construction of concepts and meaningful work need to be created. Vygotsky maintains that higher order thinking such as the ability to solve problems and reasoning are mediated by psychological tools (Woolfolk, 2013). Woolfolk (2013) surmises that these psychological tools lead to transformative thinking and a greater mastery of their own cognitive thinking.

With this in mind, the study highlights the complexity of curriculum, irrelevant training of lecturers, time and general mainstream issues that students and lecturers struggle with daily.

2.6 CONCLUSION

Rosenbaum (2010) asserts that the fundamental contribution by Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological systems theory is his suggestion that it is not just a few processes that contribute to the development of an individual, but the interactions of multiple processes across space and time. Similarly, Lev Vygotsky's key assertion purports that the socio-cultural theory of the individuals and participatory actions during learning occur within a wider context pertaining to social practices (Almahdi, 2019). Almahdi (2019) postulates that attributes of the participatory actions during learning entwine within two fundamental processes: cultural tools including learning aids and symbols, signs and language and to engage in a process of meaningful learning content including peers, educators, parents and the immersion in other social interactions. The researcher notes that Bronfenbrenner, through the bio-ecological model, emphasises the complex and socially constructed contexts necessary for support and meaningful learning to occur.

Within both frameworks, the essence revolves around meaningful interactions that have an impact on the development of the child. Within Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory is the concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). The ZPD is described as being the difference between the current limited knowledge of the child and what can be achieved with the assistance of a teacher, peer or any person with additional capabilities. Woolfolk (2013) agrees that adults often provide verbal prompts, known as scaffolding, to assist a child. This concept highlights how a child progressively becomes more cognitively adept in mastering concepts compared to prior isolated learning. The researcher concludes that the contributions of both

theorists are crucial to a child's development within their environment and socio-cultural context.

This reality in TVET colleges remains a point of contention as students' cognitive levels are debatable on entry. In the many years that the researcher has worked in the TVET system, the issue of LSEN and how to accommodate them has neither elicited serious discussion nor effective implementation. It is glaringly evident that more needs to be done, yet it is an issue that is subtly ignored. This study will assist in opening up a new framework for inclusion within TVET colleges.

The next chapter elaborates on the literature that supports this study although literature is limited in that its focus is predominantly on schools and universities. However, the same issues affect TVET college students.

CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW

“Be inspired with the belief that life is a great and noble calling; not a mean and grovelling thing that we are to shuffle through as we can but an elevated and lofty destiny”-William E. Gladstone

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an overview of existing literature on inclusivity collated from various sources. The following sections include how inclusivity is handled in other countries as well as studies executed in this area.

3.1.1 The Salamanca Views on Inclusion

The Salamanca World Conference set the precedent for international countries to embrace the need for all students, including those with disabilities, to be an integral part of mainstream education; irrespective of what disabilities they may have (UNESCO, 1994). Ainscow (2005:2) espouses that:

the most significant international document that has ever appeared in the special needs field, the Salamanca Statement argues that regular schools with an inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all.

The statement on inclusive education created urgency where inclusion is concerned by providing appropriate responses to the broad spectrum of learning needs in formal and non-formal educational settings. Rather than being a marginal issue on how some learners can be integrated in mainstream education, inclusive education is an approach that addresses how to transform education systems and other learning environments in order to respond to the diversity of learners. It aims at enabling teachers and learners both to feel comfortable with diversity and to see it as a challenge and enrichment of the learning environment, rather than a problem. Inclusion emphasises providing opportunities for equal participation of persons with disabilities (physical, social and/or emotional) whenever possible into general education but leaves open the possibility of personal choice and options for special

assistance and facilities for those who need it in creating inclusive policies around the world.

3.1.2 South Africa's Adoption of the Salamanca Statement

South Africa, like many other countries, adopted the transformational policy discussed at the Salamanca World Conference. However, Kalyanpur (2016) maintains that based on international standards, policy and practice for inclusive education, with reference to the UNCRPD and the Salamanca framework is traditionally based on Western-centred contexts. These Western-centred contexts are predominantly defined by resource-rich service models and are largely incongruous with the circumstances of persons with disabilities in non-Western countries (Kalyanpur, 2016). Muthukrishna and Engelbrecht (2018) assert that inclusive education practices and policy imperatives have, in most cases, been transferred without question to lower income countries. However, lower income countries do not always have the relevant knowledge needed for successful implementation. According to Muthukrishna and Engelbrecht (2018), this is largely evident in the exclusion of social histories, local expertise, economic realities and other culturally relevant knowledge.

Muthukrishna and Engelbrecht (2018:2) further assert that “conceptualisations and understandings of inclusive education therefore reflect the export of thinking based on the development of inclusive education in high income countries, where adequate funding as well as highly qualified professional support structures are freely available”. While this may hold true in high income countries, educational institutions in South Africa are still struggling with grasping the concept of fully inclusive classes. Donohue and Bornman (2014) together with Motala and Pampallis (2020) attribute the current state of South African education partly to the policies that were instituted under apartheid.

3.1.3 South Africa's Constitutional Legislation

The importance of education for all is enshrined in the Constitution of South Africa (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa No. 108 Of 1996) which effected changes in legislation for persons with disabilities. In guaranteeing equality before the law and in ensuring freedom from discrimination for all South Africans, Section 9

of the Constitution is the first right to have been listed in the Bill of Rights. This right gives effect to the fundamental importance of equality for all. The Education White Paper 6: Special Needs Education (EWP6) (DOE, 2001) is a direct response to the policies on reform for inclusion, ensuring that all students are granted the right to education, including youth with disabilities. The Bill of Rights in the Constitution of South Africa includes this in Section 29. The right to education in this section defines the responsibilities of the state to all South Africans irrespective of whether or not they have any disabilities. This section states that everyone has the right to a basic education, including adult basic education, which the state, through reasonable measures, must make progressively available and accessible (DOE, 2001).

In recognition of the challenges faced by people with disabilities many developed nations have acknowledged the importance of inclusion in developmental policies where it is “recognised as an essential part of human rights concerns” (Malle et al; 2015:57). Human rights and social justice form the cornerstone of the South African democracy. It is embedded within the fundamental values of the South African Constitution (Act 108 of 1996) and has:

founded our democratic state and common citizenship on the values of human dignity, the achievement of equality and the advancement of human rights and freedom (Section 1a). These values summon all of us to take up the responsibility and challenge of building a humane and caring society, not for the few, but for all South Africans. In establishing an education and training system for the 21st century, we carry a special responsibility to implement these values and to ensure that all students, with and without disabilities, pursue their learning potential to the fullest (DOE, 2001:11).

3.1.4 The Education White Paper 6: Special Needs Education

South Africa’s involvement in various international campaigns on inclusivity gave birth to the EWP6 as a response to embracing equal access to education for all students. In response to growing pressure to accommodate all students in full-service institutions, EWP6 (DOE, 2001) was ostensibly designed to transform inclusive education in South Africa. This, according to Muthukrishna and Schoeman (2000), was to be achieved through the building of an integrated system that included all students through the express use of a flexible curriculum that is suited to

the needs and abilities of students, the developing of district-based support structures to provide the necessary support to teachers, and to strengthen teacher skills in order to cope with diversity within mainstream classes. However, concerns arose that LSEN which included those within mainstream education had less than satisfactory experiences and were not properly accommodated for (DOE, 2001).

Historically, people with disabilities were excluded from the mainstream of society and experienced extreme discrimination in one form or another. Enacted legislation addressed these forms of discrimination and have progressively arrived at the issue of mainstreaming people with disabilities in normal schools. The 2006 UNCRPD became the cornerstone of equal constitutional rights for all. This is further supported by EWP6 (DOE, 2001) where all educational institutions must provide equal access to education including the youth with disabilities.

3.1.5 Exclusionary Practice

In stark contrast, Ndlovu (2019:233) asserts that students who have disabilities are actually excluded when it comes to learning, “because the system seeks to change them in order to be included rather than changing the institution to be inclusive of all students”. Ndlovu (2019) further posits that the original idea of inclusion is to engender a total transformation within the institution where all diverse students are included in terms of access which will help them to succeed. However, while previous studies revealed a positive impact for students with disabilities intending to integrate them into post-secondary schooling, many institutions were not in favour nor supportive of the idea (McKinney & Swartz, 2022). The reasoning as referenced by Gibbons et al. (2015) after a series of interviews on the integration of students with disabilities, faculty members voiced concerns that this would be a contributory factor to make normal students uncomfortable, and would disturb class routine (McKinney & Swartz, 2022).

3.1.6 Human Rights

UNESCO (2005) views inclusion as a process of reducing exclusion within education and responding to increased participation in learning among communities and cultures. Inclusion is also seen as a social construct that involves modifications and changes in content, structures, strategies and approaches, in working towards including all children in the normal system of education (UNESCO, 2020).

UNESCO (2005) endorses that all children including the youth combined with their individual strengths, weakness, hopes and expectations have their right to education, maintaining that it remains the duty of the schools system in a country to adjust their systems to meet the needs of the children. The Rights Framework in Figure 3.1 provides a view of the progression of the rights of people with disabilities through conventions and policy interventions.

2005	⇒	UN Disability Convention (in progress) Promotes the rights of persons with disabilities and mainstreaming disability in development.
2001	⇒	EFA Flagship on The Right to Education for Persons with Disabilities: Towards Inclusion
2001	⇒	• World Education Forum Framework for Action, Dakar, (EFA goals) + Millennium Development goals Ensuring that all children have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education by 2015. Focus on marginalized + girls.
1994	⇒	Salamanca Statement & Framework for Action on Special Needs Education “... schools should accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions. “ This should include disabled and gifted children, street and working children, children from remote or nomadic populations, children from linguistic, ethnic or cultural minorities and children from other disadvantaged or marginalised areas or groups.” (para 3)
1993	⇒	• The UN Standard Rules on the Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities Rule 6 Not only affirms the equal rights of all children, youth and adults with disabilities to education but also states that education should be provided in “an integrated school settings” and in the “general school settings.”
1990	⇒	• The World Declaration on Education for All (Jomtien Declaration)
1989	⇒	• UN Convention on the Rights of the Child Ensures the right for all children to receive education without discrimination on any grounds
1948	⇒	• Universal Declaration of Human Rights Ensures the right to free and compulsory elementary education for all children

Figure 3.1: Timeline of the rights framework for inclusion

Source: UNESCO (2005:14)

3.1.7 Global Strategies

In a world marked by unprecedented challenges Reed and Rudman(2023) assert that the world is facing unprecedented challenges indicative of the need for evidence –informed solutions. The authors elaborate on the increasing need to undertake or provide support to academics, policy makers ,practitioners , academics and research funders in a race to undertake research which achieve results that are contributory to a tangible impact on practice and policy.

According to Makoelle (2014) international literature regarding strategies for teaching practices in classrooms is effective in the promotion of inclusion 'evolves in two dichotomous positions'. First Makoelle (2013, 2014) underscores the importance of adopting specific strategies and teaching practices to promote inclusion. The author refers to the European Agency for Developments in Special Needs Education (2003) which places emphasis on fundamental aspects like collaborative teaching, collaborative learning and collaborative problem-solving that is inclusive of heterogeneous grouping and teaching that is effective in the promotion of inclusion in European schools. However, Verster (2024) argues that collaborative learning due to its complexity remains a significant concern in South African classes for students and instructors.

Even though much of the research has been carried out in the United Kingdom, countries as diverse as Zambia, Spain, Romania, India, China and Brazil have also participated in projects (Ainscow, 2000). The research focus was on : development of practice within classrooms (Ainscow, 1999, 2000b; Ainscow, Howes, Farrel & Fankham, 2003); development of the school (Ainscow, 1995; Ainscow, Barrs & Martin, 1998, Booth & Ainscow, 2002); development of teachers (Ainscow, 2002) practices in leadership (Kugelmass & Ainscow, 2004); systemic change (Ainscow & Haile-Giorgis, 1999; Ainscow, Farrel & Tweddle, 2000), with special importance being placed to the role of school districts (Ainscow & Howes, 2001; Ainscow & Tweddle, 2003).

3.1.8 Framework for Change

Research of this type allows for the development of frameworks in order to provide various contexts within which people can work and analyse working situations (Ainscow, 2005)

Ainscow (2005:3) postulates that "it is intended to help us focus on factors that bear on inclusive developments within an education system and more importantly it specifically places our focus on possible 'levers' that can help to move the system forward" within educational institutions.

In the framework below the focus is on schools. This reinforces the idea that inclusion should be moving towards the increased capacity of local mainstream schools to accommodate and support a widely diverse range of learners. Ainscow (2005:4) citing Senge (1989) “sees ‘levers’ as actions that can be taken in order to change the behaviour of an organisation and those individuals within it”. Ainscow (2005) asserts that this is the paradigm shift that the Salamanca Statement had its focus on. The author further argues that moving towards inclusivity supports the development of schools, instead of just attempting to integrate groups of students which are vulnerable into already existing systems.

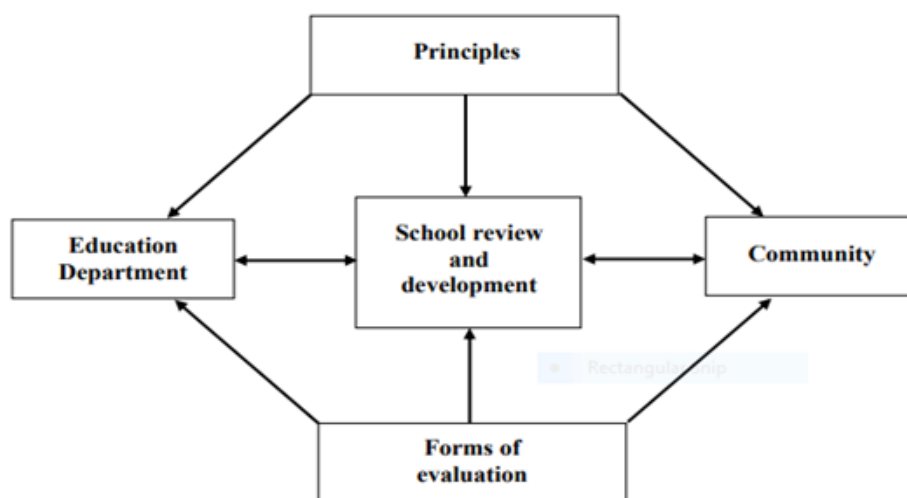


Figure 3.2: Levers for change

Source: Adapted from Ainscow (2004:4)

Ainscow (2005, Aldridge & Mclure 2022, Opoku, 2023) believes that the barriers experienced by students emanate from current ways of thinking and contends that the framework provides the levers that will assist the easing of systems towards a direction of inclusivity. Consequently, Ainscow (2005:2) expounds on the strategies that are relevant for the development of inclusive practices in order to “involve interruptions to thinking, in order to encourage an exploration of overlooked possibilities for moving practice forward”.

3.1.9 Barriers Impact on Inclusivity

Stats SA (2022) revealed that 80% of disabled people in the age group of 20-24 are still not attending tertiary education institutions. Van der Merwe of the Daily Maverick

in a statement made on the 15 August 2017 (Daily Maverick ,15 August 2017) maintains that many people still face multiple barriers. Across population groups almost four times as many white respondents had achieved higher levels of education as opposed to black respondents. In addition, female students constantly remain disadvantaged. Statistically, half a million children with disabilities were left out of the education system. This results in exclusion extending beyond simply leaving children out of academics to the number of people graduating, which eventually reduces the absorption of people with disabilities into the labour market. In addition, people with severe difficulties make up only 5.3% who attain higher education qualifications while 24% end up with no education at all. It is untenable that there are still no higher education or special education facilities that are sufficient for the majority of LSEN in South Africa. Very few, if any, well-equipped institutions are available or prepared for purposes of accessibility for disabled students. TVET colleges remain in this category with no adequate facilities, properly trained lecturers or classrooms to accommodate LSEN.

3.1.10 Lack of Specific Legislation

Mutanga (2017), in researching inclusive education, found that despite attempts at transforming some universities, LSEN still experienced feelings of exclusion and disadvantage. Currently there is no specific legislation that takes into account disability issues in South African higher educational institutions, and data remains scant (Mutanga, 2017). Mutanga (2017) further argued that proper inclusion should be supported by policies and should include support that is academic, social and financial. He further found it problematic that LSEN are simply lumped together as a homogeneous group. LSEN attending educational institutions do not display only a single special need that can easily be managed. The number and types of varied special needs require specialised assistance that can be managed through the establishment of properly constructed support structures. Students who present with special needs are part of the general population of students. No additional support exists for those that present with any intellectual disabilities which are among the impairments that have been identified. Consequently, they end up leaving the system or failing.

3.1.11 Inadequate Support Structures

In a case study, Munyaradzi and Addae (2018) explored the effectiveness of psychological support services offered to a sample of 30 purposively selected students at a TVET college in South Africa. Munyaradzi and Addae (2018) articulated that students attending TVET colleges experience multiple psychological challenges, which can have their positive academic gains adversely affected. Findings indicated that psychological support services contributed to improved retention, better academic performance, improved attendance and most importantly enhanced the certification rate. They recommended that institutions establish connections with key stakeholders, including psychological professional bodies, the DHET and the Department of Health, and should foster relationships with other TVET colleges to share information on providing psychological services to students (Munyaradzi & Addae, 2018).

3.1.12 Conclusion of 3.1

The explanation above sets the foundation for the literature reviewed in this study. This literature is crucial in addressing the experiences of TVET lecturers with students who have learning disabilities in mainstream classrooms and in developing an effective inclusive training system. In this study, the terms 'learning disabilities' and 'special needs' are used interchangeably.

Although literature on inclusive education is limited, three consistent factors emerge despite using varied terminology (Anderson et al., 2014). Essentially, authors such as Aspin (2007), Booth & Ainscow (2002) and Hattie (2012) describe these factors as fostering engagement in learning and participation, encouraging shared experiences and collaboration among all students through structured learning, and valuing individuals by respecting, accepting and acknowledging their capabilities.

3.2. DEFINING AND UNDERSTANDING LEARNING DISABILITIES

3.2.1 Defining Learning Disabilities

Many definitions of learning disabilities exist. Gupta and Yadav(2024) refers to learning disabilities as a general term with reference to a heterogeneous set of disorders which manifests itself in the acquisition and the use of speaking, listening,

reading, reasoning, writing or mathematical abilities. Guptar and Yadav (2024) further articulate that learning disabilities are also linked to psychological factors which include, maturity, development, mental retardation, emotional disturbance, and sensory impairment.

These disorders are intrinsic to the person and are presumed to be due to the dysfunction of the central nervous system and may occur throughout the lifespan of the individual. Other problems in self-regulatory behaviour, social interaction and social perception may exist with learning disabilities, however, do not by themselves constitute a learning disability. The Merriam-Webster dictionary (1995) and Intriago et al. (2021) similarly defines learning disabilities as various conditions like dyslexia or dysgraphia that interfere with a person's ability to learn, thereby resulting in impaired functioning in reasoning and academic skills which include writing, reading and mathematics. These disabilities are thought to be caused by problems in integrating and processing information, also referred to as learning differences. Other explanations make reference to learning disability, learning disorder or learning difficulty as a condition in the brain that precludes the ability to process or comprehend information, which can be caused by a myriad of factors.

Therefore, many people can be described as having a 'learning difference', thus eliminating the misconception of negative stereotyping or being viewed as someone who is unable to learn. A learning disability is identified when there appears to be a severe discrepancy between a person's intellectual ability and achievement in one or more of these areas: oral expression, listening, comprehension, written expression, basic reading skills, reading, mathematical calculation or mathematical reasoning. Additionally, Makhanya (2015) agrees that learning disabilities are difficult to define due to the confusion and the poor understanding by educational professionals and the general public. They argue that the confusion arises from the term 'learning disabilities', because the DOE does not refer to only a single disorder but includes an array of handicaps that have an effect on areas of performance. Makhanya (2015) contends that, in addition, learning disabilities cannot be traced to just one source.

3.2.2 Understanding Learning Disabilities

Learning disabilities affect how a person's ability to remember, understand and respond to new information (e! vula training, 2008). People with learning disorders

present with problems in maths, reading and writing, speaking, paying attention and listening problems (e! vula training, 2008). In addition the description is broad and refers to a syndrome rather than a specific child with a specific learning problem. Children may present with aphasia and dyslexia, both considered learning disabilities; however, each child will require a different approach to learning and accommodation in a mainstream classroom. This reflects directly on the crux of the investigation. Questions, however, arise on the ability of accommodation and support of these students. What is the possibility of dealing with more than a few students that may present with one or other type of learning disability? Are the lecturers well-capacitated to deal with these students including the normal student', without disadvantaging one or the other?

Several other contributory factors can be the cause of learning disabilities. Learning disorders and learning difficulties can lead to issues in the processing and comprehending of information in the nervous system. Intellectual disabilities points out , dyspraxia and dyslexia which contribute equally to this area (Sharfi and Rosenblum , 2014). In offering an explanation of the term learning disabilities this make reference to a large group of neurological disorders emanating from the central nervous system (Sharfi and Rosenblum, 2014). They concede that these disorders influence the ability of the individual to process, maintain or convey information to others efficiently. Emerson and Heslop (2010) add that learning disabilities make specific reference to mathematical calculations, reasoning, reading, speaking and listening. Other scholars like Selikowitz (2012) admit that defining learning disabilities is a rather controversial issue. Emerson and Heslop (2010) note that in the UK education system, individuals with specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia, but without significant intellectual impairments, are classified under the term "learning difficulty." In contrast, the USA predominantly uses the term "learning disability" for similar conditions.

Learning problems do not simply disappear. They require a dedicated contingent of lecturers and creative strategies including the commitment of all students. Anderson, et al. (2014) state that there is general agreement that inclusive education is not a static process, but one that is dynamic; and errantly considered to be more of a continuous journey rather than merely the reaching of a destination.

Even though many conflicting theories exist around how many learning disabilities there are and the causes thereof, TVET colleges have experiences of students who do present with one or more learning disabilities that are identified during the learning process. Since the admission process does not provide comprehensive information for pre-planning, confusion arises on how to deal with LSEN when these are found during the teaching and learning process.

3.3 STRUCTURING AN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM

According to EWP6 (DOE, 2001), there is an acceptance that various learning needs may exist among students. This requires a radical transformation from the current way of thinking within institutions to one that includes all learners irrespective of their disabilities in order to build a strengthened, equal mainstream education system. In this regard, different learning needs may arise from a range of factors, including physical, mental, sensory, neurological and developmental impairments, psychosocial disturbances and differences in intellectual ability, particular life experiences or socio-economic deprivation (DOE, 2005). Where these needs are not met, students remain vulnerable and are at risk of failure or exclusion from the learning system.

South Africa has historically been known for its system of segregation that has divided students into categories of normal and special needs students (Walton and Engelbrecht, 2022). Students who have been categorised as LSEN have therefore lacked in areas of support and been left vulnerable to an inferior system of education, hence the urgency to create a fully integrated training system. Barriers to learning may arise from a number of areas, which may include the classroom, from within the learner or systemic factors. In order to transform the current system, interventions need to be implemented and closely monitored, to alleviate identifiable barriers and allow for the provision of appropriate support.

The only time lecturers are aware of a disability is when registration is done, a single box is ticked, and that is where it ends. The registration documents are both incomprehensive and provide minimal information. Information provided is not adequate enough to ascertain specific special learning needs and most students are too embarrassed to indicate that they do have a problem. Thus the need exists for the structuring of a system that is inclusive and equitable for all students is critical.

Lebona (2013) provide suggestions using the framework below on how an inclusive school system may be built.

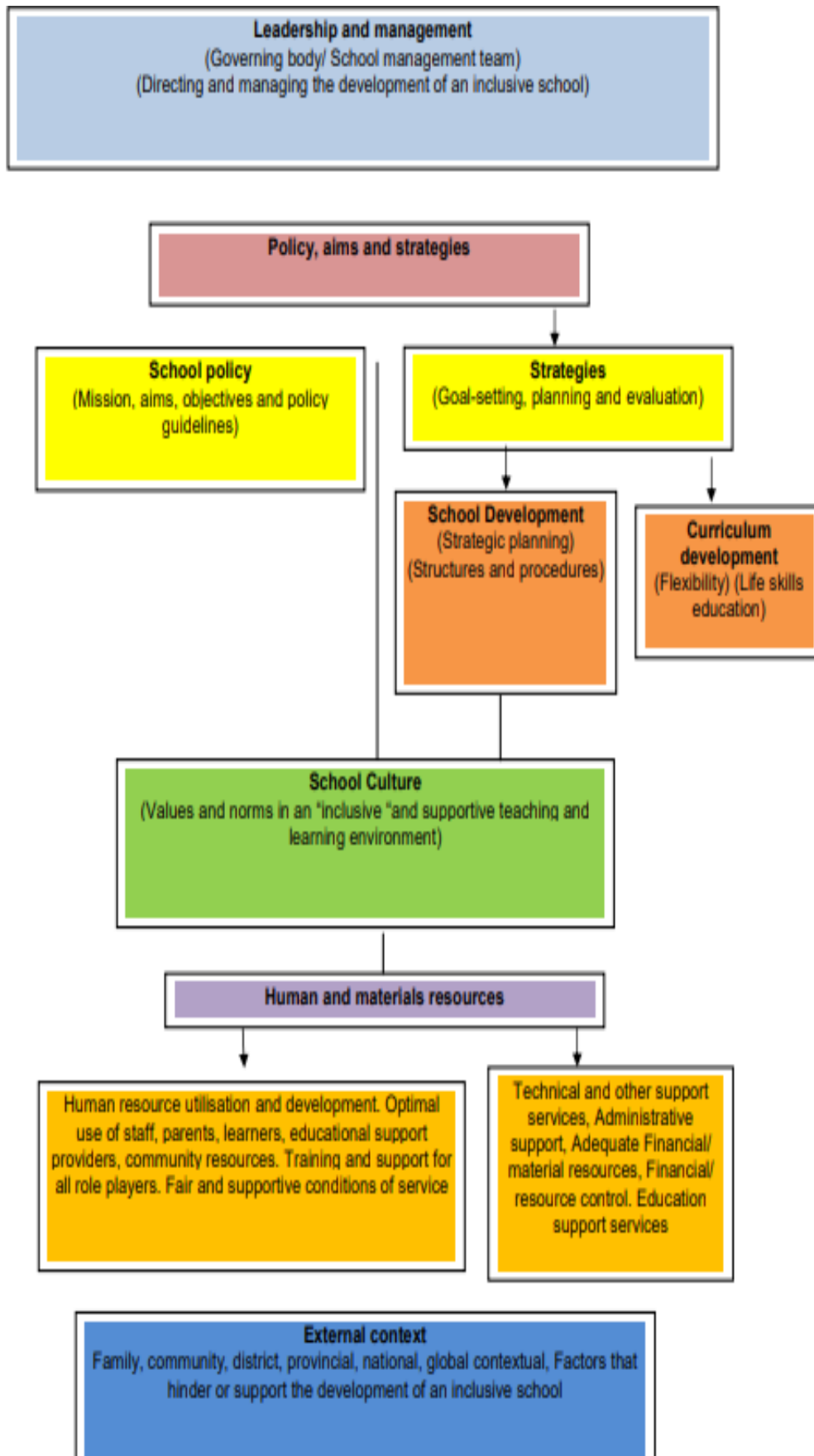


Figure 3.3: Framework for building an inclusive school

Engelbrecht et al. (2002)

A framework such as this will assist towards elucidating a comprehensive guide, from an internal perspective, involving management, to an external perspective involving family, community and other factors creating a holistic context from within which to achieve optimal results.

The framework has critical aspects embedded within its structure that could contribute to an evolving inclusive system. Currently the lack of a barely functional system leaves students at a distinct disadvantage as current barriers are not properly identified and addressed to build an effective, inclusive system of education.

3.4 MAINSTREAMING, INTEGRATION AND INCLUSION

When considering mainstreaming, inclusion and integration, it is imperative that there should be a reconstitution and deeper understanding of education. In understanding and enhancing the rights of learners, a solid inclusive system must be able to differentiate the measure and levels of support needed by the learners in order to formulate an effective and adequate system of support (Sahli-Lozano, Sharma & Wüthrich, 2024). In conceptualising the complexities around the diversity of students and the challenges in implementing inclusive education, South African educators must consider the complexities of transforming normal classroom to one that accommodates and approaches the learning needs of a very diverse contingent of learners including those with individual learning disabilities. Table 3.1 provides a clear articulation of what mainstreaming, integration and inclusion mean for students.

Table 3.1: Mainstreaming, integration and inclusion

'Mainstreaming' or 'Integration'	'Inclusion'
Mainstreaming is about getting learners to 'fit into' a particular kind of system or integrating them into this existing system.	Inclusion is about recognising and respecting the differences among all learners and building on the similarities.
Mainstreaming is about giving some learners extra support so that they can 'fit in' or be integrated into the 'normal' classroom routine. Learners are assessed by specialists who diagnose and prescribe technical interventions, such as the placement of learners in programmes.	Inclusion is about supporting all learners, educators and the system as a whole so that the full range of learning needs can be met. The focus is on teaching and learning actors, with the emphasis on the development of good teaching strategies that will be of benefit to all learners.
Mainstreaming and integration focus on changes that need to take place in learners so that they can 'fit in'. Here the focus is on the learner.	Inclusion focuses on overcoming barriers in the system that prevent it from meeting the full range of learning needs. The focus is on the adaptation of and support systems available in the classroom.

Source: DOE (2001)

In conceptualising critical areas within mainstreaming and inclusive education, EWP6 (DOE, 2001) the following areas are highlighted:

- Negative attitudes to and stereotyping of differences
- An inflexible curriculum
- Inappropriate languages or languages of learning and teaching
- Inappropriate curriculum
- Inaccessible and unsafe built environments
- Inappropriate and inadequate support services
- Inadequate policies and legislation
- The non-recognition and non-involvement of parents
- Inadequately and inappropriately trained education managers and educators.

3.5 INCLUSION AND LEARNING DISABILITIES

According to UNESCO (2005:15)

Inclusion is concerned with providing appropriate responses to the broad spectrum of learning needs in formal and non-formal educational settings. Rather than being a marginal issue on how some learners can be integrated in mainstream education, inclusive education is an approach that looks into how to transform education systems and other learning environments in order to respond to the diversity of learners. It aims towards enabling teachers and learners both to feel comfortable with diversity and to see it as a challenge and enrichment of the learning environment, rather than a problem. Inclusion emphasises providing opportunities for equal participation of persons with disabilities (physical, social, and/or emotional) whenever possible into general education but leaves open the possibility of personal choice and options for special assistance and facilities for those who need it.

According to UNESCO (2005), parents, policymakers, educators and other stakeholders in schools need to be realistic and come to the realisation that inclusion is a process that requires change both at school level and at the systemic level. In addition, this involves people's conceptions of what the school system involves and inclusive education is not one of them. The diagram below according to UNESCO (2005) demonstrates that the attitudes that society has embedded in them directly impact on the actions, commitment levels and services to traditionally move towards excluding groups. Figure 3.4 provides an overall view of the process students with special needs face before finally being accepted and included in the education system.

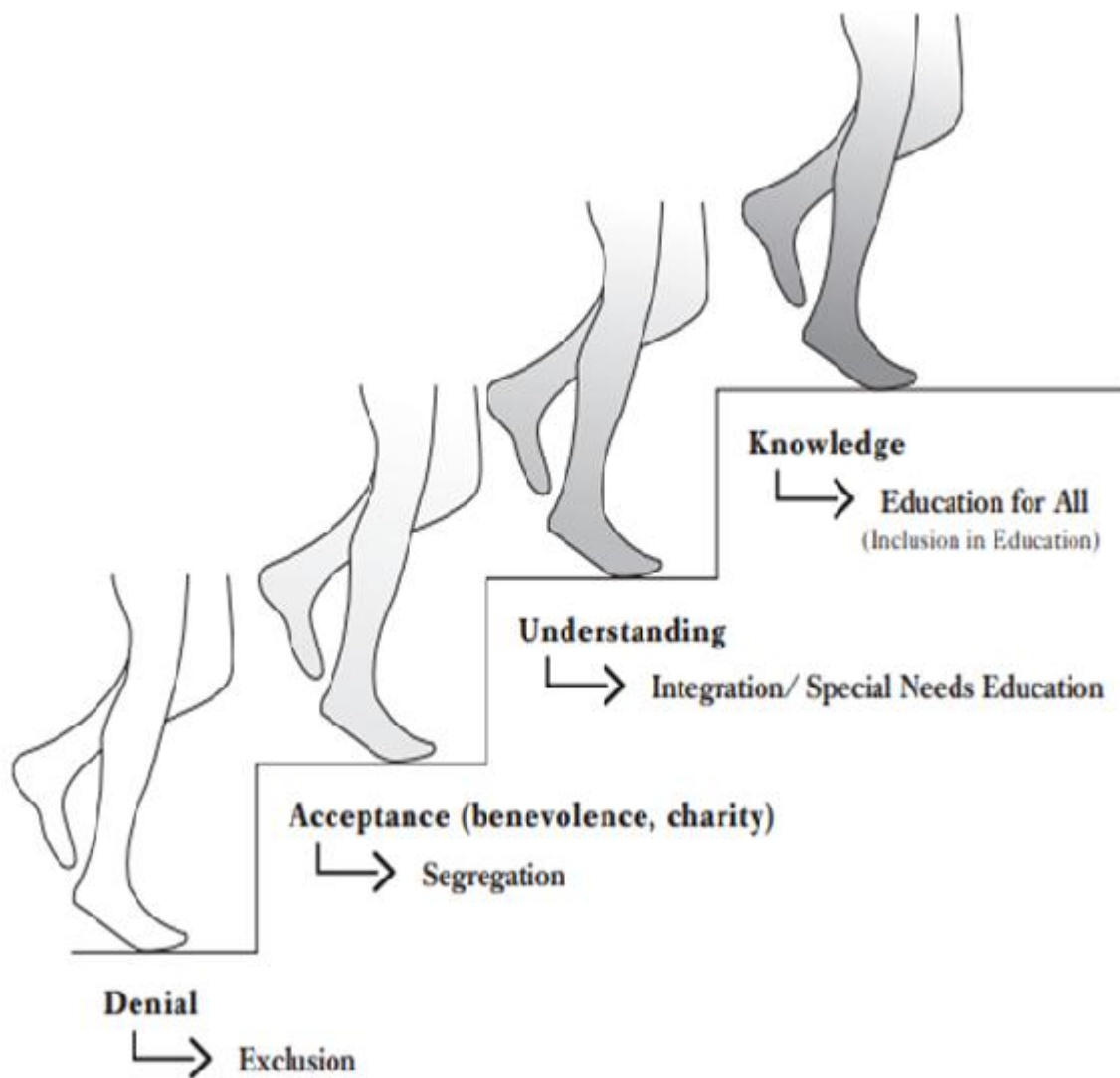


Figure 3.4: Steps from exclusion to inclusion

Source: UNESCO (2005)

In South Africa, implementing a system of inclusion creates the possibility of success for LSEN. This comes with the provision that there is a greater commitment from the institutions and all relevant stakeholders. Mechanisms focusing on national policies on inclusion, the offer of local support systems, curricula that are appropriate and very importantly, appropriate assessment strategies will create the correct context for inclusion (UNESCO, 2005). In addition, inclusion enhances enriching environments for learning within schools, embrace diversity as a positive force that must be celebrated and acknowledged. Inclusion is a process that is ongoing and does not remain in a fixed state (e! vula training, n.d.). Inclusion creates schools that are active and produce cooperative learning, with a higher degree of emphasis on

hands-on and experience-based environments once they move away from rote learning (UNESCO, 2005). In embracing inclusion the South African Constitution can be viewed as a buffer for LSEN to mitigate the impact of exclusion and discriminatory practices on students by different institutions. Inclusion can be viewed as being accepting and valuing human diversity, supporting children, thus providing a gateway for the involvement and participation of families and children in the educational programme of their choice, irrespective of whether the child has a disability or not (e! vula training, n.d.).

3.6 CAUSES OF LEARNING DISABILITIES

Learning disability is a complex notion. Researchers continually search for answers to the question as to why some children have special needs and some do not. Current research suggests that learning disabilities may occur in a number of ways which the researcher prefers to refer to as risk factors rather than causes. Among the factors listed are:

- **Genetics:** Hereditary conditions or genetics can contribute to a person's special needs. (Peterson et al, 2004). A child or any person with a sibling or parent who has special needs, has a higher chance of having special needs compared to children from families with no family history of any learning problems (Peterson et al, 2004).
- **Environmental factors:** For example, according to Peterson et al (2004), lead is a known toxin, so any exposure to environmental toxins may contribute to the cause of special needs. Exposure to paint or lead in water would lead to processing issues in the brain (Peterson et al, 2004). These present as special needs. In addition, the researcher suspects that poor nutrition may play a part in the presentation of special needs. In the Western parts of Europe and the United States documented research present significant effects within the physical environment which include, chaos, crowding , toxins, pollutants, noise, issues of housing , quality of the neighbourhood which impact on the cognitive and socio-emotional overall wellbeing of children and adolescents'(Ferguson et al, 2013)

- **Medical Conditions:** Selikowitz (2012) posits that any malformation in the brain may lead to special needs. The brain is the control centre in the human body and abnormalities would lead to a reasonable expectation that many functions may be impaired in the child. Among these are the processing of information, speech defects and concentration.
- **Problems during pregnancy:** The placenta is a vital part of a woman during pregnancy. Anything consumed by the mother during the development of the baby filters down to the baby. It makes sense that if the mother abuses substances like alcohol, drugs or nicotine the baby will be harmed (Peterson et al, 2004). The effect of these substances on the baby could lead to special needs.

Peterson et al (2004) reiterates that researchers are continually searching for more knowledge to ascertain what causes special needs in order to prevent them, as currently processing problems are regarded as tentative. Peterson et al (2004) further reiterates that rather than thinking of them as causes, it is more accurate to consider them to be risk factors of special needs.

The next section presents a global overview of teacher attitudes towards learning with disabilities.

3.7 TEACHER ATTITUDES TOWARDS LEARNING WITH DISABILITIES: GLOBAL OVERVIEW

An overall reflection of the attitudes of teachers globally is presented in the sections below. Jenson(2018) attributes that teacher attitudes are influenced by the type of disability of the student , training within the field of inclusive practices, availability and adequacy of resources and facilities. Teacher attitudes are a major contributory factor to the success or failure of students. A fundamental awareness in the identification of struggling students whether effecting a change in teaching strategy or referral for further assistance is a pivotal factor. Significant information exudes the attitudes displayed in various countries below around issues of inclusivity.

3.7.1 Australia

The Centre for Research into Disability and Society was a funded project at Curtin University, Australia. Teacher attitude plays an integral role both in providing support and assistance to ensure the success of students with special needs. Attitude is defined as a “psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular 52 entity with some degree of favour or disfavour. It involves cognitive components (your thoughts and beliefs about the subject) and behavioural components (how the attitude influences your behaviour)” (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993:1). Following the promulgation of the Salamanca Statement and its focus on inclusivity, schools in Australia have advocated for the inclusion of all students in a regular classroom.

However, Van der Bijl and Oosthuizen (2019) acknowledge that advocacy alone is not always favourably accepted by those who are involved in the implementation, namely, the teachers. It was noted that teachers present themselves as barriers to the success of inclusive classrooms. The findings indicated that teachers raised concerns which included individual time for LSEN without presenting a disadvantage to the other students, the quality and quantity of work of the children that have disabilities; a lack of adequate support, and limited training in the support of inclusive practice (Vaz et al., 2015). The study revealed that the severity of the disability that teachers must accommodate in their classes is inversely related to their attitudes toward inclusion. The more disabled the child the less positive the attitude of the teachers towards inclusion. Teachers also tended to be far more supportive of children with sensory and physical disabilities as opposed to those with behavioural, intellectual and cognitive needs.

Van der Bijl and Oosthuizen (2019) suggest that the impact of gender and age on inclusive attitudes is mixed. Some studies show no effect of teachers' age on inclusive attitudes, while others indicate that training in inclusive education improves the attitudes of younger trainees. Conversely, some studies suggest that teachers who have had exposure to persons with disabilities appear more open to the prospect of inclusion (Van der Bijl & Oosthuizen, 2019).

Another study in Australia with a focus on trainee teacher's attitudes towards students with special needs indicated that primary school teachers had a positive

attitude towards student with specific special needs as opposed to their secondary counterparts (Woodcock & Vialle, 2010).

3.7.2 Nigeria

In Nigeria, Adebowale and Moye (2012) studied teachers' knowledge of and attitudes towards special needs in Osun State. The majority of teachers who were in possession of a basic degree the National Certificate in Education (51.1%) displayed indifference in their attitude regarding learning difficulties in the classroom. Other teachers who made up a considerable percentage (43.7%) exhibited a positive attitude towards it and were prepared to assist students experiencing difficulties (Adebowale & Moye, 2012). However negative attitudes towards inclusion made up 3.3% of teachers regarding the accommodation of children with learning difficulties in the class.

3.7.3 India

In a study by Vranda (2016) on the attitude of primary school teachers towards children with learning disability indicated that in India the prevalence of children with various disabilities is 3–10% among attending students. India treats learning disability as a very important issue in primary care. It is estimated that approximately ninety million people suffer from varying degrees of learning disabilities and in an average classroom at least five students out of a total of 55 have a learning disability (Vranda, 2016).

Among the teachers, many had little knowledge as to whether a child had a specific disability. Vranda (2016) expounded on the fact that many mainstream classroom teachers had limited knowledge of specific learning disabilities. The ability of teachers to identify learning disabilities is crucial for providing appropriate support and understanding to students. Vranda (2016) reports that administrators from five cities recognised the fundamental importance of educating and providing professional development for teachers, as many were uncertain if students exhibited learning disabilities.

A study conducted by Das, Kuyini and Desai (2013) on inclusive education in India and teachers preparedness extracted information from both primary and secondary school teachers who acknowledged that they had low or limited competence with

regard to working with students with disabilities and that there was no significant difference between their skills levels.

The findings of the study indicate that the challenge of achieving full social integration and education can be overcome within society if the teacher had the necessary competencies, had better knowledge and attitudes to deal with children with learning disabilities (Vranda, 2016). In essence, Vranda (2016) believes that such knowledge and understanding contributes to teachers developing a positive attitude towards LSEN, which would enable the development of better competencies to actually manage the children.

3.7.4 Bahrain

In a study of 138 teacher candidates in a Bahrain teachers' college, findings showed that it was necessary for pre-service schoolteachers to work with students with disabilities during their school practicums (Almahdi & Bukama, 2019). The focus of the research was on pre-service and in-service teacher attitudes with regard to inclusive education. Bahrain is still in its infancy stage when it comes to inclusive education. The Kingdom of Bahrain revealed in The National Report of Education that:

inclusive education was defined by the Ministry of Education with the view that all children should be subject to similar learning-teaching methods regardless of their social and background and the different abilities and skills they possess. Educational opportunities should be provided for all, even for those with special needs of whom the ones with certain potentials should be integrated with the normal students. All services and facilities in addition to supportive educational materials should be provided to them, taking into consideration the principle of individual differences. (Ministry of Education, Bahrain, 2008:49).

While candidate teachers were compassionate towards learning with disabilities, there was still some anxiety and tension at times (Almahdi & Bukama, 2019). Some of the concerns raised by the candidate teachers concerned staff for supporting the children, resource availability, the problems associated with children with disabilities experiencing a lack of being accepted by other students, and the increased

responsibilities, stress and larger workloads (Almahdi & Bukama, 2019). Concerns also emanated as to whether the children with disabilities had the necessary skills to fit into regular classes.

3.7.5 South Africa

Malahlela (2017) undertook a study in Polokwane on adoption of the Salamanca inclusive education principles, with a special focus on the current state of affairs in South Africa which is based on social integration and redress, human rights and social justice for all students. Similarly, Donohue and Bornman (2015) exposed the human rights and equality issues as the central themes in South Africa until apartheid ended in 1993. They further expounded on the prejudices that were deeply entrenched within South African society. With apartheid and its inequalities, Donohue and Bornman (2015) believe that the education of children with various cultures, races, genders and academic abilities all in one classroom may assist in the combating of the injustices that at one time was the hallmark of how South Africans existed. With the publication of EWP6 (DOE, 2001), teachers became more familiar with the dynamics of inclusive education. However, several aspects were still questioned on the implementation and support processes. Teachers still have many “reservations and ambivalence” regarding inclusion (Donohue & Bornman, 2015:25).

3.7.6 Ethiopia

In a study by Temesgen (2017), the aims of the research were to investigate the challenges in Ethiopia that hindered the implementation of inclusive education. Furthermore, the goal was to develop a framework that would enhance inclusion of the children suffering from disabilities. Temesgen (2017) states that historically, persons who had special needs were separated from the mainstream of society due to their uniqueness. Europe and America also followed this practice until the eighteenth century. The practice was rather barbaric and included beating, killing and abandoning children with disabilities. People with disabilities were viewed as being contaminated and were said to pose a threat to the non-contaminated pure human beings (Temesgen, 2017). UNESCO (2009) places its focus on policy as a means to effective policy implementation for intervention purposes. In implementing policies and creating awareness, people would become aware of policies thereby understanding and supportive of people with disabilities. This is agreed to by

Khumalo (2019) that support remains a fundamental component in the implementation of any policy including inclusive education. “Inclusive education practices reflect the changing nature of contemporary schools with emphasis on active learning, authentic assessment practices, applied curriculum, multi-level instructional approaches, and increased attention to diverse students’ needs and individualisation” (Temesgen, 2017:18).

3.7.7 New Zealand

In Aotearoa, New Zealand has committed itself to early childhood development. This is evidenced in Te Whāriki, which influence and promotes aspirations and inclusiveness for all of its children “to grow up as competent and confident students and communicators, healthy in mind, body and spirit, secure in the sense of belonging and in the knowledge that they have made a valuable contribution to society” (Ministry of Education, New Zealand, 1996b:9), and in government policy, which supports all children’s and their families’ rights to an early education that is non-discriminatory and inclusive (Ministry of Education, 1996a, 1998; New Zealand Government, 1993, 1998). However, this system of belief reinforces that children who are disabled are special, different, and are in need of different treatment (Purdue, 2006). This perspective has remained a part of education in New Zealand as well as in other places for a considerable amount of time and have been part of a system of separate and segregated systems.

In direct contrast to other countries, this system of special education reinforces the idea that disabled children are ‘special’; they are different, and therefore require different treatment. Special education has been part of education in New Zealand for a considerable period of time and has been provided either as separate treatment within mainstream education or in segregated centres’ and schools. Unfortunately, this method is looked upon as being normal for students with disabilities. However, New Zealand has pledged its commitment to early childhood management behaviours by making curriculum modifications (Purdue, 2006).

3.7.8 Kenya

After Kenya attained its independence, the Government instituted various commissions to review the existing policies on education and training to address the

needs of the people and to focus on the national manpower development. The 1964 Kenya Education Commission, (Ngerechi, 2003) after consideration of the challenges facing vocational education recommended converting the existing government trade schools into technical secondary schools. The purpose of this decision was to prepare graduates to transition into TVET colleges directly after graduating from secondary school. During the 1970s, the country experienced a massive expansion within the provision of post-secondary technical training. This was overseen by the community-managed Harambee Institutes. 'Harambee' (Institutes of Technology) emerged from the Kiswahili word which means 'let us pull together'. In 1981, the Presidential Working Party made the first recommendation for a second university which should be a technological university. Discussions continue about the expansion of TVET colleges and the fundamental need to increase opportunities for school leavers. The Kenyan system identified a critical need to ensure an enriched curriculum with technical subjects around which it is centred (UNESCO, 1994). Subsequently vocational subjects were included in both primary and secondary school curricula and made provision for the advancement of students that exhibited vocational talent (UNESCO,1994)

3.7.9 Zambia

In Zambia, under an ILO project that aimed to foster TVET learning environments inclusive of persons with disabilities, disability awareness training was organised for managers, instructors, teachers and other training and support staff of selected training colleges (Sako, 2020). The approach used gave participants the opportunity to explore how people are disabled by society's barriers and attitudes and to identify ways in which these barriers can be overcome, and attitudes can be positively influenced by the organisation or group. By building on their existing knowledge and skills, the ILO enabled participants to identify actions that they could take on their own initiative to make the colleges more inclusive.

UNESCO (1994:7) alludes to the all-encompassing fact that:

experience in many countries demonstrates that the integration of children and youth with special educational needs is best achieved within inclusive schools that serve all children within a community. It is within this context that those with special educational needs can achieve the fullest educational

progress and social integration. While inclusive schools provide a favourable setting for achieving equal opportunity and full participation, their success requires a concerted effort, not only by teachers and good staff, but also by peers, parents, families and volunteers.

The next section deals with students' experiences with learning disabilities. The term learning disabilities will be used throughout as the term is noted to be interchangeably used with special needs, disabled students and students with disabilities.

3.8 STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

Learning disabilities encompass a myriad of developmental disorders which is evident in grasping academic or language skills, mathematics, reading, oral language communication, motor performance and writing (National Research Council, 2012). The National Research Council (NRC, 2012) elucidates the historical difficulty partly due to disabilities not being unitary or homogenous and partly because the definition emanates from exclusionary measures rather than inclusionary means. Reading disability is often used interchangeably with terms like reading disorder, learning disabilities with reading and dyslexia (National Research Council, 2012). It has been extensively documented that phonological, orthographic and morphemic awareness coupled with the actual decoding methods and accuracy of the identification of words, and other research on decoding among college students results specifically from reading disabilities (dyslexia) (National Research Council, 2012). Makanya (2015) contends that the challenges among the disabled vary from aspects of storing, processing and producing information (Lerner & John, 2012). Further areas that are generally affected include speaking, writing, mathematical computing and spelling. Challenges with attention, coordination, reasoning, memory, emotional maturity and social skills are cited as other areas of difficulties among students with disabilities (Makhanya, 2015). In other research, writing has been identified as a fundamental (cognitive, linguistic, affective and social) aspect that is important for purposes of intervention, effective assessment and accommodation of adults and adolescence of those with learning disabilities (National Research Council, 2012).

3.9 SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS FACING BARRIERS

Support for students with specific learning disabilities like visually impaired students and hearing disabled students has been largely neglected in TVET colleges. Matshediso (2007a) investigated the challenges of support regarding students in South African Higher Education (SAHE). Challenges raised by Matshediso (2007a) revolve around the lack of funding, a paucity of data on students with disabilities, and the slow pace at which transformation is taking place in higher education. Matshediso (2007a) refers to a study at a university in the Western Cape regarding the lack of change in the teaching and support for students with hearing disabilities. In interrogating the challenges experienced by students with disabilities, the DOE viewed this from a human rights perspective (Matshediso, 2007b). He alludes to the fact that the difficulty in the redress of unequal access to higher education is a result of the challenge of the transformation of formal rights on paper into real rights. He believes that the SAHE has been constant in its perpetuation of social injustices and structural inequalities. He is adamant that it is evident that students with disabilities lack the necessary support and political will from government and higher education. According to Matshediso (2007b) a disability policy for higher education institutions and the ability to prioritise issues will contribute to the redress of social inequalities in South Africa.

A study by Malle, Pirrtimaa and Saloviita (2015) in Ethiopia investigated the prevailing challenges of students with disabilities. Moreover the study highlights the limited access and participation problems experienced. Contributory factors that were identified included the shortages of adaptive training materials and equipment that could be used by hearing impaired students including for those that were physically challenged, inadequate preparation regarding pedagogy on the part of trainers who teach students with disabilities and the lack of support through tutorials for students with disabilities. These provisions were confirmed in rule 6 of the UN Standard Rules on the Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities. Moreover, Malle et al. (2015) made a critical observation that students enrolled with disabilities in vocational and training have reported that they faced far more barriers than their counterparts without disabilities which included the lack of resources and most importantly, facilitation for completion of the course.

Malle et al. (2015) also focus on factors that present challenges of the participation of students with disabilities. Among these are the lack of trained personnel, lack of opportunities regarding training and employment opportunities, attitudinal problems, lack of coordination, architectural barriers and policy limitations. In a second list, a lack of assistive devices, communication systems, infrastructure, psychological barriers in the minds of people with a disability (ILO/Japan Technical Consultation on Vocational Training and Employment, 2003).

Other scholars like Wentzel (2016) that there are guiding policies for inclusive education in South Africa. This policy is supported by policies such as Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS) (DOE, 2008 2014), curriculum and assessment policy statement (CAPS) (DBE, 2011) and the Guidelines for Inclusive Learning and Teaching (DBE, 2010). Wentzel (2016) states that these are the policies that should be used for support when South African students experience any barriers to development. The researcher in this study makes reference to Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory as she believes fervently that the school, family, community and society as a whole play a pivotal role in the provision of support for students who experience barriers to learning and development.

Inclusion is still viewed as being difficult to implement considering the number of barriers that exist. While some barriers involve the students, others may be societal, environmental and physical among the many others that exist. According to e! vula training (2008), barriers that students face may include any of the following:

- Home conditions: these include poverty, overcrowded housing, ethnic and socio-economic background;
- Home relationships: these include family structure, relationships and values, parental support of the student;
- The broader social context: local and national policies and legislation, socio-economic factors community values which complicate or sustain the teaching and learning process;
- Environmental barriers at school: students may be affected by the psychological and physical environment of teaching and learning, including the ethos and school culture, management approaches, school culture and policies, safe buildings and supportive infrastructure;

- Curriculum-related barriers: reference is made to very important issues of relating to medium of instruction, content relevance and mode of communication, materials that are appropriate, management of the classroom and organisation, pedagogies and teaching methods, assessment procedures, availability of resources and learning materials and the pace of teaching;
- Learner-related barriers: learners may face specific mental, physical, neurological/sensory needs of learners with disabilities and learning styles; and
- Teacher-related barriers: the importance of educator attitudes may have an adverse effect on students. Other factors may be their personal factors and their knowledge and training.

There is a constant interconnection between these factors as barriers do not function in complete isolation. An example would be poor home conditions and unemployment that could have a detrimental effect on the students' psyche, creating a barrier to excelling at school, and having a negative effect on developmental aspects.

3.10 NEEDS OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Despite students with disabilities being denied the opportunity to study at higher education institutions throughout the world the development of public policies increased participation (Konur, 2006). Ndlovu (2019) posits that it is imperative for all stakeholders in education to go back to the drawing board in order to understand the original meaning of inclusion. Similarly, Purdue (2006) asserts that families and children facing access to education revolves around the issues of the 'belief system of special education'

Figure 3.5 provides a clear view of how education is viewed through the inclusion lens and highlights the systemic issues that work against inclusive practice.

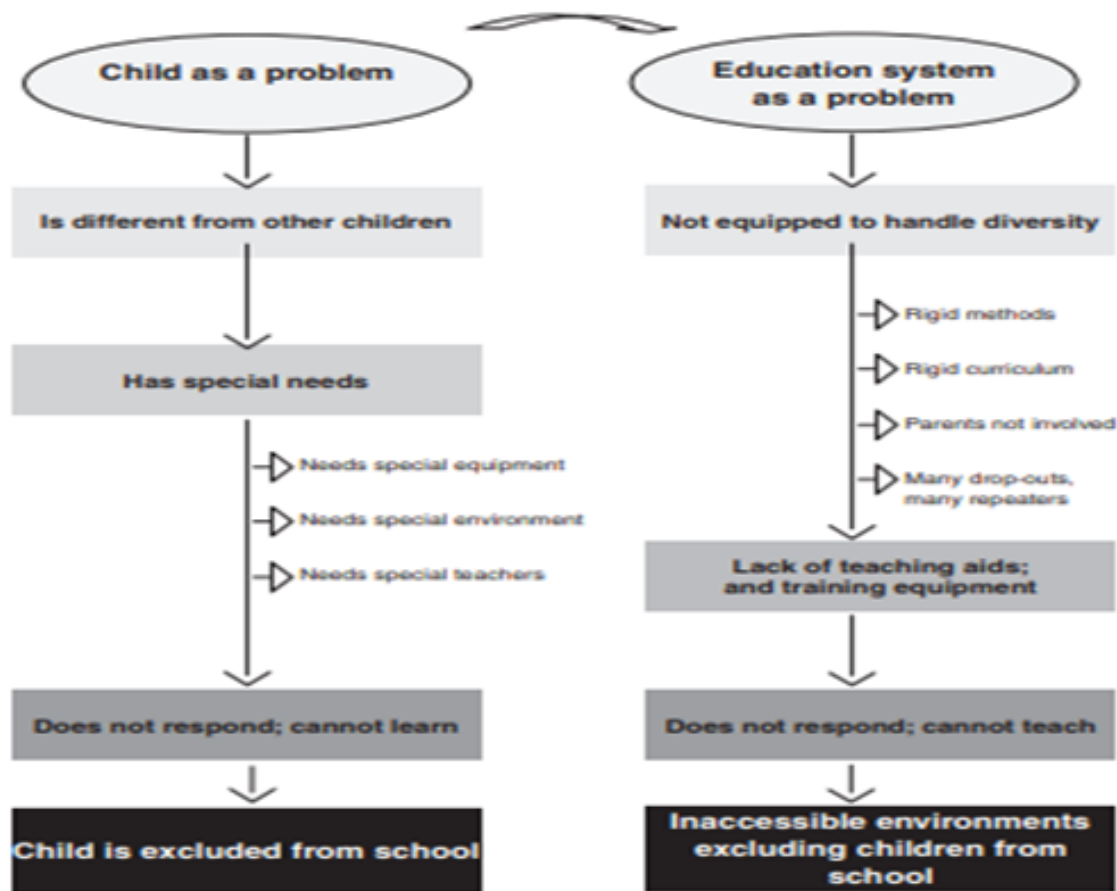


Figure 3.5: Education through the inclusion lens

Source: UNESCO (2005)

An additional argument extends from schooling to higher education, emphasising the need for stakeholders to drive progressive transformation. This transformation should focus on modifying learning environments rather than merely integrating students with disabilities without necessary accommodations or adaptations. The goal is to ensure education is accessible and inclusive for all students, regardless of their abilities. Radical inclusion is necessary to encourage stakeholders to rethink their approach and genuinely understand what true inclusion means, including how special needs students are referred to and integrated into the system. Purdue (2006) contends that the term 'special' makes reference to the disabled child as being ostensibly different, explicitly marking them as belonging elsewhere and due to their impediments as having different teaching needs and a significantly different curriculum. He argues that it is not an easy task to remove the language of special

needs due to the vocabulary being firmly entrenched in legislation and policies of mainstream education of early childhood and a part of daily discourse.

3.10.1 Incorporating Technology and Assistive Devices in TVET Colleges

Izzo (2012) and later Karagianni and Drigas (2023) posit that technology promotes increased learning and enhances learning outcomes for all students including those with disabilities. Currently TVET colleges use general teaching methods for all students with or without disabilities. With the introduction of flexible teaching practices all students will benefit. In designing an inclusive learning environment using technology, the conditions for learning create conditions that are optimal for the accommodation of all students (Karagianni & Drigas, 2023). Computer software and assistive devices provide access to enhance the learning of students with disabilities that were previously not present. El-Hagggar et al. (2023) and Reyes et al., (2022) reiterate the importance of the growth of the internet, learning environments that are fitted with computers, and many other devices that are contributory innovations to enhance efficient learning. Students with disabilities can now access information through digital means without physically attending colleges.

Izzo (2012) as well as Karagianni and Drigas (2023) expound on examples of what would enhance effective learning. Among these are an iPad which is a computer with a touch screen, digital video camera and internet connectivity. For persons with visual issues, it has voiceover technology which will audibly speak interacting with the user. A second device, the digital pen, has an audio recording device that converts handwritten notes into records that can be transferred to a personal computer. Once this process is completed, the student can review notes, edit, highlight and prepare for projects and tests. An addition is the Tablet PC which is a portable computer has a rotating screen locking on the top of the keyboard transforming the natural handwriting by highlighting key points on the screen.

“This example and others are discussed to demonstrate how technology supports the increased success of all students, including students with disabilities, regardless of educational level or setting” (Izzo, 2012:346).

3.10.2 Incorporating Universal Design Learning Principles (UDL) in Colleges

Izzo (2012) found that the incorporation of UDL is a teaching approach that provides students with an extended range of abilities to access content for course material ultimately ensuring success in college. Izzo (2012) states that from a neurological standpoint all students learn differently, irrespective of economic, culture or disability. He further explains that the processing of information uses a variety of strategies and people have different strengths and weaknesses regarding learning styles. UDL adopts seven critical principles that revolve around:

- information that is perceptible;
- being intuitive and simple;
- being tolerant when errors are identified;
- useful designs that are equitable and marketable to students with diverse abilities;
- physical effort that is low;
- space and size for use; and
- flexibility in how it is used.

In adopting flexibility in classrooms students will inevitably acquire suitable skills depending on the assessment of their individual needs. Mbuva (2019) contends that incorporating UDL into lecturing can create an online environment and learning space which is more inclusive of all students. Mbuva (2019) advocates that UDL strategies go beyond merely accommodating students with disabilities but becomes a part of a larger strategy to provide materials in multiple formats thereby meeting all students' needs.

3.10.3 Disability and Support Units

Many institutions are moving towards the global trend of mainstreaming students. This requires and makes relevant the need for disability and support units for effective handling of issues. Mbuva (2019) indicates that South Africa has some HEIs who have established disability units and these units offer specialised services at these institutions to students with disabilities and also assists in facilitating integration and access. TVET colleges unfortunately do not have disability units, exacerbating problems when they arise due to the inability of how certain issues

should be handled. Finn (1999) supports the idea that disability units are imperative as they would provide essential services that would benefit students. These units need to be managed by personnel with relevant qualifications to ensure that they are able to deal with disability issues. Nel, Nel and Hugo (2013) agree that it would benefit students if learning disabilities can be detected early to ensure that support can be provided immediately. Immediate diagnosis of a problem would ensure students have the necessary support when necessary thereby preventing the escalation of problematic areas.

3.10.4 Scaffolding and Differentiation

Wentzel (2016) references Woolfolk (2010:266) that most diverse students require scaffolding; some may require it for a shorter period of time while others for longer periods. She indicates that this is the reason why the need arises for the curriculum to be flexible. Wentzel (2016) cites (Nel et al., 2013:131) who underscores the fundamental issue that scaffolding may enable learning as teachers provide support and frameworks which allow the learner to access the curriculum, construct their individual knowledge and master academic skills. Scaffolding can be embedded into various tasks, like assisting in opening sentences for paragraphs, steps in mathematical problems and provide structures for essays (Wentzel, 2016). Alber (2014) believes that for students who appear to be struggling, differentiation may assist by modifying an assessment or making accommodations by providing alternative or more accessible projects. Alber (2014) also touches on pivotal aspects to ascertain where students actually scaffold the lesson or differentiate instruction. The author is adamant that it is imperative to flag where the student is regarding the ZPD. The ZPD provides an indication as to what the student can achieve on his own and what can be achieved with the assistance of someone more competent. In addition, scaffolding can be used for vocabulary banks illustrations and clues to answers and access to comprehension tasks (Wentzel, 2016).

3.10.5 Curriculum Modification

Guskey (2013) argues about the urgency to note that educational achievement should be viewed as a construct that is multi-faceted; where curriculum or different areas of learning call for the conceptualisation of different sets of skills and knowledge to be demonstrated.

Lee, Wehmeyer, Soukup and Palmer (2010) investigated whether curriculum modification was a predictor in student and teacher behaviour in a general education classroom, and additionally whether there appears to be any differences in ecological, student and teacher variables. This may depend on the presence of curriculum modification via examinations which included students from high school with disabilities who received instructions in core areas (Lee et al., 2010). The findings provided evidence of significant differences in student and teacher variables which were dependent on the presence of curriculum modifications. Students appeared more engaged in the provision of better academic responses and behaviour became less competitive when curriculum modifications were provided (Lee et al., 2010). The findings indicated why modifications of the curriculum are important, namely, to improve access to and implementation of the curriculum of general education. Naicker (2006) posits that in order to create more conducive conditions for inclusive practice, this must be delivered with a curriculum that is suitable for all and educationists must strive to attain a common level of understanding of ideological issues. However, the integrity of the curriculum must not be compromised. Mishra et al (2019) further maintains that adaptation of the curriculum must be a dynamic and ongoing process where prescribed programmes of studies are adapted and modified to satisfy the needs of student who have special needs. Muzata (2017) articulates that even before implementation of a curriculum, vocabulary should be adequate and well developed. Konur (2006:356) concurs that the format in which the curriculum is presented, namely, “in a paper text format, signed language format, audio format, script format or electronic format depending on the preferred ‘learning modality’ of a particular student” should be accounted for.

3.11 CHALLENGES TO INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Ainscow (2005) argues that the critical factor presenting a major challenge to educational systems around the world is inclusion itself. On reflecting on previous research from the last ten years, Ainscow (2005) suggests some levers to ease systems in a direction that is more inclusive. Ainscow (2005) further argues that the bulk of barriers that are experienced by students emanate from existing ways of thinking.

3.11.1 Access

Access remains problematic in many mainstream schools. Multiple factors may prevent persons with special needs from gaining access into institutions of learning. This includes teachers themselves as barriers. EWP6 (DOE, 2001) confirms that teachers remain vocal around concerns of including students in mainstream classes. This stems from their insecurities arising from a lack of training, and the requisite knowledge to teach students with disabilities (DOE, 2001).

Many schools feel that students should be redirected to special institutions, questioning whether accepting students with disabilities is a realistic measure. In a study carried out in schools in Durban, Ostendorf (2019) explores how realistic the practice of inclusion into mainstream classrooms really can be. Even though Ostendorf (2019) submits that the goal is one that is admirable, she maintains that it is simply not realistic immediately, with even the most committed advocate questioning its possibility. She believes that if schools aim to start from nothing, with the idea of turning institutions into fully inclusive centres' of learning, this will lead to disappointment. Thus inclusion requires clear articulation around the barriers to access as Ostendorf (2019) refers to it as an evolutionary process. This strengthens UNESCO's (2015) view that access into mainstream classrooms can be challenging. This fundamentally points to the unique position each institution may find itself in. On the other hand, Mosia (2017) in his studies on access to higher education for students with disabilities in Lesotho argues that tertiary institutions will be able to achieve mandates of the UN CRDP and Sustainable Development Goals, in adhering to the higher education policy mandate. Mosia (2017) asserts that this includes especially, Goal (4) on the provision of a quality education, which he argues is a precursor for Goal (1) which relates to zero poverty, Goal (2) No Hunger, Goal (3) Good health, Goal (8) Economic growth and decent work, and Goal (10) a reduction in inequality.

Another study by Purdue (2006) references the work of (Allan, 1999) on exclusion in practice, underpinning a dominant role of constructing disability in embracing mainstream education practice, with a view to maintaining certain truths surrounding issues of disability, while negating others. Even though a stance emerged of examples of an inclusive approach to disability, ironically, it remained the dominant

perspective that disability is the problem of the child, the child is viewed as less than human, and any condition foresees the child as damaged and therefore leads to the child being viewed as being less valued than others (Purdue, 2006).

3.11.2 Disabilities within Higher Institutions

UNESCO (2015) posits that TVET colleges is a rather sensitive issue for persons with disabilities. Mention is made that in many other countries where inclusive education is implemented settings within the TVET colleges are still segregated (Pohl & Walther, 2007). It is evident that improvements are needed to ensure that inclusion benefits all persons, with special focus on those with disabilities. UNESCO (2015) refers to the opinion of the European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education (2001) that inclusive education and the quality thereof are reciprocal. This lends to the belief that a setting that is inclusive can make a fundamental and very significant contribution to the quality of education for all students (European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education, 2001).

In the USA, UK and Australia, two major discrimination tests are conducted to ensure equality within the higher education setting. The first test is concerned with 'less favourable treatment duty' by the university "where they are prohibited from treating disabled students less favourably on grounds of their disability" (Konur, 2006:354) The second test places emphasis on the duty of the university to make "reasonable adjustments" to ensure that students who are disabled have "equal access to the curriculum, admission processes and examinations on par with their non-disabled peers" (Konur, 2006:354).

Another study comparing 191 college students with learning disabilities in higher education to 190 students without disabilities was undertaken by Heiman and Precel (2003). The study was a comparison over four crucial academic areas. The areas covered academic difficulties, how they function during examinations, learning strategies, and an overview of factors that have a particular effect that may impede or assist in their academic success. Findings revealed that students without disabilities displayed no significant differences between the number of courses taken, family status or grade point average. However it emerged that students with disabilities presented with more difficulties in social sciences, humanities and foreign languages than students without disabilities. Reading and writing emerged as a

significant factor as a lot was required for the courses. The inability to grasp a foreign language is a contributory factor especially among students with special needs. Similarly, TVET colleges in South Africa adopt English as a medium of instruction to non-English students. This presents similar challenges as evidenced in test results, indicating that language is an issue among both with and without disabilities, especially where it is not their mother tongue. Attention should be given during the planning stages to ensure that all students are able to engage in mainstream classes by using a variety of differentiated strategies.

Wadhwa (2020) further underscores the singular challenge that exists in the provision of effective education for youth and children with learning problems. The author postulates that in India the overcrowding of classes exacerbates stress on exam oriented learning, multi-sensory teaching, large curriculum, encouragement of thinking and experimental learning has not found a consistent pattern. It is concerning that the impact leads to a large number of under or non-achievers culminating in college and school dropouts (Wadhwa, 2020)

LSEN require a variety of strategies for the understanding of work, which will have major implications on how TVET college lecturers accommodate the multiple needs of students in mainstream classrooms.

3.11.3 Disabilities and Employment

Even though people with intellectual disabilities can make a valuable contribution to the labour market, they receive very low rates of paid employment. Representing a group that is marginalised in labour markets around the world, they are far more likely to be economically inactive, underemployed or unemployed (ILO, 2017). Some countries offer disability benefits, increasing public spending, but where there are no benefits, people with disabilities are totally dependent on their families. Shepard (2019) advances the argument that while employment rates may differ across subpopulations, it is evident that disability groups lag way behind their peers who are normal. This is indicative of the problems faced by people with disabilities and specific groups when it comes to gainful employment and the retention thereof. Shepard (2019) argues that closing the gap in employment rates between subpopulations of working-aged people among various disability groups and their

counterparts of working age that do not have disabilities should be a critical goal for policy and practice.

The statistics of people with disabilities comprise 15% of the global population and an estimated 785 million persons of working age. They represent and remain a marginalised group in the labour market in all countries around the world, being far more likely than persons without disabilities to be unemployed, underemployed or economically inactive. Where they have participated in vocational training, it is often in segregated settings where courses are frequently not linked to labour market requirements or at a standard lower than that required by employers. Persons with special needs are more likely to be in low-paid jobs with little chance of promotion.

A report from a three-year longitudinal study by Cocks and Thoreson (2013) on economic and social outcomes of graduates with disabilities from two comparison groups exposed the barriers faced in the workplace. In the disability group, 31.7% indicated barriers regarding factors in employment as opposed to 17% in the comparison group (Cocks & Thoreson, 2013). Some of the barriers for graduates with disabilities included work demands as a frequent barrier, while graduates without disabilities cite loss of employment (Cocks & Thoreson, 2013). Considering the barriers faced by people with disabilities, steps are imperative to reduce the economic and social costs that place a burden on communities, individuals, societies and economies (ILO, 2017).

3.11.4 Gender Inequality

Discrimination faced by women and girls has been highlighted by the UNCRPD (ILO, 2017). The ILO (2017) stress the importance of taking all measures so that the rights and fundamental freedoms which include the right to vocational training can be enjoyed by all. Konur (2006) in his findings concurs that the women who were surveyed in his study revealed particularly low levels of qualifications being reached. This shows the importance of transformation that is necessary and urgent to ensure that there is no gender discrimination in TVET institutions. Further impetus is given by the UN CRDP to the ILO's call to ensure that people with disabilities are effectively integrated into general training and employment services (ILO, 2017). To allow effective promotion of both genders to succeed, effective strategies must be put into place to enable equity. The ILO (2017) concludes that:

- Enabling policies should be instituted.
- Challenging of mistaken assumptions regarding capabilities of disabled persons.
- Accessibility to buildings and transport should be enabled.
- Adaptation and evaluation methods, entry criteria, teaching methods and materials.
- Trainees with disabilities, alongside non-disabled trainees should be taught by TVET colleges so that workforce capacity can be strengthened.
- Resources should be allocated to effect change.
- Policies should be regularly reviewed (ILO, 2017).

The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) (2013) similarly makes particular reference to the inequalities against girls and women. The report shows that girls remain at a distinct disadvantage in getting an education, finding employment, or receiving vocational training than boys with disabilities or girls without disabilities (UNICEF, 2013). Girls and young women are regarded as being doubly disabled as they face other prejudices and inequalities like traditional roles and other barriers (UNICEF, 2013).

3.11.5 Parental Involvement

In a qualitative case study of two elementary schools in the United States of America, Stevens (2007) highlights the importance of parent engagement and regards it as an effective strategy for success. Burke (2013) contends that most parents experience difficulty in navigating the special needs system. TVET colleges in South Africa have little to no collaboration with parents. Many students that attend TVET colleges are adults and this, therefore, creates a barrier for support of the student. Stevens (2007:14) states that:

in our efforts to ‘leave no child behind’, educational leaders must employ methods to inform and engage parents from all walks of life: the wealthy, the poor, the educated and those with little or no education, regardless of race, religion, gender or ability level.

Burke (2013) believes that the lack of parental participation in students with disabilities education leads to unsound and inappropriate educational programmes. He reiterates the importance that without parental involvement, students with

disabilities remain vulnerable to receive inappropriate and inadequate services. In addition, Frankel, Gold and Ajodhia-Andrews (2010) believe that a family-centred approach perceives family members to be experts regarding their child with a disability and fundamentally see them as partners in the process of decision-making. Parents remain the primary caregivers of students who can play a major role in collaborating with lecturers even if it is just for purposes of support. In engaging parents or guardians in planned meetings additional information can assist the lecturers in preparing adequately for affected students.

3.11.6 Adults and Disability

In a survey of educational experiences by Preece (1995) in the North West of England, findings showed that the earlier an individual had acquired a disability, contributed to limitations in their ability to attain a higher or professional qualification. Adults with disabilities however have indicated an increase in their aspirations and education needs in recent years (Preece, 1995). Thus the option of TVET colleges has become a popular choice for adults especially where many had previously failed to complete schooling. However, research in this area is limited and LSEN remain a marginalised group. Among the findings, Preece (1995) reflects on the aspects that promulgate underachievement of students with disabilities and posits that these arise from both oppression of students from various sources underscoring practical access and attitudinal issues as contributory barriers. Preece (1995) recommends an equal opportunities approach for disabled adults in adult education programmes.

3.11.7 Teacher Readiness in Identifying Students with Barriers

The EWP6 recommended that changes be made for the early identification of students with barriers in order to facilitate support. Mkhuma, Maseko and Tiale (2014) agree that identifying students with learning barriers is vital and creates the expectation that teachers in full-service schools have the requisite expertise to deal with them. New roles and responsibilities have been introduced by the national SIAS policy for the various stakeholders who are actively involved in the child's education

A qualitative study by Malahlela (2017) further established the challenges faced by educators in the implementation of inclusive education regarding policies on SIAS and EWP6. In identifying that trained teachers are vital to inclusive education

Donohue and Bornman (2014:p3) expound on the importance of “positive caregiver attitudes” which can affect resources, time and sacrifices in ensuring that children receive proper education. However, Mkhuma et al. (2014) argue that even though there remains the expectation that teachers are trained in inclusive education, most teachers are in possession of general qualifications for mainstream schools. These scholars recommend that in order to alleviate misidentification, over-identification and non-identification and bias, teachers should possess the necessary skills and knowledge of identifying barriers to learning. In order to do this, Frankel et al. (2010) agree that in order to successfully implement inclusive education, teachers must possess positive attitudes, and adequate training and support. Similarly, Ntombela (2006) asserts that teachers require the necessary information in order to gain knowledge and skills, but more importantly require support.

The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education (UNESCO, 1994) agrees that the following elements are fundamental to a successful inclusive system:

- Student teachers, from both primary and secondary schools should be provided with a “positive orientation towards disability”, in order for them to gain an understanding of what can be attained within schools with “locally available support services”;
- Skills and knowledge are must be of a high standard mainly of “good teaching” and the inclusion to assess special needs;
- Adaptations to the content of the curriculum;
- Being able to use assistive technology;
- Teaching that should be individualised to cater for a more diverse range of abilities; and
- Teacher training practice institutions should focus on preparing teachers to “exercise autonomy and apply their skills in adapting curricula and instruction to meet pupils needs as well as to collaborate with specialists and co-operate with parents” (UNESCO, 1994).

3.11.8 Policy Challenges

Even though the National Government has adopted various inclusive policy documents for mainstream schooling, research has identified gaps in the system as to why implementation still remains contentious. Ntombela (2006) asserts that even though the inclusive policy underpinning inclusive education and training is representative of the country's objective to develop of an equitable, non-racial and democratic society, it fails to explain how the transformation will take place. He makes specific reference to how the development and transformation of the different levels of administration could be undertaken to support and facilitate the necessary changes. According to Ntombela (2006), there is a lack of clarity on the process of allocation of resources for those that need them and is sceptical about whether the policy is practical and can be achieved with the resources that are currently available.

Similarly, Naicker (2006) agrees that policy developers and implementers realised just four years after the launch of EWP6 that there were several challenges and possibilities regarding implementing inclusive education in South Africa. Furthermore, Donohue and Bornman (2014) refer to this policy as being one that is merely symbolic. According to these authors, symbolic policies attain some attention initially but fail when it comes to issues of implementation. This reference was made to EWP6 (DOE, 2001) in which a similar pattern was observed (Donohue & Bornman, 2014). Jansen (2001) agrees that in South Africa some policies merely represent political symbolism rather than being practical. This therefore leads to vague policies being passed with nobody taking responsibility for its implementation. Even though inclusive education is embedded in human rights and in the democratic context of South Africa which recognises diversity. (Engelbrecht,2006) point out various structural and contextual issues that had a negative impact on implementing inclusive education. Some of these issues include changes in society, management of diversity in schools, contextual changes, and encompassing educational reforms (Engelbrecht, 2006). The EWP6 (DOE, 2001) highlights six broad strategies:

- Conversion of some special schools into resource centres', including the improvement of existing special schools;

- The mobilisation of approximately 300 000 children with disabilities of school-going age that are currently not in school;
- Some mainstream primary schools that may be converted into full-service institutions that will be inclusive;
- Staff orientation and administration in mainstream schools to be accustomed to the practices of inclusive education, including the ability to identify children who may present with disabilities as early as possible;
- Help and support for educators through the establishment of district-based support teams, towards the goals of implementation of inclusive practices in classrooms; and
- A national advocacy campaign to be implemented to allow South Africans to orient themselves to the ideas of inclusive education, and inclusion and participation of its entire people with disabilities. (DOE, 2001).

These policies have been criticised as lacking specifics and relevant detail, with little guidance on how to implement these strategies effectively. In hindsight, educators should have received thorough training in the area of inclusive inclusion with special reference to TVET colleges. This comes especially at a time when higher numbers of LSEN are entering colleges. With inclusive education being referred to as complex, Ntombela (2006) reiterates the critical role of the teacher in the reform process, pointing to the building of a truly supportive and inclusive education system through properly equipped, confident and skilled teachers.

3.11.9 Educator Challenges

uMkhanyakude District remains the third poorest district in South Africa. A Section 27 Report by Hodgson and Khumalo (2016) in this district, places focus on the teachers employed who often possess neither the expertise nor experience critical for children with disabilities. Pantić and Florian (2015) align with the perspectives of Ballard (2012), Florian (2009), Villegas and Lucas (2002), and Zeichner (2009) in their challenge to the status quo. They advocate for educators to become agents of change by endorsing a social justice agenda. This agenda critically addresses educational inequalities and is driven by a commitment to increasing access to education and improving outcomes for all students

Instead, teachers often exhibit discriminative behaviour and refer to students with disabilities as 'lunatics', exercising little patience with them (Hodgson & Khumalo, 2016). On the other hand, teachers do receive training from the DOE, but complained that it is limited and highly theoretical which proves unhelpful (Hodgson & Khumalo, 2016). Additionally shortages of staff, including allocated staff allocated display little interest or understanding of students with disabilities (Hodgson & Khumalo, 2016).

In a study by Malahlela (2017) on educators' perceptions of the implementation of inclusive education in Polokwane mainstream secondary schools in Limpopo Province, the educators maintained that implementing inclusive education was adversely affected by the lack of equipment and facilities, inadequate teacher training and increased enrolments in mainstream classrooms. The study recommends that for successful implementation of inclusive education, continued professional development and training of educators in the field of inclusive education is needed. In improving the confidence of educators, Malahlela (2017) further recommends regular support, the monitoring of activities in inclusive education in mainstream institutions and provision of adequate resources.

Even though a qualitative case study by Ntombela (2006) in the greater Durban area acknowledges the merits of an inclusive system, there are challenges in the implementation of such a system. The study was focused on examining the processes that the Kwa-Zulu Natal Department of Education had adopted to disperse the policy in preparation for schools, especially educators and other stakeholders regarding the process of implementation. The critical findings of Ntombela (2006) that emanated from the study suggested that the educators' understanding of the policy was distorted. This was largely due to the ineffective and inappropriate methods used during the process of dissemination of the policy and the communication that was inadequate among the various education sectors. Ntombela (2006) found that educators found it difficult to unlearn old habits and still embraced the essence of the medical model that is still heavily reliant on educating students with disabilities. Similarly, Makanya (2015) agrees that teachers tend to lack expertise when it comes to teaching students with disabilities and prefer to have referrals from psychologists and occupational therapists. Many teachers still hold on to the attitudes that LSEN belong in special schools as they are not trained in

inclusive education. This is shown by Ntombela (2006) who highlights the pressure that teachers may endure from teaching students with disabilities as most teachers are trained in general teaching methods but believe that assistance must be afforded to people to break down barriers that exist in the system, in order to unlearn old ways of thinking and embrace new ways of doing things.

In another study by Ntombela (2011), he highlights the limited knowledge of the EWP6 policy. When the policy was introduced, no intervention in the form of workshops or training took place resulting in limited understanding of how these strategies would work. Currently TVET colleges are in the same position and are ill-equipped as to how to implement EWP6. The DHET has the expectation that LSEN should be integrated with normal students; however, little knowledge exists on how to accommodate them in a mainstream classroom. Even though barriers may be mild to severe, it is imperative that the understanding is dependent on the type of barrier or special need that presents in a class. Lecturers must receive adequate training and should constantly be up-skilled to deal with any issue that may arise. Continuous professional development is the most important catalyst in promoting fully competent lecturers especially to serve in TVET colleges, in order to respond to the constantly changing landscape.

3.11.10 Disabilities and Resource Centres

Fully resourced centres play a pivotal role in the success of students with disabilities. The DOE (2005) policy on Conceptual and Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of Inclusive Education: Special Schools as Resource Centres suggests a radical transformation of current thinking and new ways that are consistent with SSRCs and EWP6. Suggestions highlight the importance of a new framework and recommend that they become support bases, with full-service and ordinary schools and district teams.

The EWP6 makes the following suggestions:

- The inclusion of students with disabilities in all areas of educational practices, and the subsequent moving away from using disabilities to separate students;
- The provision of education should be based on what is best needed to support them;

- Providing support for students through full-service schools which possess the necessary capacity to be able to assist the learner with particular disabilities;
- Provision of direction of how the initial facilities will be arranged and how additional resources will be attained;
- How full-service, ordinary schools will incorporate students with disabilities with an indication of how they will be identified and assessed;
- Ensuring that difficulties will be alleviated through the introduction of strategies and interventions to assist teachers to cope with diversity of learning;
- The provision of clear direction for the education support system; and
- Clear indicators on how disabled students should be identified and served by current special schools on site and be a resource for schools and teachers in the area (DOE, 2005).

However, there remains a lack in clarity and an ambiguity around EWP6 that has prevented the implementation of these strategies effectively.

3.12 LECTURER COMPETENCE IN DEALING WITH STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Using an interpretive paradigm, qualitative data was generated over a period of 12 months from six lecturers who were teaching students with disabilities. Ngubane-Mokiwa and Khoza (2016) investigated lecturers' experiences of teaching STEM to students with disabilities and used a case study of two TVET colleges to ascertain how technology is being used in vocational training. Ngubane-Mokiwa and Khoza (2016) posit that in teaching subjects of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics, the design is such that students and teachers possess similar physical abilities that would enable them to write formulas, draw diagrams and be proficient in the handling of scientific apparatus to physically engage in scientific experiments.

In the apartheid years, teachers were trained differently. Training took place according to race, which contributes to the issue of some teachers having experience in teaching students with disabilities and some with general qualifications to teach. Ngubane-Mokiwa and Khoza (2016) assert that the problem is even greater in TVET colleges. With the introduction of technology which would resolve some problems in TVET colleges, the question arises around the competence of lecturers.

The findings of the study exposed a serious deficit of technological knowledge from lecturers in these programmes, especially with regards to teaching approaches and resources (Ngubane-Mokiwa & Khoza, 2016). This finding led to the conclusion that LSEN are not being technologically supported, with the same findings regarding pedagogical knowledge. The suggestion from Ngubane-Mokiwa and Khoza (2016) is that the lecturers could not teach across the three main approaches which is learner-centred, teacher-centred and content-centred avenues. They further identified that what was even more confusing for the lecturers was the use of two different types of curricula, performance curriculum and competence curriculum simultaneously. Ngubane-Mokiwa and Khoza (2016) posit that it will always be difficult for teachers if they continue to work with these two curricula, because the competence curriculum trajectory is horizontal and is driven by learning outcomes, while the performance curriculum is driven by subject content and follows a vertical approach. They concluded that it would remain a difficult task to offer support to LSEN, if they did not possess pedagogical knowledge, technological knowledge and content knowledge as the two curricula (performance and competence) are dependent on these three pedagogical approaches.

Ngubane-Mokiwa and Khoza (2016) place emphasis on the White Paper for Post Schooling Training where TVET institutions were highlighted, by Dr Blade Nzimande, The Minister of Higher Education and Training in 2013. The policy (DHET, 2013) highlights pertinent aspects stipulating that:

The DHET'S highest priority is to strengthen and expand the public TVET colleges and turn them into attractive institutions of choice for school leavers. Key objectives in strengthening colleges include improving their management and governance, developing the quality of teaching and learning, increasing their responsiveness to local labour markets, improving student support services and developing their infrastructure.

The Kuching Declaration states that:

Access to high quality education is a fundamental right to all. In times of global vulnerability, issues such as sustainability, health, peace, poverty alleviation, gender equity and biodiversity conservation need to be at the forefront of thinking, planning and actions related to strengthening STEM

education. While the relative balance and emphasis of these disciplines varies around the world, it is the interrelatedness and combination of these that will propel progress.

3.13 TEACHERS AS AGENTS OF CHANGE

Pantić and Florian (2015) argue that the preparation of teachers as agents of change in order to promote inclusion and social justice requires a sense of clarity, justifiably about what knowledge teachers need, believe and do and how they will articulate their agency as teachers when exercising this approach. While some agreement exists around the efficacy regarding values, skills and knowledge to engage with diverse groups of students, there is little knowledge surrounding development, how they are enacted and sustained, including any evidence of how this will be carried through in various teaching contexts and environments.

Nevertheless national standards often reflect the specifications that are imperative for the competencies that teachers must have, to achieve their status as teachers. Pantić and Florian (2015) provide a comprehensive list of competencies that includes:

- Theory, practical, knowledge and skills integration (Donnelly & Watkins 2011; Korthagen 2001) ;
- the skill to develop inclusive pedagogy((Blanton, Pugach & Florian 2011; Florian & Linklater 2010) ;
- Attitudes and skills which are collaborative (Frost 2012; Nevin, Thousand and Villa 2009);
- The recognition of the importance of the environment at home and working with families who are diverse(Hornby 2010; Scorgio 2010,);
- How the effects of a broader comprehension of change in education has affects within the various contexts of exclusion and disadvantages(Slee 2010; Zeichner 2009);
- Improving outcomes of learning through relationship building(Cornelius-White 2007; Donnelly & Watkins 2011; Hattie 2009; Wubbels & Brekelmans 2005);
- the capacity for inquiry and reflection (Liston & Zeichner 1990; Zeichner 2009);

- commitment to the education for all and the accounting of moral values (Carr 2003; Kim & Rouse 2011; Pantić & Wubbels 2012).

Teachers who are committed to social justice, inclusion and equality for all must be able to work towards building appropriate professional relationships with their students to enable a quick response which is adequate for their diverse needs (Pantić & Florian, 2015). Agency encompasses a sense of purpose, competence, autonomy and reflexivity.

Pantić and Florian (2015) developed a model of teaching agency for social justice in applying these aspects of human agency explaining:

- Sense of purpose in teachers' beliefs regarding their roles as agents and understanding of social justice;
- Competent teachers' practices addressing the issues of underachievement and exclusion of some students;
- Autonomous teachers' perceptions of the environment and context-embedded interactions with others; and
- Reflexivity teachers' capacity to analyse and evaluate their institutional settings and practices.

Pantić and Florian (2015) emphasise the importance of recognising the diverse contexts in which teachers work and the structural aspects of schooling that can hinder inclusive practices. They argue that a well-designed framework is necessary to capture evidence of practices aligned with the inclusive pedagogical approach. This approach unites teachers who believe in their ability to support all children and the potential of all children to learn, along with their knowledge of socio-cultural perspectives on learning and relevant theoretical, policy and legislative issues.

Florian (2012) agrees that due to the diversity of students, today's classrooms demand more inclusive approaches for which many teachers feel unprepared. The inclusive practice project which was specifically devised for teacher reform resulted in an innovative approach. This will prepare teachers to enter the profession knowing the key strategies and taking responsibility for cultural, linguistic and developmental diversity and inclusive practices in their classes.

Table 3.2 below highlights the fundamental areas for teachers entering a profession that has transformed drastically and requires expanded competence in a very diverse classroom.

Table 3.2: Inclusive pedagogical approach

Underlying assumptions about what teachers should know, believe and do	Actions for reforming initial teacher education	Key challenges within the broader structures of schooling
Difference must be accounted for as an essential aspect of human development in any conceptualisation of learning (knowing)	Replacing deterministic views of ability with a concept of 'transformability'	'Bell-curve' thinking and notions of fixed ability still underpin the structure of schooling
Teachers must believe (can be convinced) that they are qualified and capable of teaching all children (believing)	Demonstrating how the difficulties students experience in learning can be considered dilemmas for teaching rather than problems within students	The identification of difficulties in learning and the associated focus on what the learner cannot do often puts a ceiling on learning and achievement
The profession must develop creative new ways of working with others (doing)	Modelling new creative ways of working with and through others	Changing the way we think about inclusion (from 'most' and 'some' to everybody)

Source: Florian (2015)

Teachers face several challenges in the workplace. The practice of inclusive education and mainstream classes add another dimension to the transformational aspects taking place in institutions. In preparing teachers the idea is to help them understand how their interactions with their colleagues and other agents contribute to the transformation and reproduction within their structural workplace. Combining the elements of the framework for progressive inclusive pedagogy in action together with the proposed model of teacher agency culminates in new possibilities for further knowledge generation (Pantić & Florian, 2015).

This will assist to systematically prepare educators for the relational requirements framing inclusive practices for development. "While working collaboratively with others is an integral part of the inclusive pedagogical approach, the model of teacher agency situates teacher competence for inclusive practice within the broader domains of teacher agency" (Pantić & Florian, 2015:344). Table 3.3 highlights the perspectives of teacher agency and inclusive pedagogical practices.

Table 3.3: Aspects of teacher agency and inclusive pedagogical practices

Aspects of teacher agency	Inclusive practice
Purpose (commitment, motivation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • teachers' perceptions of their moral roles, sense of identity and motivation as agents of social justice • teachers' own understanding of social justice
Competence (Inclusive Pedagogy as 'core' expertise)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • teachers' understanding of broader social forces that influence schooling and (micro-)political competence • teachers' practice of inclusive pedagogy, including: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Replacing deterministic views of ability with a concept of 'transformability' 2. Demonstrating how the difficulties students experience in learning can be considered dilemmas for teaching rather than problems within students 3. Modelling new creative ways of working with and through others
Autonomy (individual and collective efficacy and agency, relationships and contextual factors)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • teachers' beliefs about individual and collective efficacy • levels of confidence, control and resilience • collaboration and collective agency for social justice • levels of power and trust in teachers' relationships • perceptions of school cultures and the principal's leadership • perceptions of teachers' roles as school and system developers and participation in decision-making • broader education policy and socio-cultural contexts
Reflexivity (reflexive monitoring of own action and social contexts)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • teachers' capacity to articulate practical professional knowledge and justify actions • teachers' meaning-making of the structures and cultures in their schools as sites for social transformation • critical and open reflection on their assumptions, practices and exploration of alternatives

Source: Pantić (2015:344)

Research by Hove and Phasha (2024) favours a range of quality support for students with disabilities. The author expresses that South African schools in line with the policy of inclusion accommodate a diverse range of learners. Hove and Phasha (2024) relays that as much as accommodation of learners do take place, there is not much information on how the students are supported.

Mainstreaming has become a major factor that has firmly entrenched itself in the academic world although not everybody is open to the prospects of having mixed classes. However full-service institutions advocate for the mainstreaming of students with disabilities much to the criticism of many who believe it just will not work. However, the ILO has made a critical call for non-disabled people to train alongside disabled people. This recommendation is clearly supported in the ILO Vocational

Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons Convention, 1983, no. 159) and ILO Vocational Rehabilitation (Disabled) Recommendation, 1955 (no. 99) (ILO, 2017). The ILO purposefully calls for authorities that are competent in the provision of vocational services to persons with disabilities, including the necessary adaptations and the use of general services where this is appropriate and a possible alternative (ILO, 2017). The governing body of the ILO gives credence to the fundamental issues of skills development of people with disabilities, for access to labour, and more importantly for the inclusion in programmes that offer employment promotion and mainstream training (ILO, 2017).

The promulgation of the many acts adopted since the Salamanca Conference has thus had many who advocate for the inclusion of students with disabilities to be mainstreamed, but equally has its fair share of criticism.

3.14 SPECIFIC LEARNING DIFFICULTIES

Figure 3.6 indicates a broad spectrum of learning disabilities and difficulties of which staff are expected to be aware of in order to deal with students' needs.

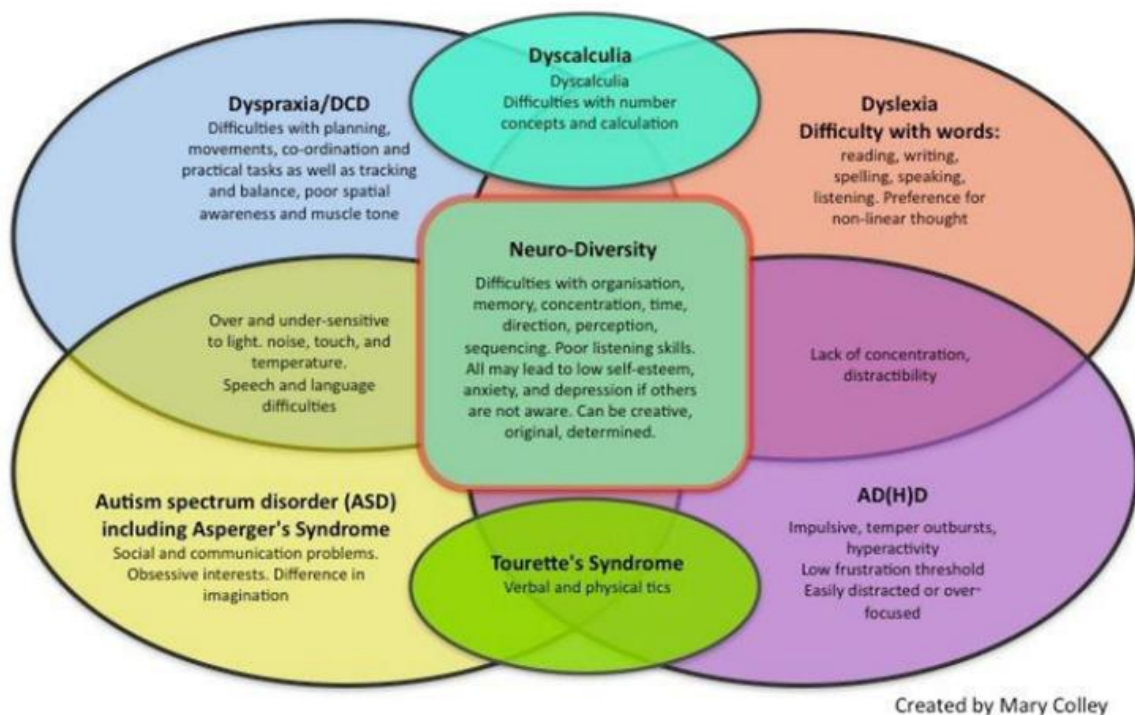


Figure 3.6: Specific learning difficulties

Source: Colley (2021)

However, the question arises whether all of these disabilities can be accommodated in a mainstream classroom. Irrespective of the type of disabilities or difficulties identified in a student it is pivotal and mandated by law to accept all students and to deal with all individual cases. This is evidenced in EWP6 which provides a clear directive that educational institutions are obliged to provide equal education for all students, including the youth who have disabilities. However Figure 3.6 conveys the clear challenges that may be presented in a classroom regarding the number of learning disabilities that exist and the number of problems that could arise in a single mainstream classroom.

The UN CPRD affirms the importance of accommodating all people with disabilities, to ensure that equality and freedom is equally enjoyed by everyone, and where necessary adaptations should be implemented so it allows people with disabilities to be included to enable them to exercise fairness and equality regarding their rights (UN, 2006). This initiates the argument on the readiness of lecturers to accommodate every student that enters their classrooms in terms of curriculum, classroom structures, support structures and the awareness of the presence of the student with a potential disability. From the perspective of inclusive education, this means that LSEN must be encouraged to actively engage during classes. It is about ensuring equality for all students and acknowledging their individual differences. This may prove challenging considering the possibility of disadvantaging students with no learning disabilities.

Since the end of apartheid in 1994, equality and human rights have been fundamental factors affecting their lives. The education of children with learning disabilities of every race, culture, gender and the varying degrees of academic ability put together in one classroom may help to heal the deep prejudices that permeated South Africans (Donohue & Bornman, 2015) In essence transformation became a necessity. The transformation outlined in EWP6 highlights changes in the schooling system. As a result, education must now include students with disabilities learning alongside their peers in the same age group. This integration aims to facilitate both

their intellectual and social development, with the support of their peers (Donohue & Bornman,2015).

Donohue and Bornman(2015) view inclusion specifically in South Africa from a human rights perspective, ensuring that the same opportunities are afforded to all students, providing them with the access to the same education to help them to become productive citizens. Political will and policy changes, unfortunately, do not always reflect the actual approach to managing learning disabilities in practice. The reality is evidenced by the lack of progress in policy implementation over the past decade (Donohue & Bornman, 2015).

South African activists and policymakers realised the importance of a fundamental change in how education was being administered. This called into effect the type of education that students with special needs were receiving. South African activists insisted on an equal and just education system that accommodated all students with or without disabilities, acknowledging diversity and social justice for all students. This was the call for mainstream education for all.

With the global focus being on inclusive education the DOE (2001) reveals that approximately 70% of school-going age LSEN are still in special schools. Much like what occurred during the pre-apartheid era, these students still remain separated from mainstream schooling, largely reducing any chance of their contribution to social or economic activities. What remains evident is that:

The struggle to achieve a condition of belonging in education by and for children with disabilities exposes the deep structure of social exclusion that is represented in and reproduced by schooling, Seeking inclusive education is undermined by a range of factors including the appropriation of the discourse inclusion by deeply conservative forces committed to sustaining exclusion and the ethic of competitive individualism that is the engine for education policy making and school level practices. While inclusive education and the establishment of belonging for the diverse range of students who seek enrolment and successful participation in school is a challenging ambition, it is a first order requirement for sustainable futures (SLEE, 2019:909).

In a qualitative study conducted by Khumalo (2019), a case study was used to establish the experiences of four TVET lecturers who taught students with visual disabilities. In generating the necessary data, the use of semi-structured interviews were used. Khumalo (2019) used the theory of Kolb which she used as a basis for the interpretation of the experiences encountered by the TVET lecturers. Three major findings were found to be the source of the problems within the system that prevented efficient delivery of lecturing. It was found that lecturers had never received any professional training in preparation for these students. Secondly, there were no resources for students with visual disabilities, and no support was received from the Department of Higher Education or the college management. The lecturers, however, embraced the challenge and found their own means of dealing with the challenges they experienced.

Besides visual disabilities, many students with hearing disabilities attend TVET colleges and struggle to cope in mainstream classes. Khumalo (2019) reveals that the study by Florian (2012) in Scotland showed that teachers in preparation to include students with disabilities in mainstream classes displayed reluctance and an unsympathetic attitude towards these students. They were not in support of having students with disabilities in their classrooms as they felt this would interfere with normal students and furthermore felt that they had not been trained to embrace students with disabilities. Currently TVET colleges still experience the same issues. A student with visual disabilities has no access to Braille; a student with hearing disabilities is left to find their own ways of coping in class. Identifying many other special needs is problematic as students are reluctant to ask for assistance.

3.15 INTERNATIONAL AND DOMESTIC POLICY AND PRACTICES, MODELS, THEORIES AND RESEARCH

Scientific together with 'grey' literature which makes reference to information produced outside the bounds of traditional distribution and publishing channels may include working papers, policy literature, urban plans and government documents. Currently research on barriers to learning and special needs within TVET colleges remains scarce. Much of the research has been conducted around schools and universities, with little focus on TVET institutions, thereby creating a critical gap in this area. This research gap warrants serious introspection by TVET colleges with a

focus on the experiences of lecturers regarding the inclusion of students with learning disabilities in mainstream classes, and how these students with special needs are understood, accommodated and have their needs adequately addressed. This section seeks to highlight international and domestic policy and practices, models, theories and research in this field.

3.15.1 International Experience

Globally, interest in inclusive education has sparked a wave of reform in policy and strategic imperatives as countries have worked towards adding value and meaning to the lives of people who were previously marginalised. The focus, especially on disability-inclusive vocational training has been advanced by the UNCRRPD (2006), wherein Article 24 requires that societies and their governments are now required to ensure that persons with disabilities have equal access to vocational training, adult education, lifelong learning and tertiary education without any discrimination. Article 27 of the Convention further highlights the importance of effective access into technical and vocational guidance programmes and placement and continuing vocational training.

The ILO (2017) policy briefly mentions some global initiatives for inclusive education underscoring the fundamental investment and commitment of countries in creating an equal platform for people with disabilities. Among these countries are:

- *Australia*

Policies in Australia have been revised in an effort to monitor the effectiveness of plans in promoting people with disabilities within TVET institutions. In a recent policy document, Equity Blueprint 2011-2016 (National VET Equity Advisory Council, 2011), a number of reforms have been highlighted which recommend the vocational education and training sector's support of students with disabilities including those who were previously disadvantaged.

- *Bangladesh*

The National Skills Development Policy (NSDP) of 2011 that was formulated by the National Government of Bangladesh with assistance from the ILO provides recommendations on disability inclusion. This was part of a strategy in conjunction

with the Technical Vocational Education and Training Reform Project that was supported by the European Union (EU). The purpose of a National Strategy by the NSDP aimed to provide the necessary support in formulating the strategic direction for mainstreaming of people with disabilities in TVET institutions. The Department of Technical Education in Bangladesh implemented a pilot project in TVET institutions for mainstreaming disability issues that eventually led to the development of guidelines for inclusion within these institutions and the training of 140 vice principals on inclusive education? (ILO, 2017).

- *Ethiopia*

National guidelines by the Federal TVET Agency for the inclusion of people with disabilities were prepared together with the Ethiopian Centre for Disability and Development (ECDD). Through these guidelines, trainees with disabilities are now admitted in all regions in Ethiopia that comprises 35 skills training centres. The ECDD has been instrumental in capacity building of five TVET institutions and fosters stronger ties between TVET colleges and the labour markets in the inclusion of persons with disabilities (ILO, 2017).

- *India*

The Skills Council for Persons with Disability which involves the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), and together with the National Skills Development Corporation places its emphasis on adequate standards and relevant industry-based skills training for persons with disabilities and allows employers to have an influence in the planning of policy where employment is provided to persons with disabilities. Article 19 in the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act (2016), further endeavours to offer institutional programmes and schemes that include loans at concessionary rates in order to support persons with disabilities through employment, vocational education and training, and all other mainstream vocational programmes both formal and informal (ILO, 2017)

- *Zambia*

In an effort to create a conducive and an inclusive environment, Zambia, under an ILO project worked towards fostering a TVET learning environment for persons with disabilities that involved awareness and training on disability issues being organised for teachers, support staff, managers and instructors for selected colleges in the country. This approach allowed participants to see how society's barriers disabled people and to further identify how these barriers may be overcome (ILO, 2017).

3.15.2 Inclusive Education in South Africa

Inclusive education has become an important and relevant subject for discussion from a human rights and social justice perspective, more over in the interest of creating an equitable system of access into education and training. Although there is currently legislation that favours and places a more critical emphasis on how schools should deal with disabilities, TVET colleges are still struggling on how the implementation of inclusive education should be instituted. This section provides an overview of inclusive education in South Africa.

3.15.2.1 Overview of legislation and programmes on inclusive education in South Africa

Some of the legislation that mainstreams inclusive education are the Skills Development Act (Act No. 97 of 1998), the Skills Development Levies Act of 1999 and the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act (Act. No. 4 of 2000), together with the White Paper on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities of 2015. This legislation creates a comprehensive framework for the support of previously disadvantaged and disabled people of South Africa. The National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS, 2005) developed by the Department of Labour aimed at the transformation of education and training through increased access to training, the improvement in the quality of training, and the redress of inequalities (ILO, 2017).

In understanding and conceptualising disability in South Africa, a background into the history of past practices is important.

3.15.2.2 Inclusive education in South African before democracy: pre-1994 apartheid era

During the apartheid era, education in South Africa was a fragmented system with education departments being divided along racial lines into 18 education departments. While some departments had policies others had no policies, especially when it came to special needs students. During the 1970s, special schools were opened for students with autism and/or severe mental disabilities. However, poor communities including black disabled learners at pre-schools were further discriminated against with having no access to schooling at all (Ryan, 2010). The segregation according to special needs, race and disability further served to reinforce harsher discrimination for disabled learners (Ryan, 2010).

During the 1970s, a move was made to open special schools for students who were severely handicapped, autistic or had minimal brain function (Ryan, 2010). However, students that fell into these categories were further segregated and placed in different classes depending on their race and culture (Ryan, 2010). According to Ryan (2010:114), “these special schools were hugely expensive to run and by segregating and categorising learners according to their race and disability, these schools also encouraged discrimination”.

Due to the many types of disabilities among learners, intelligence quotient tests were introduced and conducted on students who presented with milder disabilities than those listed above. Where students showed they required extra resources to assist in their learning, special education classes within mainstream schools were created. This, however, led to their being labelled by their peers as being in the ‘stupid’ class. Inevitably, this had an adverse effect on their self-esteem and their future learning (Ryan, 2010).

3.15.2.3 Inclusive education in South African during democracy: post-1994 era.

With the change in leadership and government in 1994, transformation of the education sector received a much-needed boost. This was done to ensure that the system accommodated students in full-service places of education, and to meet the ideals of an inclusive system (Ryan, 2010). Furthermore, “learners with special educational needs or learning barriers such as physical impairments, socio-

economic deprivation, inadequate support services, and language barriers) are being included in mainstream classes” (Ryan, 2010:115). Fernandez– Batanero et al (2022) expound on the need for support throughout the educational process, as it is crucial especially during the transitioning from secondary to higher education and must be carried out through the establishing of transition strategies.

Notwithstanding the positive change, South African institutions still struggle with how LSEN should be included and assisted. Mutanga (2017) underscores the crisis in redressing past inequalities, and the challenges that remain in transforming formal rights on paper into real rights of individuals in an inclusive system. The scholar asserts that the SAHE system continue to perpetuate social injustices and structural inequalities.

Difficulties around access and participation are still being experienced by students with disabilities a decade after the signing of and ratification of the UNCRPD (Mutanga, 2017). This ironically is a human rights treaty and is intended to protect “the rights and dignity of people with disabilities” (Mutanga, 2017:143). Similarly, Tugli (2013) postulates participation rates as being low in higher education institutions because there is little support by the institution, due to issues of disability not being an area that is prioritised by most of the higher education institutions, coupled with a significant lack of interest from the political domain.

3.16 INCLUSION AND DISABILITY IN SOUTH AFRICA

In South Africa, barriers to learning are addressed in EWP6 (DOE, 2001). The Minister of Education, Professor Kader Asmal, at the time, acknowledged the significance and relevance of this paper and regarded EWP6 as a “post-apartheid landmark policy” that broke all connections with the past and gave people with disabilities the valued recognition they deserved in their continued contribution to society (DOE, 2001). He reiterated, however, that this must not be done in isolation, hence the purpose of the policy. Professor Asmal, was cognisant of the complexity and challenges of inclusion and expressed his personal views that he was:

... also deeply aware of the anxieties that many educators, lecturers, parents and learners hold about our inclusion proposals for learners with special education needs, they fear the many challenges that may come with inclusion

of teaching, communication, costs, stereotyping and the safety of learners- that can be righted only by further professional and physical resources development, information dissemination and *advocacy* (DOE, 2001:3)

The policies fundamental purpose was to work towards the building of an inclusive education and training system that argues specifically for the accommodation of all students within a single mainstream education system. This framework was envisioned as a means of eliminating previous exclusionary practices that separated students into special schools for those with disabilities and normal schools for normal students. Furthermore, emphasised in the policy is support in the form of training, disability support teams, resources and additional training for teachers.

The EWP6 (DOE, 2001) requires an inclusive education and training system that is able to meet the needs of not only those that have mental, physical and neurological impairments but also those, who, through socio-economic deprivation and illness experience difficulties in education. (OECD, 2008). Therefore, the OECD (2008:261) states that:

South Africa gives “educational inclusion” a much broader meaning than simply “access to schooling for persons with disabilities”. It is part of a fundamental shift away from the segregated education system of the apartheid period towards the principle of social inclusion and reflects the country’s determination to promote equality and prevent any form of discrimination – whether it be on the basis of race, gender, language, disability or poverty – in all spheres of life. Beyond mere access to education and breaking the cycle of poverty, inclusive education is part of the nation’s promotion of diversity, citizenship and economic and social wellbeing.

However, even though there are policy guidelines in place, the Minister of Higher Education Dr Blade Nzimande admitted at the launch of the South African White Paper on Post-School Education in January 2014, that there is currently no national policy on disability that guides education and training. On 11 May 2017, in a televised interview, Dr Blade Nzimande made special reference to Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges lacking both in policies and the necessary capacity to deal with staff and the ability to accommodate students with disabilities. He further argued that even though there are policies, guidelines and

national conventions, this has done little to create an integrated post-school education system as the current system remains fragmented and separate when it considers existing transformation and the diversity of programmes within institutions. TVET colleges tend to work according to individual needs and have varied levels of commitment towards the allocation of resources for disabled students. Dr Nzimande concurs that even though a bursary scheme was introduced in 2008 through the National Skills Fund (NSF) to complement funding from the Department of Labour, this remained underutilised. This sparks concern, considering the issues of inequalities, regarding access and redress in education that remain an extremely urgent matter that requires immediate attention.

The year 2024 has brought much criticism for its reduction in NSFAS to TVET Colleges. TVET colleges receive funding for infrastructure. Institutions find it difficult to report the enrolment of students with disabilities due to students not indicating their disability status on registration forms for fear of stigmatisation. This negates the ability to report cases for additional support.

The South African White Paper on Post-School Education and Training issued by the DHET (2014) seeks to compel all higher education institutions to address issues of disability and to create higher levels of awareness and has set a target to meet these objectives by 2030.

Some of the targets set by the South African White Paper on Post-School Education and Training is to turn TVET colleges into attractive institutions of choice for school leavers. To strengthen the image of the colleges, it is envisaged that partnerships with employers will be prioritised. This will allow access to opportunities in the workplace and would improve opportunities for industry experience for students. Opportunities will be created for students for work placement, since the goals of TVET colleges are to prepare students for the job market. SETAs will also play a critical role in establishing links between colleges and industry. Employers can play a pivotal role in advising colleges around issues of current market demands and the realigning of a curriculum that is market-responsive. This would contribute to creating employment for TVET students, thus making them more marketable.

Curricula within TVET institutions are currently regarded as complex in their administration, difficult for both the students and their parents to understand and not

adequately quality-assured. A review of the curriculum will be instituted which is one that will respond to local labour demands. This will be done with the assistance of unions, employers, colleges and the Department of Basic Education. Fundamental articulation to other post-school programmes will be included in the review to expand opportunities for students; however, there is still no national policy to guide post-school education on disability in the post-school domain and training institutions (DHET, 2013).

The White Paper for Post-School Education and Training places much emphasis on the issue of increased access of students with special needs. Within the education arena, The Adult Basic Education and Training Act (2000), the South African Schools Act (1996), the FET Act (1998) and the Higher Education Act (1997) have mandated that educational institutions should ensure that students with special needs have access to education (DHET, 2013) The focus of the EWP6 (DOE, 2001) is for higher education institutions to improve access by developing appropriate institutional plans.

3.17 FULL-SERVICE SCHOOLS IN SOUTH AFRICA

Full-Service Schools (FSS) are defined as “mainstream education institutions that provide quality education to all learners and students by supplying the full range of learning in an equitable manner” (DOE, 2005:8) The fundamental purpose of FSS is the commitment to always strive towards achieving access, social justice in education, quality and equity (DOE, 2005). The focus of FFS is on inclusion. Its main objectives revolve around the ability to transform institutions into places where challenges can be addressed and barriers identified to ensure that learning can occur. The focus on the accessibility of schools remains a primary objective so that all learners can attend and achieve their full potential.

In addressing the purpose of full-service places of education the DOE (2001) refers to inclusive education as envisaged in EWP6, as encompassing and acknowledging the following aspects:

- All children and youth can learn, and they need support.

- Accepting and respecting that all students are different in some way and have different learning needs that are equally valued and part of the normal human experience.
- Enabling the structures, systems and learning methodologies to meet the needs of all students.
- Maximising the participation of all students in the culture and curricula of educational institutions and minimising barriers that are uncovered.
- Empowering all students by focusing on their individual strengths with a view to enabling these students to participate effectively and equally in the learning process.

The above purpose forms a critical aspect of the vision for inclusive education so that all students that are part of any education institution including TVET colleges are accommodated and supported as effectively and holistically as possible irrespective of their learning disability.

Even though EWP6 refers to FSS or colleges as those that should be fully equipped and supported in an effort to provide for the full range of learning needs, Makanya (2015) found that training remains inadequate, resulting in lecturers not having the necessary knowledge of how to properly assist or support these students. This was confirmed in a study by Ngubane-Mokiwa and Khoza (2016) that students with disabilities in TVET colleges are not supported technologically due to a lack of knowledge, resources and appropriate teaching methods.

In accepting this approach of inclusivity, it must be acknowledged that learners who are deemed vulnerable due to barriers to learning, including exclusion in South Africa have been historically referred to as LSEN which are those students that have disabilities and impairments (Ryan, 2010). These students currently experience a tremendous number of challenges in mainstream classes. The researcher has noted during the course of lecturing, students who can barely read, write or understand the constructs of simple sentences. Many are teased or laughed at and this has a devastating effect on their morale. They rarely contribute in class after these episodes. Quite often, the researcher overhears that the content is too difficult to understand or that the lesson is proceeding at an extremely fast pace. Language is

also a critical factor and remains problematic as many learners' struggle with the language of instruction which is English. Most students speak indigenous languages.

This makes group work, oral exercises, role plays and quizzes, extremely difficult as LSEN offer minimal contributions to these exercises or simply refuse to participate. Normal students are vocal about not wanting students with disabilities in their groups to conduct class exercises, exacerbating issues of isolation. Students very often complain that the lessons are far too difficult to understand and often whisper to their classmates asking them to explain what has just been taught. This creates some frustration among the normal learners, who feel like they are being disturbed.

Much like South Africa, a study in East Africa showed similar problems and Ebuenyi et al. (2018) agree that teaching skills remain inadequate with stringent admission requirements combined with rigid TVET curricula. They further bring into focus school policies which are unclear, a lack of support specialists, propounding the structural barriers for the inclusion of persons exhibiting mental disabilities.

The TVET programmes not only focus on the acquisition of vocational skills but comprise formal education as well. Observations revealed that those students with mental and intellectual disabilities were unable to meet the requirements of TVET programmes (Ebuenyi et al., 2018)

Other critical areas like assessment strategies are standardised for the normal student placing vulnerable learners in an unfair position. Oral exercises are poorly delivered, written work and tests have dismal performance levels, resulting in many failing or dropping out of the system. Another issue is the physical design of classrooms and the overcrowded setting making it extremely difficult for the manoeuvring of students within the classroom or the ability of the educator to get to the student to provide individual attention. This causes embarrassing, awkward situations for them, affecting their confidence levels.

3.18 LECTURERS AND DISABILITIES

Mayat and Amosun (2011) perceived a lack of awareness by lecturers in supporting students with disabilities once they are registered for any programme at their TVET colleges. Furthermore, the study revealed that some lecturers had significant reservations regarding whether or not learning outcomes would be reached by these

students. Makanya (2015) argues that lecturers are not professionally trained to deal with LSEN and that TVET college's offers minimal support to lecturers in this regard. He further highlights the plight of lecturers in assisting students with disabilities due to the said lack of knowledge and the dire need for specific training in this area to better accommodate and assist students optimally. Mudau (2018) concurs that when training was offered to lecturers for the NC (V) curriculum, the main focus was on delivery of the curriculum with little emphasis on inclusive assessment practices. Participants highlighted that they were unable to support students since they were not trained in the skills needed to teach LSEN (Mudau, 2018).

3.19 SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Support for students with disabilities may occur through diverse means. In interviewing 30 students within a higher education institution, Matshediso (2010) found that some students had positive experiences with lecturers while others reported negative ones. The support received by these students came from multiple academic and non-academic sources including their families and friends. It is important to note that students with disabilities reported that some academic staff were positive in their interactions with students.

Varcoe and Boyle (2013) revealed that teacher attitudes were also influenced by those who had the relevant resources to teach effectively. The availability of resources within classrooms thus indicates the need to ensure that TVET college lecturers are fully enabled to assist and support students by providing them with adequately resourced centres. It must be noted that resources combined with relevant, adequate training will have a positive effect both on teacher attitudes and students.

3.20 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter has provided a global view of literature attained on inclusive education. Even though there is some literature available, all indications point to a lack of critical literature from within higher education institutions especially for TVET colleges. TVET colleges seem to lag behind other tertiary institutions, considering the implementation of inclusive practices. Current literature indicates that even though

there is an awareness of students with special needs within the system, there is an inability to implement strategies without concrete policies in place.

The next chapter presents a comprehensive and in-depth look at the research paradigm and design application for this study.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The previous chapter integrates critical literature around inclusivity and the mainstreaming of students with special learning needs in TVET classes. The current chapter encapsulates the research design and methodology utilising a qualitative approach within an interpretivist paradigm. A case study and a non-probability purposive sample procured the goal for the purpose of this study. The primary focus of these methods is in ensuring that questions are answered adequately and succinctly through the use of an in-depth exploration of the subjective experiences of Lecturers in mainstream classes with students who may exhibit special learning needs. Interviews, observations, field notes and a recorder were incorporated to glean the necessary information enveloping the purpose of the study. Notes assisted in the backing up of crucial information. The researcher endeavoured at all times to extract rich, detailed information.

4.1 RESEARCH APPROACH

The researcher adopted a qualitative approach as it allows an in-depth exploration of the study under investigation. Alam et al (2024) describes qualitative research as a methodical approach which is used in humanities, social sciences and other domains and sub domains for purposes of investigation and to comprehend patterns, underlying meanings, the delicateness of the human experience, occurrences and actions. This study finds that the qualitative approach is suitable as it takes place in a natural setting, which are the TVET colleges, and therefore aims to understand the experiences of lecturers in their natural settings using an interpretive research paradigm.

4.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM

An interpretivist paradigm is employed to investigate the subjective experiences of TVET lecturers in respect of students living with disabilities in a classroom context in TVET colleges of KwaZulu-Natal. In interpreting subjective experiences, one must note that these experiences are based on personal feelings and beliefs as opposed to facts. Thanh and Thanh (2015) underscore the importance of using an interpretivist paradigm to understand the perceptions of individuals and to explore their experiences in an effort to uncover their reality. This method is used in

qualitative designs as the reliance is on the actual reality of the individual, rather than statistics. Finally, an interpretivist paradigm has its focus on what human beings have to say within the realm of their experiences and serves the purpose of this investigation as lecturers' experiences in supporting students with disabilities will be explored.

4.2 3 RESEARCH DESIGN

A case study design was used. Heale and Twycross (2018) as a systematic, intensive investigation of a group, single individual, community or a unit where in-depth data related to several variables is examined. Yin (2015) further explains that a case study may be explanatory, exploratory, descriptive, multiple or single. A case study in this instance explores the dynamics that occur within specific classroom environments in a real-life situation. Creswell (2012) further mentions that this approach may involve multiple sources of information including interviews, observations, documents, reports and audiovisual material. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) concur that a case study may be used due its uniqueness or to elucidate an issue. This study sought to explore the experiences of senior managers, campus managers and lecturers on three campuses within the uMgungundlovu district of KwaZulu-Natal in order to provide an integral view of the dynamics of supporting students with disabilities within mainstream classrooms in TVET colleges, thus making the case study approach a suitable choice.

4.3 POPULATION AND SAMPLING

Probability and non-probability sampling are widely used in social sciences research. Wisniewski et al (2020:121) characterizes probability sampling as a process of drawing samples using random selection, emphasising that every element of the population has a 'known nonzero inclusion probability'. Non probability sampling according to Wisniewski et al (2020:121) entails an arbitrary 'selection of elements into the sample' for which the probabilities of inclusion may possibly be zero or unknown. Rai and Thapa (2015) further add that purposive sampling is also referred to as selective or subjective sampling, judgemental, and relies on the judgement of the researcher for the selection of units (eg.;cases/organisation, pieces of data and events).

A non-probability sampling method was utilized for this study. This allowed the researcher to use her own judgement when selecting members of the population that represent certain characteristics that are pertinent to the study. Non-probability sampling techniques include quota sampling, convenience sampling, purposive sampling, heterogeneity sampling, modal instance sampling, self-selection sampling and expert and snowball sampling. This study focused on purposive sampling.

4.3.1 Purposive Sampling

Purposive or convenience sampling was appropriate for this study as it allowed the researcher to select information-rich participants that are representative or informative to the topic at hand (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Campbell et al (2020) further assert that the reason for purposive sampling is to ensure a distinctly better matching of the chosen sample to the objectives and aims, thereby improving trustworthiness of data and results and improves rigour of the study. Researchers view sampling as a strategic choice as to who will be involved in the study and how and where the investigation needs to be conducted. The sample was drawn from a pool of information-rich sources that are the Senior managers, campus managers and lecturers within the government TVET college sector of South Africa.

4.3.2 Sample Size

The research sample included three (3) senior managers, three (3) TVET managers representing the respective campuses, and twelve (12) lecturers in the uMgungundlovu district of KwaZulu-Natal. This will reveal their lived experiences and contribute to the authenticity of the study. Interviews were conducted with the TVET Academic Head (Deputy Director) of the college, the Curriculum Division Manager and the Quality Assurance Manager who are responsible for the involvement of the choice and quality of courses implemented within colleges. These officials deal with the implementation of all policies and approval of programmes and courses within the college. This includes the inclusive policies and curriculum within TVET colleges. The interviewing of key stakeholders contributed to a varied and rich source of data to be drawn.

4.4 INSTRUMENTATION AND DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES

A Qualitative design proved suitable for the study allowing a thick, rich description of information (Creswell, 2012). Data collection proceeded through a series of semi-structured questionnaires via face to face interviews, class observations and field notes. A recorder was utilised to revert to when necessary. As the researcher my intention throughout the process was to place a deep level of concentration on the daily experiences of lecturers and issues they faced. Field notes assisted in elucidating areas providing structure and context to the experiences of mainstream issues. Class observations assisted the researcher in following the actual processes during lessons which augmented crucial information.

4.4.1 In-depth Interviews

The researcher conducted an in-depth investigation of the study using a semi-structured interview guide for face-to-face interviews. This allowed for greater flexibility and additional probing where necessary. Interviews are intended to elicit a deep understanding of participants' views and subjective experiences. According to Glesne (2006), meaningful interpretations can be made by analysing conversations which allow the researcher to get a deeper insight into participants' experiences. The interviews were recorded with the permission of participants so that a more thorough analysis of the recorded interviews can be done at a later stage. The voice recordings allowed the researcher to focus fully on the person being interviewed without any external distractions. Note taking during the interview process assisted the researcher in capturing additional information that might be useful for probing thus complimenting the process.

4.4.2 Observation

Mirhosseini, SA. (2020) acknowledges that the significance of qualitative data is 'contextual situatedness, deeming that evidence examined by qualitative researchers should reflect the ' nature of the phenomena within their actual setting'. Mirhosseini, SA. (2020) further explains that it is therefore incumbent that in a 'prototypical qualitative study' data may be obtained via participation within real life contexts and these events may be recorded. For purposes of this study the researcher ensured that a non-obtrusive observation occurs which ensures that the researcher may

record all activities as they occur. Field notes were taken so that non-verbal cues could be recorded.

Observations were conducted during classroom visits as a means of witnessing first-hand the experiences of TVET college lecturers in an inclusive classroom. To observe how students with disabilities are accommodated in a mainstream classroom context, the researcher used an observation checklist (Appendix F) and a recording device to be able to refer to later in order to make additional field notes where critical aspects may have been missed. The observation checklist allowed the researcher to record patterns and behaviour of students with disabilities in class, responses of these students and to glean how these students were accommodated in mainstream classes. This allowed the researcher to gather additional supportive evidence for the study.

4.5 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Bertram and Christiansen (2014) identify data analysis as consisting of three flows. These are data reduction, data display, drawing of conclusions and verifications. In identifying themes, Braun and Clarke (2006) recommend that a researcher should work in a systematic fashion proceeding through the entire data set and identifying interesting sub-themes that will form the basis of all major themes.

Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA) is widely used to analyse themes in social sciences research making it suitable for this study. Stemler (2000) posits that content analysis is not simply based on word counts but is a technique that is rich and meaningful particularly when it comes to its reliance on the categorising and coding of data. He agrees that this is a useful technique in the analysis of field notes that are taken during observations and interviews.

During the process of observation and interviews large amounts of data are collected. However, Schreier (2013) argues that unlike other methods that actually add to data, QCA is useful in that it aids in reducing the amount of information. In essence, the fundamental focus of QCA, according to Schreier (2013) is to focus on selected aspects and most importantly, on the research question.

Content analysis is also very useful for the examination of patterns and trends in documents. This would be useful in this study as Schreier (2013) concurs that this is a method that is both systematic and flexible.

Once the data set has been worked through, the researcher identifies major and minor codes or themes for analysis and interpretation. According to Rule and John (2011), a suggested coding option comprising open, axial and selective codes can be used to create labels, to make connections across categories and to connect information to reach viable and focused categories.

4.6 COMPARABILITY, CREDIBILITY, REFLEXIBILITY, RELIABILITY, TRANSPARENCY AND TRUSTWORTHINESS

A number of features are identified as fundamental to ensuring the rigour of a study. These are “transparency, maximum validity or credibility, maximum reliability or credibility, comparativeness and reflexivity” (Samaure & Given, 2012:2). Adler (2022) surmises that trustworthiness plays a huge role in the evaluation of the worth and integrity of a study. It is acknowledged by Gay et al. (2011:392) that trustworthiness is fundamental to ensure that the research is of a high quality. Credibility and trustworthiness of the data is also vital to ensure that results of the study can be verified.

Ensuring validity and credibility will show that the study is fairly and accurately represented (Samaure & Given, 2012). Credibility can be shown in a number of ways. One of them is member checking as a means of ensuring that information is accurately represented thereby ensuring credibility of data. Member checking in qualitative research is regarded as respondent validation or informant feedback. This technique is used to enhance and improve the internal validity, credibility and accuracy of the study.

The advantage of using member checking in a study cannot be underestimated as it prevents distortion of captured data, corrects what is perceived as incorrect information and prevents false information from being presented as authentic research. However, there are drawbacks when using member checking as the respondent may refuse to participate due to time constraints; respondents may also tell you exactly what they believe you want to hear; or they may change their minds

and ask for information considered to be vital to the study to be removed. Checking was done by taking back the information that was captured and interpreted to allow for members to check the authenticity of the captured information, thereby validating or rejecting it.

Other essential features like transparency refer to the clarity of the study when referring to the process followed. According to Samaure and Given (2012), this provides an audit trail and secondly checks as to whether the study is generalisable to other researchers, should they choose to replicate the studies in order to see if they have similar outcomes. It also allows the readers to ascertain whether the most appropriate method was chosen to answer the research question (Samaure & Given 2012)

Samaure and Given (2012) also indicate that comparison among the various cases is essential to ensure that a theory can be built that is representative of all voices in the study. They believe that it is valuable to make these comparisons so that it can be related to the broader research context.

In enhancing the integrity of data, McMillan and Schumacher (2010) refers to triangulation as a means of using multi-method strategies where the corroboration of data is undertaken through the use of multiple data sources. Thurmond (2001) defines triangulation as the combination of theoretical perspectives, data sources, data analysis methods, investigators or methodological approaches.

Bans-Akutey and Tiimub (2021) postulate that triangulation is an advantage as it helps to confirm findings ,especially when researchers use various methods for example qualitative and quantitative methods and is fortunate having findings from all methods pointing in a specific direction, consequently confirming results.The author contends that this confirms that work carried out is accurate .

However Bans-Akutey and Tiimub (2021) emphasises that using triangulation does not meant that data which has been collected cannot be questioned.

However, there are also distinct disadvantages of triangulation which include the difficulty of dealing with vast amounts of data, increased time involved, investigator bias and conflict regarding the theoretical framework used (Thurmond, 2001,).

Thurmond (2001), however, acknowledges that when triangulation is used appropriately it may contribute positively to research findings.

McMillan and Schumacher (2010) also expand on the importance of triangulation as a means of cross validation among sources to ensure credibility in an investigation. Merriam (2002) emphasises the importance of triangulation, peer examination, an audit trail and critiquing the researcher's position, which are required to ensure reliability, consistency and dependability. Finally, reflexivity by researchers shows what influence their presence may have had on the results of the study (Samaure & Given, 2012)

In this study, triangulation through interviews, rigorous peer review and transcript verification was undertaken to ensure that information remained authentic and unbiased. Peer review involved the evaluation of academic, scientific or other professionals within a relevant field provides valuable feedback for the researcher . This allows for credence and acceptance of the research study.

The next section expounds on the ethics required for research as it forms the cornerstone of a study to ensure integrity and compliance.

4.7 RESEARCH ETHICS

4.7.1 Protection from Harm

The researcher ensured that participants did not face any risk or harm during the research process. Risk or harm associated with the study may include any emotional distress, medical conditions, physical discomfort or embarrassment (Barrow & Khandhar, 2020) in line with the principle of beneficence (Creswell, 2012). Beneficence encompasses the welfare of participants in research ethics as a primary goal of any research study or clinical study.

The negative health risks associated with the novel Corona virus, also referred to as COVID-19, were be considered, particularly when collecting field notes and primary data from participants. The researcher had to take all the necessary precautions to limit the risk of exposure to COVID-19 for all participants.

4.7.2 Informed Consent

Creswell (2012) underscores the importance of gaining informed consent and consideration from all research participants. The researcher complied with all ethical guidelines and ensured that the consent of all stakeholders was obtained when conducting this investigation. Permission was obtained from the TVET colleges that the research was being undertaken as well as the written and signed consent from all research participants (Barrow & Khandhar, 2020).

4.7.3 Confidentiality and Anonymity

McMillan and Schumacher (2010) expound on the seriousness of confidentiality and anonymity. Participants were made aware that all information would remain confidential at all times and the researcher will ensure that no participant will be identified through the research. Pseudonyms were assigned for this purpose so that identities of participants were concealed for purposes of anonymity (Creswell, 2012).

4.7.4 Right to Withdraw

All rights were explained to research participants prior to commencement of the data collection. They will be informed of the right to withdraw at any time without penalty and without providing any reasons. Barrow and Khandhar (2020) concur that all participants should have the right to decide whether or not they want to partake in the study voluntarily. It is important that no coercion or exploitation in any form occurs whether explicit or implicit in violation of the rights of the participant.

4.7.5 Limiting Researcher Bias

Bias in this study can occur when the principal researcher allows their position to influence the outcome of the results (Creswell, 2012). This is risky as the outcomes of the study may be compromised by distorted results. In order to remain objective and limit bias, the researcher reviewed the findings with peers and consulted multiple sources to verify information. This ensured that my potential bias position as a lecturer within a TVET institution was minimised.

4.7.6 Risk Minimisation COVID-19

The ramifications of the novel Corona virus brought a new set of challenges for researchers and participants. It is vital to note that the protection of participants should be at the forefront of all interactions between the researcher and participants. The researcher ensured that a register was kept in place with details of all participants for identification purposes. This was done to assist in tracking members should the information be required for COVID 19 purposes. The register was confidential being duly and safely stored. A guide detailing COVID 19 rules which include social distancing, sanitising rules, cough etiquette, non-touching of the face during interviews, masks to be worn at all times was highlighted and issued to each participant before the set interview date. In addition, participants were asked in advance whether any co-morbidities or illnesses existed that could put them at risk during interviews. These participants could choose to withdraw or remain as part of the study if it was safe to do so. The researcher ensured that a medical /first aid kit with additional sanitisers, masks, spit screens (face shields), and gloves were always carried and made available where necessary. Before the start of each interview, the signed document that the contents of the COVID rules were understood and would be adhered to were collected and stored safely with the register. Due to the social distancing rules, two recorders were used to capture all information, one for the researcher and one for the participant to ensure that the required social distance was always maintained.

4.8 LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study examines the 'Experiences of technical vocational education and training college lecturers with students living with special learning needs in a mainstream classroom context in Kwa-Zulu Natal. Interviews, observations, and class visits were conducted to ascertain how interactions occur between lecturers and students. The researcher used information rich sources who include the senior management team who had knowledge of policies and inclusion issues , campus managers who oversee lecturers and lecturers who deal with students daily

This investigation was conducted in a single geographical area. Responses were limited to participants within the government TVET education sector. During the Covid pandemic severe restrictions had to be put in place forcing the researcher to

remain within a single area. This was beyond the control of the researcher. This was a contributory factor making it impossible to choose a larger sample for purposes of generalizing to other TVET colleges . Although the study was limited to a single area, the researcher believes that the findings might be instrumental in assisting the education sector to transform the shortcomings of inclusive education within the TVET college sector.

4.9 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In summarising chapter four the researcher took cognisance of a number of issues. A discussion of the design and methodology, type of approach and sampling had to be carefully considered. The crux of the chapter used a qualitative approach and employed an interpretivist paradigm focused on the ability to extract pertinent information. In addition interviews, observations and field notes were conducted with a sense of purpose, to ensure that questions for the study could be answered. Data collected were analysed, coded from which themes emerged. The next Chapter presents the findings of the research.

CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

“The greatest gift that you can give to others is the gift of unconditional love and acceptance”- Brian Tracy

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter presented the research design and methodology. The researcher collected field notes from participants in order to answer these research questions:

RQ1 What are the experiences of TVET college lecturers with students' with special learning needs in a mainstream classroom setting?

RQ2 How do TVET college lecturers accommodate students with special learning needs during teaching and learning?

RQ3 Which additional teaching methods and technical support should be provided for students with special learning needs to ensure success in classes?

RQ4 What strategies or interventions being undertaken to deal with students with special learning needs?

In this effort, the following chapter unpacks the findings and analysis of interviews conducted with the SMT, campus managers and lecturers who engage with students from the three campuses within the uMgungundlovu TVET college system. All primary data emanating from the interviews is presented in this chapter. The data emerged from the participants' perceived understanding of inclusive education as they explained their interactions with their students daily. From the interviews, the researcher identified codes, themes and sub-themes. Each interview took forty-five minutes to an hour. Pseudonyms were used for purposes of protection and anonymity.

Table 5.1 that shows the pseudonyms, the gender, highest qualifications, work experience, special needs training and hierarchical position of all participants.

Table 5.1: Details of the participants who were interviewed

Pseudonyms	Gender	Highest Qualification	Experience	Special Needs Training	Hierarchical Position
College Management					
SM1	Female	Master of Education	30	None	Senior Management
SM2	Male	Master of Education	33	None	Senior Management
SM3	Female	Master of Education	33	None	Senior Management
Campus 1					
CM1	Male	Bachelor of Education (Honours)	13	None	Campus Manager
L1	Female	Bachelor of Social Sciences	13	None	Lecturer
L2	Male	Bachelor of Science Postgraduate Certificate in Education	9	None	Lecturer
L3	Female	Bachelor of Accounting Science	11	None	Lecturer
L4	Female	Advanced Certificate in Education	14	None	Lecturer
Campus 2					
CM3	Male	Bachelor of Education (Honours)	30	None	Campus Manager
L5	Male	Bachelor of Education (Honours)	10	None	Lecturer
L6	Male	Master of Education	11	None	Lecturer
L7	Female	National Professional Diploma in education	8	None	Lecturer
L8	Male	National Professional Diploma in Education	16	None	Lecturer
Campus 3					
CM3	Male	National Professional Diploma in Education	13	None	Campus Manager
L9	Female	Bachelor of Arts	5	None	Lecturer
L10	Male	Bachelor of Science (Special Education)	12	Yes	Lecturer
L11	Female	Bachelor of Social Science (Tourism)	3	None	Lecturer
L12	Male	National Diploma in Civil Engineering	9	None	Lecturer

Management includes the SMT (SM1-3).The lecturer findings in Table 5.1 include all lecturers (pseudonyms used) who participated.

5.2 PRESENTATION OF THEMES

This section presents themes that were derived from the analysis of field notes collected through interviews and observation. Table 5.2 shows the themes that are presented in this section.

Table 5.2: Findings from managers

	Themes	Sub-themes	
1	Understanding and defining inclusive education	Perspectives of management Lack of relevant professional training Complexity of the curriculum College Ethos	→ INSTITUTIONAL PARALYSIS
2	Deficient functioning	National directive to meet targets Lack of functional polices and organisational strategy Monitoring Inadequacies College not prepared for accommodation of special need students. Lack of prioritisation	
3	Misconceptions plaguing the TVET college system	The dilemma besetting TVET Functioning	

Findings were divided into broad overarching themes and sub-themes. These were identified by the researcher through an intensive process of sifting, reading, re-reading and correlating. The researcher found that the themes and sub-themes meshed into a state of institutional paralysis, where the status quo has remained in a precarious position. This paralysis within a tertiary education sector where there is a reactive stance to issues rather than a proactive one is unfortunate as students fall through the cracks in the system. All findings are comprehensively discussed below. The information below represents the views of the SMT and campus Managers (CM).

5.2.1 Understanding and Defining Inclusive Education

5.2.1.1 Perspectives of management

According to Ainscow (2000) and Francisco, Hartman & Wang (2020) there are different views on inclusion. This is underscored by Makoelle (2016) that a plethora of research includes IE and inclusive pedagogy. He admits though that there has been little progress in being able to come up with a common element. He further laments that the “inclusion movement is still grappling with the problem of finding a clear understanding and operationalisation of the concept” (Makoelle, 2016:4).

Below are the management views.

SM1 commented:

“inclusive education is really where a teaching and learning institution does not discriminate in terms of the types of students it takes in as long as they meet the minimum academic requirements for entry. So if a student meets the requirements but may have some sort of learning or physical disability the institution will take them.”

SM2 communicated that:

“It means you put everybody in the same class.”

When asked to explain further, he commented:

“Whether they are male or female, has one leg, one eye, its inclusive. We don’t have a special class because when we live in a community we don’t have special people doing special things.”

He backed up his view, saying:

“it starts to put people into categories, and it has a stigma attached to it. So when people leave school they still say you were in a special class. Even years later when you become good the stigma remains. Everyone must live with everybody. We must be able to function in a society that includes everybody. If you don’t learn it in the class how would you go out and know what cerebral palsy is. Children have to learn that the world is made up of

everyone. Some people have special abilities. Some people don't have them. They have their own limits and that has to be accommodated."

SM3 on being asked what she understood by IE, explained that:

"Inclusive education refers to an education system that is designed to include all learners irrespective of whether they have special needs or not. Inclusive Education ensures that all learners are supported and developed in mainstream TVET colleges."

CM1 added:

"If you analyse the word inclusive I am looking at not discriminating against anyone. As far as education is concerned, there may be some barriers, but the learner should not be discriminated against because of his disabilities. When that particular learner is involved in education that to me is inclusive education."

CM2 conceded that:

"It would be an education system that caters for people from all walks of life. Whether they come in from the various schools. Whether they come in with handicaps they should be able to partake from the education system on the table. I believe that no child should be left behind."

When the researcher explained the concept of inclusive education, CM3 responded:

"Ok. Working at this college our college it is just a normal college. We just accommodate average students. Its students' who do not have special needs, and if they should have special needs they will drop out and there is no follow-up."

From the above statements one can ascertain that management have various views on IE.

5.2.1.2 Lack of relevant professional development

Akoojee (2016) contends that inadequate and poorly trained staff, lack of resources ostensibly due to underfunding of colleges, leads to governance and administration

challenges. TVET staff training has been an ongoing issue with many of the staff holding general qualifications. TVET college lecturers are not limited to pedagogical training (Van der Bijl & Oosthuizen, 2019). The lack of focus on training is broad, and training in special needs is virtually non-existent. This is a highly contested area, as is evident in the excerpts below.

When asked about training in the area of special needs, SM3 responded:

“A workshop was conducted previously for management; however this is insufficient to adequately prepare and equip managers. Staff training needs to be prioritised as all staff have not yet been exposed to intensive training in this area.”

SM2 stated that he had received:

“Nothing. We talk about the funding grid all the time.”

He conceded that currently even lecturers cannot handle students with special needs stating

“No. Our teachers don’t know how to handle it. We had special needs learners where we did sewing. We had to hire two special needs teachers to do that. Our teachers did not know how to handle those students because they had special needs. We had to get external teachers who knew how to handle special needs students with sewing, students were demanding and we had to get two teachers as they were not functioning at the same level. They could not do the level 1 entry programme. It was too hard for them. We did not lower the standard, we just increased the time. Where it supposed to take 6 months it had to be completed in a year. That was an eye opener. That was the only special needs programme that we did.”

CM1 replied that:

“When it comes to that one they used to come up with a plan called training needs, which is the training needs for each and every institution. When you come up with that plan, the placement committee on these kind of things their focus is only on programmes offered by the college.”

He also believed that:

“If they can just focus on this area then the students will benefit and even the lecturers will benefit and be relevant, even if it is just one lecturer trained in special needs per campus a student can be referred for those cases.”

He felt that in terms of training needs there was no benefit due to the challenge of being conditioned to working in a particular way.

CM2 articulated that:

“The reason for that is you find the majority of the lecturers in the TVET sector they haven’t come through a special training system like we had previously with teachers going through Springfield Training College like they used to. A lot of lecturers in the TVET sector have come straight out of industry.”

CM3 concurred that:

“You have to train your lecturers, then you have teach them how to identify students with special needs, how do you see if your students are grasping the curriculum, how do you go about looking at those that are left behind. How do I identify if I have 10 students in class, progressing to the next level. What do I do with those that are left behind? So we need proper training for lecturers to identify students with special needs.”

Management’s admissions that staff need proper training correlates with the frustration of lecturers within the TVET sector. Van der Bijl and Oosthuizen (2019) assert that training presented to lecturers is neither relevant nor helpful to teaching areas. They maintain that the skills development process is not coordinated.

Training needs which are presented to staff are often courses that have no bearing on strengthening core issues like inclusive education. As far as teaching staff are concerned, Wedekind (2016) argues that colleges remain a ‘black box’. It is evident that training is fundamental and relevant.

5.2.1.3 Complexity of the curriculum

Lolwana (2011) asserts that the curriculum is poorly defined and lacks responsiveness and adequacy for industry with relationships in the labour market

providing an indication of a sector that is weaker than average on many counts. Compared to other institutions, TVET colleges suffer from severe deficiencies and continue to be a compromised and undervalued sector (HRDCSA, 2014). Government attributes this to the quality of education that is poor with problematic governance and poor financial management (DHET, 2012).

In asking about the suitability of the curriculum for both normal and special needs students, SM1 admitted that she was ambivalent:

“I am glad that as an institution we are enabling them to access us. Secondly I feel sad that as an institution we are not in the position to provide them with what they need. The pacing of the programmes for example is not something that is a decision that we can make. It is determined by the people who develop the curriculum.”

She believed that adjustments in certain areas could make accommodation work.

SM presented his view, as follows:

“Our curriculum is pitched at international standards. That’s why they are so difficult. So that you can move anywhere in the world. The education from schools however is nowhere near bringing the child to fit in. We have this huge gap because they can’t count, read or write on entering level 2. Students can’t read and write when they come to TVET colleges. Prevocational Learning Programmes (PLP) is offered because of poor marks and it assists in career guidance. It’s a foundational bridging for students who haven’t met the basic criteria for entry in the course for which they had applied”

He believed in the suitability of special needs via the PLP system

“Some students don’t do maths at school and therefore the PLP assists, this is suitable for special needs as well. PLP is assessed internally and not by the Department. We are moving towards (LMS) a learning management system which will assist the special needs learners. Remote assistance or on line help will allow a learner with a problem to access help.”

SM3 said:

“Yes, the curriculum is suitable for all students doing a specific programme, however the content and requirement differ according to the programme, for example Safety and Society has a physical exercise component which is compulsory, the type of exercise can be adapted to the need of the student”

CM1 shared his sentiment stating that:

“You know if you are talking about the very same curriculum I am still having a problem. I don’t want to say normal and special needs but the curriculum offered by the college, some of the programmes that are offered are equivalent to what is offered by the university. If you look at the N(CV) (grades 10, 11, 12) programme itself it is more complicated than the ones done at Nated (post matric) level.”

“As the campus manager, I stepped in to assist in the programme. I tried and I struggled to teach it. If you are expecting a Grade 9 student to come into the (NCV) programme it is too difficult for them. To be honest the curriculum is very difficult compared to post matric curricula.”

He lamented that:

“I still say that I don’t know if the curriculum was thoroughly researched based on its difficulty. I would be lying if I said they all would be able manage the subject matter in the same manner or fashion, some have some handicaps here and there. The literature that we have can have a handicapping effect in other words. The content needs to be watered down in some cases or else they get extra time in the exams.”

CM2 said:

“No, for the mere fact that when these groups sit down to design the curriculum, to design textbooks, the special needs learner does not even pass through their minds because if you look at our workshops scenarios they don’t cater for special needs students, and that is the mental (special needs) aspect.”

SM1 summed it up and argued about shared responsibility of the system and other stakeholders, stating:

“So I think there is also a lot of work that DBE should be doing I mean let’s face that, and we look at the curriculum of these so called special schools most of what they do are not relevant in terms of what we require at TVET colleges. We have a problem just with mainstream schools because of their obsession with maths literacy, and we find suddenly in terms of our engineering programmes we are running short of students. So I think that there just needs to be an understanding that this is a responsibility that has to be evenly spread right across the education spectrum, it is the responsibility of government and the responsibility of the private sector.”

The researcher believes that the integrity and relevance of TVET college programmes is a bone of contention. A study by the OECD (2014) makes reference to programme quality, coherence of the system and partnerships with the labour market.

Stakeholder engagement and the ability to work with industry is vital for the adaptation of current course offerings to be market responsive. Intensive research into the South African markets should be undertaken to equip people with necessary skills to improve the high rate of unemployment and boost a crumbling economy. This can be done through a relevant, accurate and focused college curriculum that incorporates inclusivity during its planning and preparation phase.

5.2.1.4 College ethos

College culture and presentation to the public is paramount as to what message is relayed about inclusivity. When the researcher asked if the college represented the ethos of an inclusive college, the following views emerged:

SM1 stated:

“I think if you are looking at inclusivity in its broadest meaning if you not just isolating it to just the differently abled people this is one of the most inclusive colleges I have seen in terms of race and gender the representation of women in management for example it is one of the few colleges where there really is a multi-racial staff there are some colleges that you go to where the entire staff is made up of only one race but looking at different abled people I think that it sort of falls in line with about 90% of people in this country, public and private.”

She continued:

I believe it starts right at the gate in terms of the kind of signage we use, the kinds of inclusive pictures we use, notice boards, notices you know those kinds of things that basically indicate a student must be able to see themselves mirrored in the organisation, so for example in terms of our marketing material, they should be able to see themselves mirrored for them to say that I am actually included within this college community and it doesn't only apply to disabilities, it applies to gender to race, within the organisation, then they see themselves visible within the organisational part of it.”

SM2 disagreed:

“No we don't have that culture. It needs to come in. You will have pockets of people who may have it. That does create a barrier.”

SM3, however, stated:

“Yes, I do think this college represents the ethos of an inclusive college. The management and most staff do understand the need for inclusive education.”

She added:

“Firstly, the organisational culture needs to be transformed. An inclusive college needs to have the appropriate mindset, attitude and values to understand the importance and need to adapt. The inclusive college prioritises easy access to facilities, have properly trained staff and ensure that all students are treated equally”

CM1 said he felt that there was no culture of inclusivity in the college, and CM2 agreed saying:

“No, it doesn’t, because we are not designed to cater for those individuals who we classify as slower learners.”

He maintained a stance that they:

“should have a separate facility for students who would probably be classified as slower learners, to put them in the mainstream you would probably disadvantage them.”

The legacy of the past still has an effect on marginalisation and skewed focus. Even though EWP6 highlights the inclusion of special needs students, there is a paralysing effect on implementation within the TVET colleges.

5.2.2 Deficient Functioning

Akoojee (2016) maintains that South African TVET colleges even though they have concerns which are dominated with attention around access and massification’, this has not been a positive experience. The admission process is conducted via formal channels. Students apply online and then approach campuses to fill in a formal application form. The process of how students are admitted and what criteria is being used remains questionable. In essence, all organisations and educational institutions know the pivotal role of functional policies and trained staff. The lack of such can have severe implications in the running of any institution. On being asked what an inclusive college should look like, these views surfaced.

5.2.2.1 National directive to meet targets

Meeting national targets has been highlighted as a significant barrier.

CM1 stated:

“What is actually happening now is that we are just chasing numbers to say the Department requires us to have that particular number in our classes, irrespective of what we are getting at the end. We are just filling classes for the sake of filling classes.”

SM1 also conceded:

“It’s a matter of filling up the classes”

SM2 reiterated the issue of targets:

“It is all about making up numbers. We have targets to meet though these targets have never been met. What further adds to TVET woes is that students don’t declare their special needs so we have a problem in the sense that students don’t know that even a reading problem is a special need.”

He continued:

“We don’t have facilities in the college that are friendly towards special needs student. Some people are ADHD but they will not tell you. They will just withhold the information from you and you can’t do anything about it, it costs a lot of money to invest in those types of things. When our students register there is a section for special needs and disabilities and the answer is always No.”

He admitted:

“There is a special school near my college called Ekhukanyeni, which is a special needs institution, there is an educator who has a Doctorate in special needs, she used to accuse me almost on a daily basis to say “you TVETs” are discriminating against our learners.”

In retrospect, staff members believe that access is possible. South Africa presently has a policy EWP6 to this effect; however, the implementation has conjured up the incongruence of inclusion as a factor in mainstream institutions. The researcher has deduced that the TVET admission processes being followed has compromised the integrity of the sector and remains flawed, which is a direct result of chasing the numbers required to meet national directives. In addition, participants’ excerpts point

to issues of non-disclosure on registration forms as highly problematic. Reports are submitted by students and there is no way to verify the authenticity of such.

5.2.2.2 Lack of functional policies and organisational strategy

There has to be a strategy in place for proper functioning to occur. The current study reveals that the college lacks a disability strategy and policy. The views of management below reflect the necessity and impact of having a guiding strategy.

SM1 stated:

“Since June 2020, I have picked up that the institution does not have a disability strategy. So it’s something we going to be working on, it did not have an academic support policy which has been done and passed via the academic board. Until now, there has been no formal policy to address the inclusion of people with disabilities in the PSET system. Therefore this Strategic Policy Framework on Disability for the Post-School Education and Training System is necessary to guide the improvement of access to and success in post-school education and training (including at private institutions) for people with disabilities. Through the implementation of this strategic policy framework, transformation and redress with regard to full inclusion, integration and equality for persons with disabilities in the post-school education and training system, will be accelerated.”

She admitted:

“We would have analysed for example what programmes are suitable for different types of students then we would be able to implement something that is meaningful because right now it is an arbitrary thing. It is a hit and miss kind of thing. It is not part of an organisational strategy, as we have other strategies. We need to have an organisational strategy around the differently abled people.”

She reiterated the need for:

“an institutional dialogue about disabilities. It doesn’t only apply to students, it applies to staff as well, so I think that when you have an institutional dialogue I mean for us, as uMgungundlovu TVET college, for provision to access of

differently abled people. When we have that dialogue our vision and our mission with regards to this area because we would have analysed what we are able to do and what we are not able to do.”

The overarching view emerged surrounding the promulgation and implementation of functional guided policies and strategy. Policies form the cornerstone of educational provision. Non-implementation of basic policies seems a continuous barrier that plagues the TVET system.

SM2 believed that there is a need for:

“clear policy and special staff. You can’t expect all the staff to be on the same level. Maybe take small steps first, but we must have a policy in place that says well we got to start perhaps with 1 percent of student population partially sighted and slowly expand. We must have policies, procedures and resources in place for special needs students. The other thing that is very important is to sensitise our students and staff to it. These are not people that are outside our normal life. The tolerance of all students and growing up with it is vital.”

In addition, he mentioned:

“I was never asked to generate a policy or procedure. We have been discussing it, it’s just there in the funding grid. We were discussing that we need to create awareness. Disability does not mean your hand is broken. You may be mentally slow, speak slowly. We spoke about putting up charts during registration and the conversation just stopped there. It stopped there.”

CM1 added

“You know when it comes to policy the policy is just something there for the sake of submitting that kind policy throughout the country, there are nice policies in cupboards but if you look at those they are not being implemented. That is our main challenge of implementation.”

A significant burden is placed on the DHET to implement the means to monitor compliance in this area. The need for introspection to satisfy the basic principles of equality and access must be upheld with due cognisance for past redress as well.

5.2.4.3 Monitoring inadequacies

Monitoring is a necessary tool for the identification of progress and support. Inadequacies in how monitoring is maintained is contentious. The management has the following views when asked about how often monitoring took place to ensure that students with special needs have their needs met.

SM1 stated:

“Monitoring is campus based and is conducted by campus management at predetermined times, however lecturers do provide informed feedback to the senior lecturer.”

CM2 disagreed that monitoring occurred at campus level stating that it was:

“Zero and that’s the way it’s going to stay. People just choose to look away.” It doesn’t happen.”

SM2 admitted:

“We do go out for monitoring but not for special needs. We will ask a question like how you are asking me. They still claim that there are no special needs. The registration forms states no special needs. Normally lecturers pick it up and we are told a specific child is not performing well. We get that from student support. Nothing where we really go formally and monitor it.”

SM1 added:

“I am unfortunately not as involved in the area of inclusive education as I would like to be. This is an area in which I would like to further develop to add value to the college and facilitate our college in accommodating more students with special needs into mainstream vocational education.”

CM2 responded on Monitoring and Management and that there is no involvement. The response was:

“Not at all.”

On probing further, CM2 claimed:

“You know the thing is when students come into the system we don’t know that John has got a learning disability. Generally a student chooses not to talk about it. The only indicator that we have is if we know by looking at the school report that a child has come from Newton (this is a special needs school) for example so that kind of gives you some inkling but we also found that a lot of the children that are coming from mainstream schools are just as slow if not slower than that Newton individual”.

The researcher asked for a reason as to why he felt this way. He stated:

“It is the mindset of the educators from schools, if you can’t cut it at school, go to TVET college. Unfortunately those teachers have not a clue as to how demanding the system can be at TVET.”

The impact of no follow through from schools feeding into TVET colleges indicates the gap in the educational system.

5.2.2.4 College not prepared for accommodation of special need students.

According to the Strategic Policy Framework on Disability for the Post-School Education and Training System (DHET, 2018), reasonable accommodation means any necessary and appropriate adjustments and modifications, which includes technology and assistive devices. The document infers that persons with disabilities must not face exclusion from a situation where enjoyment or exercise is equally available to others.

On asking whether the college is ready to accommodate students with special needs the response from SM1 was:

“Unfortunately this college is not yet adequately prepared to accommodate students with special needs in mainstream classrooms. The physical infrastructure and design of the campus pose a challenge for the accessibility and exacerbates the issue of staff not trained to support and assist students with diverse needs.”

In addition, SM2 stated:

“we also have to take into account the infrastructure and resource reality of that institution. We have campuses for example that don’t have ramps and don’t have lifts. We have classrooms and practical rooms on the second floor and third floor, so you are not going to be taking students with mobility issues.”

SM1 quoted an isolated example:

“We had a student who had mobility issues. We moved out of our staffroom and turned it into a classroom because it was on the ground floor. Staff moved up so that we could accommodate the student. So I think if you are able to make accommodations on all of our campuses because not all of our campuses are multi-storey campuses anyway, certainly we will be able to take these students. For me what is important is that we must not set students up for failure. We must ensure that they are meeting the minimum academic requirements for entry to our programmes. In other words that they have been sifted through, and they have gone through the selection of the pace and placement test.

However in the same breath, she stated students who cannot be accommodated initially must be redirected to PLP classes.

“...we certainly do our best. The directive right across the board is that students who don’t meet the minimum criteria must be redirected. They go through a year of different subjects. If successful they can enter into the NCV programme. These are funded by the Department. We take 50 students, success rate and retention is high. This includes both normal and special needs students. This is not just differently abled students, but all students.

She reiterated:

“We also don’t have a disability strategy. Student support reports to me and it sort of falls in line with the rest of private and public schools which make up about 90 percent of educational institutions. It is not unique in any way that we

do not priorities the differently abled people. In terms of infrastructure. We don't take them in large numbers. There is nothing unique about that."

I probed further on whether she felt this area was neglected somehow and she responded:

"I think that there is a lot of paper, a lot of political statements but it isn't followed up with the finances and that is a reality. I was acting principal at another campus and we had requested recapitalisation for disability we had said just as we had recapitalisation for introduction of the N(CV) programme lets have a special ring fence type of recapitalisation, where colleges must all analyse themselves, you know campus by campus, analyse infrastructure and put together a recapitalisation plan, specifically in the area of disabilities lifts, ramps, assistive devices, you know those kinds of things."

On asking whether the matter had been addressed the reply was:

"No, it was never taken forward this. It was a proposal that was made around 2012 so what I am saying is it is easy to make statements. In fact we are required to complete documentation and so on. How we are enabling disabled people to access our institutions where someone somewhere can tick a box"

She maintained that:

"The fact of the matter is that if we don't look at this and understand that colleges need funding for this. We do get under a million rand a year. It may be R400 000 to R500 000 a year for assistive devices for assistance in the exams like scribes, translators, but we need meaningful money for us to be able to say that we are able to change our infrastructure and change our environments."

CM1 also believed that:

"It is impossible to say we are not going to accommodate them, because these people are part and parcel of our communities. Numbers must be looked at. The entire college must be specialised in different areas for special needs. I think before we are able to accommodate them we need to identify their needs, we need to conduct something in the form of research and the

experience of our lecturers. We can come up with statistics. From there we can be able to prioritise.”

He continued:

“..we have asked the training committee to prioritise the training needs of our lecturers in the area of CNC. Up to now I started in 2016 still nothing has happened. We do have partnerships with TDM here. I tried to engage them. The machines are there it’s just for someone to coordinate. When it comes to TDM for our campus to benefit from this partnership you train our staff because it is a curriculum need, but honestly they said they don’t have the time. But in terms of training needs it’s still a challenge. We are too conditioned.”

However, CM2 concluded that:

“the reason why we have such an influx is because there is no fee attached and every student literally walks in and the selection process doesn’t go down too well.”

CM3 responded:

“Not at all.”

I asked for a further explanation to which the opinion emerged that:

“You have to train your lecturers, then you have teach them how to identify students with special needs, how do you see if your students are grasping the curriculum, how do you go about looking at those that are left behind. How do I identify if I have 10 students in class whom we are progressing to the next level. What do I do with those that are left behind. So we need proper training for lecturers to identify students with special needs.”

Even though there is a high demand for services within the TVET sub-system this there are insufficient staff available where conditions of service are far from favourable. It is evident that highly qualified staff who are professionals in their fields, including psychologists, are remunerated as administrative staff. This leads to a high turnover, as staff seek better opportunities elsewhere. The end result is that colleges are left with unsuitable staff to support students (DHET, 2020).

5.2.2.5 Lack of prioritization

Prioritising the trajectory of funding, adequate resources and suitable infrastructure is fundamental to the effective functioning of an inclusive educational organisation. Colleges are allocated funds for a number of projects. Hierarchically it would make sense for special needs infrastructure to be taken care of for purposes of inclusivity. However it does seem that other areas receive preference for funding as indicated below.

SM1 stated:

“Well I think there’s other priorities, maintenance funding has come through.”

On asking whether this places special needs students as a secondary factor, she argued:

“I don’t know about putting them 2nd but I think in terms of any organisation you triage. You have to put up the list of priorities and this list is dictated by the largest amount of students that we serve.”

SM2’s involvement was largely limited to being:

“involved in a single garment making project. I was never asked to generate a policy or procedure. We have been discussing that, it is just there in the funding grid. We were discussing that we need to create awareness. We spoke about putting up charts during registration and the conversation just stopped there.”

CM1 comment about the prioritisation of issues was

“No. I don’t want to lie about it. To be honest with you when it comes to our college we have not changed our mindset.”

Responses point to limited attention towards special needs students or when there was some attention, it was simply put on the back burner.

5.2.3 Misconceptions Plaguing the TVET College System

5.2.4.1 Dilemma besetting TVET colleges

The functioning of TVET colleges and the role they play in South Africa cannot be undermined from the preparation of people for the world of work to changing mindsets on what the prime purpose of TVET colleges actually are:

SM1 lamented:

“You know we must be clear, there is an expectation in that TVETS are all things to all people. That we are able to solve all the ails of the country. So we must address the skills deficit, the NEETS issue. We must address the issue around students that are coming from disadvantaged backgrounds, we must somehow turn that around, the list is endless. But I also think we must be clear as a sector of what is our purpose and therefore what do we do to enact that purpose.”

Her frustration was expressed as follows:

“So for the expectation that you know we are suddenly expected to address an issue that hasn’t been addressed generally within the education system because within DBE there should already be exit strategies for students that are not coping from these school, and there should have been discussions between DBE and the world of work and DBE and higher education and training in terms of how we are going to be doing this. There should be an interaction between DBE and the national skills funding terms of how these students can be funded when they access skills programmes after they leave.”

It is evident that TVET colleges need to be proactive towards special needs issues. The current situation based on the verbatim responses of management indicate an insipid response towards an issue that is critical if South African society is to achieve social justice and equality. The researcher ascertained that TVET colleges have been progressing steadily towards a state of paralysis. The researcher has noted stagnation in areas that need attention. The involvement by management (SMs and CMs) highlighted the gaps within a discrepant and dysfunctional system which

exposes the critical need for attention within. The institutions operate within a state of paralysis where little can be attained as national directives drives the mission of target-based filling up of classes This consequently impacts on an already skewed admissions process. Irrelevant professional lecturer qualifications have steeped the TVET college sector in crisis. An ineffective monitoring and feedback system does little to alleviate TVET college woes. The lack of functional policies and a disability strategy are some of the debilitating inadequacies plaguing an already compromised sector. The next section deals with the findings from lecturers.

Table 5.3: Findings from lecturers

Themes	Sub-themes
Understanding inclusive education	Lecturers understanding of inclusive education
Challenges	Perceived lack of relevance in professional development Lack of effective accommodation Lack of necessary Monitoring Time Constraints Highly pitched curriculum Lack of staff support and intervention Lack of support structures
Structural Deficiency	System ill designed for admission of special needs students

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IRRELEVANT PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT & SYSTEM ILLS

5.3 UNDERSTANDING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

5.3.1 Lecturers' Understanding of Inclusive Education

Loreman Deppeler and Harvey (2010) posits that inclusion is indicative of all students being fully participative in all spheres of learning. In understanding IE, UNESCO (2001) states that the crucial aspect remains on the elimination of barriers through learner participation. EWP6 (DOE, 2001) places special emphasis on the definition of IE. This definition, however, is in policy terms. Clarity is given via the document by Makoelle (2016:5) that “acknowledges that all learners are able to learn, all children and youth are able to learn, provided that they are given appropriate support, that is accepting and respectful of the fact that each individual

learner is different in some way and has learning needs, which should be equally valued too.” In essence, the guiding principles of Education for All (Peters, 2003:7) extends this context in the excerpt below that:

“Addressing this widely recognised need for change, the Dakar Framework for Action adopted a World Declaration on Education for All (EFA) in 2000, which affirmed the notion of education as a fundamental right and established the new millennium goal to provide every girl and boy with primary school education by 2015. EFA also clearly identified inclusive education as one of the key strategies to address issues of marginalisation and exclusion. The fundamental principle EFA is that all children should have the opportunity to learn. The fundamental principle of inclusive education is that all children should have the opportunity to learn together.”

The above responses express the need for adapted, accommodative education.

Below are some of the ideas of what participants surmise. Although most lecturers had a fairly good idea of what inclusive education entails, some still grappled with the concept.

L2 related:

“My understanding is when a school or a college educates all students irrespective of their background, competence and so forth. We all know that there are barriers that we have in education where some students that are not even coping.”

L8 stated that to her:

“Inclusive education means an educational sector that is structured to enhance the needs of all the different members of society, irrespective of race or disability, but it must be an educational sector that respects those differences where everybody is given a space to function maximally.”

On being asked on her understanding of inclusive education, L4 opined:

“I don’t know... I don’t know”

The researcher probed further for an understanding of the lecturers view by asking if she had any inclination of what IE is about. Her answer was just

“No”

Further explanation entailed that these were:

“Children that require special needs. They do not fit into the normal education system.”

She further questioned whether the campus was really ready for IE students.

Although there is a fair understanding of IE, some lecturers seemed to struggle with the concept. Loreman et al. (2010) acknowledges the confusion that exists about the understanding of inclusion. It is often found that after conversations with other educators about inclusion, it is obvious that some educators are misinformed (Loreman et al, 2010).

5.3.2 Challenges

Professional development is paramount to assist lecturers to deal with a diverse contingency of students. Wedekind (2016) highlights the fundamental need for lecturers to undertake relevant studies for the upgrading of their qualifications. Van der Bijl and Oosthuizen (2019) argue that the focus of the State and the system has been sector-specific in terms of lecturer qualifications ever since its 2013 promulgation on the Policy on the Professional Qualifications for lecturers in Technical Vocational Education and training . Training continues to be a contentious issue as indicated below.

The inability to engage with students with special needs as a result of not possessing the relevant qualifications reveals a huge gap in the system. Most lecturers are ill-equipped to meet student needs. Below are the some of the views elicited from lecturers’

policy on professional qualifications for lecturers in technical and vocational education and training

5.3.2.1 Perceived lack of relevance in professional development

On asking whether they had the relevant qualifications for LSEN, the following opinions emerged.

L7 responded:

“No. Is there a reason for that. I never found it necessary, until I got here.”

I probed for a deeper explanation and L7 argued that:

“Because we taking children with special needs but we don’t have the capability of dealing with them.”

The above views show the need for training and qualifications as a key factor in mitigating the impact of inclusion within mainstream classes. Opinions were that lecturers did not have the necessary capacity to include students due to a dire lack in training.

On further probing of the perceptions about including LSEN into mainstream classes, L9 articulated the following:

“Hey, my opinion on that is that I am not even trained. How do you feel when you cannot deal with that student? It’s very frustrating. We have failed the student before and now even us as lecturers we have not been trained even our facilities do not cater to the needs of the students.”

On questioning on the possession of qualifications in the area of special needs, L2 stated:

“Not at all.”

On asking whether training in the areas of special needs have been offered she responded:

“Nothing, absolutely nothing whatsoever.”

L10 responded:

“No. None.”

L11 equally admitted:

“No I don’t. I just did a few modules in my professional qualification.”

When asked whether he thought that there should be some type of intervention from the TVET side into lecturers not having special needs qualifications, now that we are admitting them, he stated:

“Absolutely, it is a requirement, you can’t operate a ship without having a proper understanding of how it works. We are just using our experience in terms of catering for those students but without having proper training on how to do that.”

It is evident that the majority of the lecturers in TVET colleges are either academically qualified, but not professionally qualified or vice versa. Relatively few are completely unqualified, but very few meet all the requirements expected of a college lecturer. Currently, college lecturing staff are recruited from the pool of top performing TVET college students, and from TVET college students who proceed to university and come back to the sub-system. Both these routes are misaligned with the policy requirements for lecturer educational training and industry experience. Lecturers are also recruited from those with industry experience who might not have teaching qualifications. The issue of inclusivity and relevance is still problematic.

However, L9 who was the only participant with training in special needs concurred that training:

“does really assist me because mind you special needs learners are regarded as a special population and therefore there is a need for the teaching and learning to be adapted to suit their needs while at the same time they can be able to achieve just like any other so called normal learner. So my training in special needs assists me in handling a diverse group of learners who come with different levels of disabilities. You find in the classrooms we have learners with visual problems, they use spectacles, we have learners who have got hearing challenges and we have students who have mild and mental retardation.”

Peters (2003:3) asserts that

training should be intentional, and classroom based, intensive and ongoing in order to promote sustainable effective practice. Secondly, in priority, is school-as-a-whole reform to support classroom practice. Important factors in whole – school reform include leadership, coordination of services, multi-disciplinary planning, parental involvement in decision-making and in-school support systems to build capacity.

Van der Bijl and Oosthuizen (2019) maintain that the availability of training for TVET lecturers to ensure new knowledge, career development, curriculum and technical skills is either absent or sporadic at times. Van der Bijl and Oosthuizen(2019) further argue that 64% of lecturers claimed that training they received was neither relevant nor helpful to their areas of teaching.

5.3.2.2 Lack of effective accommodation of special needs students

Accommodation of students with special needs remains an area of contention as lecturers struggle with accommodation within mainstream classes. There is a serious lack of attention to the inclusivity of students with diverse needs.

On questioning lecturers on the admission of students with special needs, L7 stated

“Yes we take them, but we don’t accommodate for them in terms of resources or proper infrastructure. We disadvantage them.”

L5 acknowledged that he was against inclusion of special needs students into TVET colleges stating:

“Well, I am against it if I can say that because firstly a person or a learner that has a special need cannot concentrate in schools, we don’t have resources, to fund or to teach these children, for example if we look at our college we have those students with particular types of special needs but we can’t cater for them. If I can call it a relevant example, I have a student. She is very bright but she has a problem with her eyesight, you see if we are writing exams we are going over a textbook it is difficult for her to learn.”

On further probing as to why these students were enrolled, L5 complained:

“You know the Department, they actually haven’t planned”, if I can put it that way, for those students with special needs.”

“It’s a matter of filling up the classes, but if you can compare the DBE and DHET the basic education have special schools so they cater for learners with special needs, what about the DHET we have no special colleges or TVET colleges where they can cater for students with special needs.”

L10 also claimed:

“I feel it is ok to admit them as long as we have made provisions for their special needs, which provisions I don’t think we are equipped with.”

L3 said:

“In the current system I will say it is still a bit of a challenge. Especially if we look at the human resources or the human capacity, in terms of the lecturers, because we are dealing with mental issues. They might not have severe physical impairments so which means while the current TVET colleges don’t accommodate people with physical challenges I think that those with mental problems they could be easily accommodated. because they don’t need special structures, but basically in terms of human capacity of the college I think we don’t yet have enough lecturers who will be able to handle such students”

The deficit in attention to accommodate LSEN is an area that is neglected. Lecturers are burdened with paperwork and classes that grow larger every year. Akoojee (2016) concurs that student enrolment has increased in TVET colleges without complementary resource increases whether it be infrastructural or human. This brings about an increased deficit in the ability to concentrate on inclusion as a part of the organisational strategy.

5.3.4.3 Lack of necessary monitoring

Monitoring is an area that seems largely neglected as the quotes from staff respond.

On asking what monitoring takes place to ensure that special needs students are having their needs met.

L11 says

“None.”

When asked how he felt about that, he stated that the image of the sector was compromised:

“Okay, now that you have brought it up I feel like we are portraying a bad image for our college since we are dealing with students. We are excluding them. We just turn a blind eye and say ok its fine then they drop out and we don’t even follow up. It is a bad case.”

Monitoring for purposes of support and compliance is an integral function that needs the necessary attention.

5.3.2.4. Time constraints

Time is of the essence as lecturers already faced a system overburdened with paperwork. This left little time to concentrate on students that were in dire need of assistance.

L6 complained:

“We got students coming in I think it’s hard on the lecturer because they get left behind in terms of the way the curriculum is set and our time frames. We don’t have time to focus on the special needs students and the college isn’t set up to help them, if they need extra assistance.”

L2’s concern was also that bringing students with disabilities into the mainstream disadvantages them.

“Because they are people who are disabled, maybe they are slow learners, they require more time to capture that information. The moment you mix them with those that are normal you are jeopardising them and their ability to capture that information because they will take more time. To master that information which is not actually made for them and there is no allowance for that in the TVET sector.”

L6 argued that he did try because:

“At the beginning of the year when you got time you can ask if we can help, do this, do that, try that, but as we get stuck for time they get left behind. We only focus on who is doing the work. No one else. They just get left behind, drop off, disappear.”

L5 claimed:

“They always struggle in class. You see that they are struggling, and they have difficulties, you know with catching up with everybody. You see that they need their own time for you as a lecturer to attend to them. It means that you have to make additional time in order for you to move at their pace. Because in the mainstream we can’t accommodate them in the way that they are supposed to be accommodated.”

L7 contended that:

“It is not a fair system, even students that are screened, are taken with such low marks, you can identify from a placement test that a student is a special needs student, but they are still taken. They take them for numbers., for funding purposes. You don’t get any time to spend with any student one-on-one. If you look at the timetable if you are teaching 26 out of 30 hours there is no time.”

On the other hand, L9 stated:

“Well I would say given the situation I am able to deal with them effectively but mind you our institutions are not yet properly designed. We have time challenges.”

Chitiyo (2013) also considered the unfortunate lack of resources as a perennial problem dogging the system regarding the delivery of inclusive education. The question relates to the appropriateness of inclusive education in an African context. The challenges of the staff are a concern. TVET colleges spend little time on the actual accommodation of students that are in dire need of acceptance into mainstream institutions. Other approaches to inclusion are mostly deemed a political struggle (Armstrong et al., 2010). South Africa is no different. Due to the lack of knowledge on identification and pedagogical ineptitude, students are chastised for being stupid, lazy, and careless (Chitiyo, 2013) or are simply ignored. L8 lamented that when special needs students were identified in class:

“It’s a very awkward situation there isn’t a particular way. I have not gone through training for it. They are somehow left unattended but obviously we

need an education that is going to be inclusive that is going to help other people to be sensitive to the different needs of others in class and mostly to promote normality. We all have got differences.”

Further probing on what happens with these students extracted the following response:

“Obviously because of the lack of support and sensitivity in some cases they just vanish into thin air. And unfortunately no one really cares that much.”

The lecturer stated that no follow-ups are made because:

“We don’t have systems in place for that”

On asking what more can be done L2 suggested:

“Proper training to lecturers, and also not mixing those students with normal students.”

On asking if this is a good idea considering the past L2 surmised:

“Well it depends on the moment you say we are separating you because of? Then there comes a problem. But if you are just splitting according to group, knowing that a specific group requires special attention that will assist.”

L9 admitted:

“... I just leave them. I just ignore them and I am being honest because there is nothing I can do, because even if you report to management they don’t do anything.” I don’t want to lie, as a result we are not trained it is not easy to pick up but what do, I do. It is so frustrating to just leave them like that, because there is nothing I can do. You can even spend 2 hours with them nothing will be gained.”

L2 argued that even trying was a sensitive issue, stating:

“I remember I had some students with problems with their eyesight. I tried to give them time as much as I can. I also tried to accommodate them by drawing a separate timetable but it was difficult and also sensitive. I have tried but it is a sensitive issue.”

5.3.2.5 Highly pitched curriculum

Curriculum remains an issue of concern regarding suitability.

On asking whether the curriculum is suitable for both normal and special needs students, L3? stated:

“The curriculum as it is, is fast paced it is for students of a certain calibre, that’s what our curriculum is set up for.”

He surmised that:

“The curriculum does not need to be changed. It just needs to be adjusted time wise where they need to focus on certain aspects and the way we teach them.”

L4 however opined:

“Well during COVID-19 children with special needs were not given any extra in terms of time, resources, strategies or anything for that matter.”

L9 was adamant that:

“It is not viable. On asking her to further explain she reiterated that the syllabus being taught is very difficult even for the normal students. Our curriculum is based at a university level, so even the normal child with no special needs struggles. It is tough. I don’t want to imagine.”

L2 believed that:

“The curriculum just assumes that all students are the same and normal. Because even if they do give maybe the paper with different cognitive levels,

they forget that even that 30 percent of the lower level some of the special needs can't even get that 30 percent. It does not cater for them."

L4 concurred

"No, It does not meet their needs. It's very different from main stream school. Even for the normal learner in terms of difficulty. For education and development it's very, very difficult, so if you could not make it in a schooling system how would you make it here."

When asked why the college admitted students, L2 said:

"You know the Department, they actually haven't planned properly, if I can put it that way, especially for those students with special needs. It's a matter of filling up the classes."

TVET colleges are still seen as a gateway for students that cannot cope in schools. Thus the issue of students that actually enrol there are those that present with many learning difficulties for which TVET colleges are ill-prepared. It is clear that the curriculum is a significant barrier, and no one actually champions the cause to transform or adapt it for inclusivity with the mainstream TVET college sector.

L5 lamented that the curriculum cannot be compared to schools in terms of difficulty.

"Let's go back to the curriculum of NCV level 2 is equivalent to Grade 10 but if you can take the Grade 10 curriculum and put it here and take the schools Grade 10 curriculum and put it here level 2 curriculum is heavier than the Grade 10 so if the students are not normal it is not easy to cope."

On asking what happens then to those students along the way, he responded.

"They just drop out and go back home."

On asking his feelings about that, L5 stated:

"Right now, they introducing this thing called CETs. It's more of the skills programmes"

He responded:

“I am not trying to be political but by the look of things our government is interested in tenders rather than the success of the students. Because what I heard via the grapevine is that one NCV students does not cost less than R40.000 each per student so they are not interested in the student success or the students future they are only interested in enriching themselves. So that is where the problem is so even if students are going back to the poverty then next year new students arrive there are still students who are not out of the system. It’s a system that repeats itself. They are not interested in their future.”

Armstrong et al. (2010) argue that in advocating for special needs education, it is apparent that the label excuses the failure of the system to deliberately address the dignity, aspirations and human worth of many young people. This coincides with EWP6 that the curriculum is a major and significant barrier both in special and ordinary schools. The emergent factors that contribute to the issue of successful implementation are the language of learning and teaching, content, classroom organisation, curriculum pace and time, strategies used and assessment.

5.3.2.6 Lack of staff support and intervention

On asking on what challenges they experienced in the classroom, L6 stated:

“There is nothing to assist me if I find challenges. It is resource challenges. Also the college does not cater for anything even if you try to offer something. I have tried to implement blended learning the college refused. Even though it was mandated by the DHET during COVID they just refused.”

L2 asserted that:

“The challenges remain one of the major issues in that special needs differs in many ways, some grasp information and easily forget, and some they take long to grasp information. So the moment you going to introduce the lesson you will have to go back to the previous level and re-teach the concepts that were previously taught at the lower level so that is the challenge. So you can’t just go straight into planning a normal day, because most of the students will lose some information”

On what support was being offered to lecturer the following opinions emerged. L7 said:

“No, I wouldn’t say there is any support there, we basically struggle on our own. I mean you know when they register. It is to get into our programme with a Grade 9 pass, however we do get the special needs students that come mean from Newton (which is a special need school) whom we do accept”

L9 shared his view as follows:

“Well I can’t say that there is much that they are offering except by keeping their doors open in case I need something from them otherwise there is virtually nothing.”

L8 corroborated this:

“Nothing much and I don’t blame them. The TVET sector has not prioritised special needs. We need to get specialists in the TVET sector so that they can draft policies to cater for such a group of people, because these people are part and parcel of us.”

On probing as to whether TVET colleges have been neglected somehow, he stated

“We are sort of a stepchild. Because when the minister speaks about tertiary education, he is speaking about universities.”

From the information gathered there is little doubt about the perceptions of college staff of the TVET sector. The concept of IE exposes the challenges being grappled with. This includes major aspects of the lack of training and an inability to deal with special needs students during mainstream class activities. If anything, many are left to fend for themselves. The majority of staff candidly revealed the extent of their lack of skills when it boiled down to IE. The exacerbating factor is that staff simply do not know what to do, or how to deal with LSEN in a mainstream classroom without relevant training. South Africa is trying to progress towards the inclusion of international standards with the intention of the professionalization that comparative to international standards (Akoojee, 2016). Peters (2003) endeavours to put into perspective a large scale cross-national study of countries in the Global North which provides pertinent information on the fundamental aspects that may emanate from

training. Priority should be given to teacher training as studies make recommendations on the enhancement of skills within classrooms within a direct focus on curriculum adaptation and development, together with pedagogy.

5.3.2.7 Lack of support structures for students

The referral of students for assistance occurs within a vacuum. The lack of structures and professional staff poses a major challenge. Lecturers responses indicate the lack thereof in the statements below

On asking what structures exist to refer students to, L5 declared:

“What I can say is we do not have that structure. The only thing we do when we encounter those challenges is refer those students to the Student Liaison Officer (SLO) that’s all, and the SLO will know how to deal with it we don’t know about having a clinic site, a social worker, a nurses site, we don’t know about that thing.”

He further expounded:

“I only came here in 2017 from a Coastal college. There was a lady she served as a psychologist if I may put it that way when we had students with special needs we were referring those students to her through the SLO. So we knew that we do have that structure but in this college I have never heard of that.”

L4 stated:

“Nothing, they are on their own. It is not a fair system.”

L6 maintained that:

“There is nothing. It is just a campus that caters for normal learners. We don’t cater for any special needs learners, when there is a problem we tell them to speak to their class representative, most likely they don’t even do that they will go to the SLO and that’s the last step. Also I don’t think our SLOs have been trained for special education.”

The struggle of lecturers is evident. Campuses have no support structures which places an additional burden both on lecturers and the system.

L9 lamented:

“No structures, absolutely nothing at all.”

The researcher asked where students with special need went to.

L9 continued:

“Well, it’s like that student I was talking about. A student was excluded from writing all his subjects, and nothing was done., absolutely nothing as I said. I reported the matter to management, and they did not tell us anything. Apparently the student enrolled at Ekukhanyeni school (special needs school). He had studied there for a few years. I don’t even know where he got the report from to be admitted here. So as for the support, absolutely nothing, the student did not qualify and also did not know what to do.”

On asking what happens at the end of the year, L9 lamented:

“Nothing. we just continue like normal... come end of the year they fail.”

L2 had a similar view:

“No, we don’t have any structures, except for the SLO. I don’t know if it was a programme or something but there was a time that we had to identify students with special needs.”

On asking him what occurs after the identification, the response was

“Nothing.”

As lecturers it is a notable reality that the SLO deals with matters of the Student Representation Council issues and bursary complaints but special needs are not taken into account. This leaves a gap as to what actually happens once students with challenges are identified for purposes of referral and assistance. The TVET campus is not equipped with any health and wellness practitioners to date. Mobile clinic services come to campuses occasionally.

L3 replied:

“Of course, I will repeat what I have been saying we need specialists in this sector who will draft policies. Policies which are going to assist in making the TVET sector relevant. between the schools and universities, a lot of people are dumped in the TVET sector space, it is sort of a dumping ground. There are no proper programmes which are dealing with the issue.”

L9, however, believed that:

“...there is a need to link with families/parents because the parent is the first teacher and the parent understands the students more than me. So obviously there are lots of links that I try to create between myself and the college and the parent. And then after that if there is a need for special attention whether it is medical or any of that sort, I also assist in having them get some attention.”

What is notable is that TVET colleges do not have relevant targeted structures where students need assistance can be referred to. The issue of referral to the SLO as a point of contact takes away from the issue of having professional staff on campus. This has been a long-standing issue where students with issues mostly go to local clinics and hospitals when problems occur.

5.3.3 Structural Deficiency

Systemic barriers continue to plague the TVET system. The infrastructural capacity is not designed to accommodate special needs students. The lecturers concurred that the capacity to accommodate special needs students remains a problematic factor. Their perspectives are indicated below.

L11 indicated that:

“... in the past months there have been people from the Department of Labour who came. I am part of the safety committee, one of the red flags was that our college does not necessarily cater for people with special needs and by virtue of that it discriminates against them.”

L8 stated plainly

“No.”

When probing further, she claims that in the light of:

“The way the system is structured, it might not really support special needs students. I don’t know that we have the capacity in terms of equipment and also the timing as well, as the necessary training. So I don’t think we can.”

Chitiyo (2013) postulates that mainstreaming is seen as proponents of inclusion that seemingly embeds itself on grounds of morality. He further purports that mainstreaming is seen as “buttressing the traditional negative beliefs about people with disabilities which led to their unequal treatment by society in the first place and therefore, being inherently unequal” (Chitiyo, 2013:52). It may very well point to those students already in the system being accepted merely on moral grounds or vague policy and admission intervention.

5.4 CONCLUSION

TVET colleges have been inundated with problems from its inception of particular programmes. Even though there may be policies and instructions, lecturers bear the brunt of a system that is struggling in many critical areas. Learners with special needs and disabilities have equal access into the system without the relevant and much-needed support. There is a prevailing attitude of lecturers that interactions among students must be the same for all students, with little consideration for those who struggle within the system. Staff remain at a loss as to how to support students with difficulties and campuses are far from ready to provide effective teaching and learning to those that have special needs. This ranges from a lack of resources to unqualified staff. Lecturers equally are limited in how to assist without proper training. For instance, the increase of 64.3% (400 273 in 2011 expanding to 657 695 in 2012) in student numbers has only seen a mere 2.17% increase in staffing in the same period. The challenges to individual TVET colleges as a result of this skewed expansion can only be surmised from these statistics (Akoojee, 2016).

5.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter presents the dilemma faced within the three TVET campuses. Lecturers and Management responded to the semi-structured questions and the issues that plague the concept of inclusivity. Two major themes emerged from the minor themes. The major themes of **Institutional Paralysis** and **Irrelevant Professional Development and system ills**, portray an educational sector struggling to survive in an advancing world. The implementation of Inclusivity continues to be an area undermined and with it the future of students who remain severely compromised. The focus of the study was to draw information from participants around the current landscape of inclusive education within the mainstream system of TVET colleges in Pietermaritzburg.

CHAPTER 6: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

“There is no chance, no destiny, no fate that can hinder or control the firm resolve of a determined soul”- Ella Wheeler Wilcox

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The study was conducted at three TVET colleges in KwaZulu-Natal. This final chapter includes a summary of the study, a discussion of the implications and recommendations to stakeholders to present a comprehensive discussion on the various aspects that embody the mainstreaming of students in TVET colleges and lecturers' experiences with them. The study focuses on the serious implications of non-disclosure of registering students with special needs that lead to non-identification and support by lecturers. This is a critical factor for effective planning and training of lecturers for IE. The findings show the disjointed and fractured system that exists in TVET colleges accommodating students with special needs within mainstream classes. This points to a clear lack of support for both senior personnel, lecturers and students tasked with following a framework guided by the Salamanca Statement (Savolainen et al., 2012).

This chapter offers recommendations especially in a field that is vital to both social justice and the economic growth of South Africa, as IE remains obscure irrespective of the clear need for it. Proposals for future studies are also made.

The conclusion highlights the objectives of the study which are to:

- Understand lecturers' experiences with students with special learning needs in a mainstream classroom setting.
- Examine how lecturers accommodate students with special learning needs during teaching and learning.
- Examine whether additional teaching methods and technical support is currently provided for students with special learning needs in the TVET sector.
- Determine which strategies and interventions could equip TVET college lecturers with competencies and skills to educate students with varying special learning needs are being employed.

The aim of this study was to elaborate on the experiences of TVET college lecturers with special needs students within a mainstream environment and the implications of IE for both lecturers and students.

6.2 SUMMARY OF CHAPTERS

6.2.1 Chapter 1

This chapter provides the foundation of the study, focusing on the experiences of TVET college lecturers with special needs students in mainstream classes. The study's aim was structured around addressing the deep-seated issues faced by TVET college lecturers.

6.2.2 Chapter 2

The theoretical framework included an overview of the models of disability. The researcher asserts that a broader contextualised understanding of the different models of disability which exist forms a pervasive lens into how individuals are viewed. The researcher is of the understanding that a critical, intensive discourse around preconceptions of disabilities work towards the prioritising of mainstreaming students with disabilities.

In supporting the human rights of individuals, Oliver (2013) underscores the importance of the social model that is focused on assisting people with disabilities to improve their lives. This is substantiated by the human rights model which subscribes to the ethos of equal opportunities for all in society. The human rights perspective links directly to the human rights model in the subsequent passage.

The researcher believes the fundamental introduction of the models of disability inextricably infuses into the current study for a better understanding. Chapter 2 provided a view of the bio-ecological theory of Bronfenbrenner. Kadaravek (2011) addressed the theory and its impact on disability. The theory is well rounded and explains the five systems that the child is exposed to and their influence on the child as they develop through life. The growth and adjustment of the child is the primary focus. This impact is identified as central to interconnections which clearly impact the child and the environment in which they exist. Currently there is little understanding of how the bio-ecological theory relates to students and teaching and learning in

TVET colleges. This is evident in TVET colleges as social interactions are fundamental to teaching and learning. TVET colleges comprise of both adolescents and adult learners making it a complex environment. Adolescence has been described in the literature as a period of conflict, reorganisation and realignment of family bonds and the content and quality of relationships, more than the isolated actions of either parent or adolescent. The Social Constructivism equally plays a vital role underpinning the study. Vygotsky believed that social interactions both with educators and more learned peers could impact a student's learning potential. Vygotsky was adamant that the students mind would benefit through interpersonal experiences or face the risk of lagging behind if left with their own discoveries.

6.2.3 Chapter 3

This chapter highlights the differences, similarities, benefits and problematic areas among a few countries and how IE is conceptualised. Where the benefits are great, research shows that IE offers maximum benefit to both students and teachers in equal measure. This works in increasing their tolerance, valuing differences and understanding (Boyle, Scriven, Dumin & Downes, 2011). The scholars emphasise that this assists in the establishment of a school culture of continued development and improvement. It is here that teachers are immersed in a society where they are encouraged to embrace varied pedagogical approaches and strategies, thereby catering to the needs of diverse learners This creates a positive environment and thus impacts positively on all students (Boyle, Topping, Jindall-Snape & Norwich, 2012, Loreman, Deppeler & Harvey, 2011). In ascertaining the experiences of TVET college lecturers on students with disabilities, a summary of the literature exposed the global views surrounding the mainstreaming of students as opposed to segregated learning. Zaretsky (2005) concedes that there are very few areas of educational inquiry that is as troublesome and divisive as disabilities and special needs. This is due to its nature of being informed by other fields such as the social sciences and the controversial medical model.

The challenge that arises is the vast increase in the numbers of students with disabilities entering mainstream institutions and the inability of educators in finding the means of having their needs met (McHatton & McCray, 2007; Valle & Connor,

2011). Valle and Connor (2011) infer that educators work within a pressurised atmosphere where test scores may even be manipulated as they grapple to maintain a certain standard. These are not by any means predetermined but stem from the educators wanting to maintain success rates. This may negate the said intention of the support where it is needed as teaching becomes standardised and passing a priority. I have noted through the study the lack of training to deal with special needs students.

Chapter 3 highlights the commonly accepted dogma that one needs to be reactive to challenges rather than proactive. Ironically, special needs students have been in the system for a while. One can articulate that educators' attitudes, however, remain a resistant factor due to the lack of training of lecturers within TVET colleges.

6.2.4 Chapter 4

A qualitative approach was discussed. This allowed for the voicing of opinions through the experiences of the lecturers. The researcher used the Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis which provided for alignment between the qualitative approach and the interpretivist paradigm. A case study was employed and purposive sampling took place. A sample of three senior management members, three college managers and twelve lecturers were chosen for the study. Files were organised and the data was sifted via intense reading, categorising and memo-ing.

6.2.5 Chapter 5

This chapter encapsulates the views of the SMs, CMs and lecturers. Questions posed provided a synopsis of their attitudes and feelings about IE and mainstream education. What was interesting throughout the study were the contradictions and similarities between the various stakeholders. Participants provided interesting views on how IE was handled and the stance the TVET college took. In essence, and as much as IE was acknowledged as being a significant factor, little effort was given to accommodating special needs learners for a variety of reasons.

Frustration was noted especially among the teaching staff with stakeholders in leadership positions providing much information on what should be happening but was not being implemented. The perspectives of all stakeholders were noted via interviews, observations and field notes.

In ensuring that the objectives of the study have been met a synopsis of the researcher's journey through a very interesting yet neglected area is provided below.

Research Objective 1

Understand lecturers' experiences with students with disabilities in a mainstream classroom setting.

Chapter 5 presented an analysis of the experiences of lecturers' with special needs students within mainstream classes. This brought to the forefront the frustration and nonchalant attitudes of TVET college lecturers who lack the necessary ability to adopt effective adaptive pedagogical strategies to provide the relevant support for student success. This arises from a lack of relevant specialised training. Lecturers did not hold back on their irritation. They stated curtly that they simply ignored LSEN. Their view was that they did not know how to assist. Time constraints were a barrier even with normal students due to a large workload. They were adamant that it was impossible to have learners with special needs in mainstream classes. The majority believed that TVET colleges were ill-equipped to handle LSEN within the already strained TVET system, a high-pitched complex curriculum and unqualified lecturers that exists in mainstream classes with mixed students. Lecturers asserted that the TVET college was to blame for the incompetence, lack of monitoring and feedback to the national structures regarding non-compliance with IE policy (namely, EWP6) in mainstream institutions.

Objective 2

Examine how lecturers accommodate students with disabilities during teaching and learning.

Chapter 5 revealed that little to nothing is done to accommodate students that require assistance or generally lag behind. Lecturers simply pretend like they are not there and move on with the lesson. Again, this points to lecturers not being focused on or familiar with how the issue of accommodation should be handled. Special needs students cannot be turned away, so lecturers feel forced to operate in an area of unfamiliarity. Most lecturers mentioned that these students are ignored and ultimately end up dropping out or failing dismally. The adage that ignorance is bliss is an attitude expressed by most lecturers. There needs to be a re-examination of what

professional development is relevant for optimal performance. Lecturers complained of an inability to interact with students as they are untrained in this area. Accommodation is just a fancy way of saying we accept all students, yet this is far from the truth. Students in many cases were not accommodated in any way or form. Lecturers mentioned that they accepted them, but nothing would be done with them as they did not know how or what should be done.

Objective 3

Explore whether or not any technical support and/or additional methods are currently employed to assist students with disabilities in the TVET college sector.

The overall synopsis indicates that little is done to assist these students. Basically, most students are ignored. This is due to the lack of really not knowing how to deal with LSEN without the relevant training. No technical support is provided nor do lecturers support or embrace the issue of special needs students. In essence, the use of differentiated strategies and alternative methods is untapped. Standardised lecturing is the norm as this is what all lecturers have been exposed to in their general training. All students are taught in the same manner as time is a critical factor for completing syllabi. This is due to the minimal attention that learners with disabilities and special needs get in mainstream classrooms with special reference to TVET colleges. Lecturers indicated that it was a difficult situation as they did what they felt was necessary which could amount to doing very little or nothing as the sector was one with a changing climate of policies and laws that were not implemented and poor monitoring systems. This cascaded from the senior management teams to campus principals and lecturers. Again, the question can be asked. "How do I as a lecturer assist special needs students without the necessary knowhow?"

Objective 4

To identify strategies and interventions to equip college lecturers with competencies and skills to educate students with varying disabilities. Armstrong et al. (2010:138) asserts that attempts at intervention remain fraught with difficulty even if there is "genuine humanitarian attempts to assist in educational transformation". The scholars argue that these difficulties remain precarious and looked at as being ill-

founded and idealistic. These views cannot be looked at in isolation as intervention relies on equipping lecturers with relevant training and workshops which is inclusive for TVET lecturers. This is the only viable option to equip lecturers to enable to understand differentiated pedagogies for special needs students. Lecturers require the competencies and skills to accommodate all learners through training and workshops. An updated transformed, adapted and relevant curriculum for students entering mainstream classes is necessary for success. In dealing with special needs, pedagogy must be user-friendly and pitched in a manner that accommodates every student. Lecturing and assessments currently are standardised. Pedagogies are unchanged. Naicker (2006) maintains further that where inclusive education is concerned curriculum is the vehicle that is the major contributory factor that leads to the alienation of students from mainstream classes.

6.3 SUMMARY OF THE LITERATURE REVIEW

Human rights perspectives through radical discourse around issues of inclusion view society as being the enabler and creator of barriers to education. The current trajectory within the field of inclusive education shows a progression from discriminatory practices and exclusion to one of inclusion that views all persons as having equal rights and access before the law. This view is enshrined in the Bill of Rights of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996) that prohibits any form of discrimination towards persons with disabilities. Discrimination against persons with disabilities can be construed as a violation of their constitutional rights and works against the foundations intended by the Constitution for the building of a caring and humane society in which every person should be treated equally. The South African Constitution (1996) clearly makes for a strong stance against any forms of discrimination, inclusive of disabilities. This is advocated for in the White Paper for Post-School Education and Training for equal access, and a vision for integration within economic, political and social programmes in the country (DHET, 2013).

Historically persons with disabilities have been excluded socially, politically and economically from societies. In advocating for equality, Tugli (2013) argues that exclusion is not only discriminatory and a violation of human rights, but it also places an additional burden on families, fails to contribute to the economy and adds to the

social costs of the state. Where people with disabilities cannot be a part of society or the economy this creates a direct burden on the state to support them through welfare programmes.

6.4 LIMITATIONS

The research took place during the critical COVID-19 pandemic. The fear, frustrations and delayed access to campuses occasionally necessitated rescheduling. However, the researcher successfully navigated these challenges, strictly adhering to COVID protocols. Some participants were initially hesitant due to infection concerns, but the researcher effectively communicated the study's significance for inclusive education and TVET colleges. This helped participants appreciate the potential positive impact on all stakeholders.

Due to the small sample size of eighteen participants – comprising three central office members, three CMs and twelve lecturers from three TVET college campuses – the findings cannot be generalised to a larger population. The study was confined to a single umbrella college and focused on the experiences of its staff across the three campuses involved. Despite the study's limitations, rich qualitative data was obtained from the interviews. While challenges were encountered, the research yielded a fairly comprehensive perspective on the issue of IE at TVET colleges.

6.5 CONCLUSION

The aim of this study was to investigate the experiences of TVET college lecturers with special needs students within mainstream classrooms in Kwa-Zulu Natal. A non-probability sampling method has been used. The researcher employed a purposive sampling method which allowed access to information-rich participants. A link between the ambit of incorporating purposive sampling as a method is synonymous with qualitative studies

Emerging themes via a qualitative analysis using interviews, field notes and observations contributed to an effective gathering of information of the views and experiences of TVET lecturers. Interviewing of the SMT revealed several gaps in the system. A case study offered the ability to extract pertinent information for the study. A thorough analysis of verbatim accounts of participants ensued.

References highlighted numerous issues plaguing the system, including systemic and operational barriers to day-to-day teaching. These factors contribute to the neglect of students with special needs. Mainstreaming these students revealed numerous challenges in classrooms. Key obstacles to effective inclusive practice contribute to the institutional paralysis of the college, compounded by irrelevant professional development for lecturers. Critical factors emerged from the study, underscoring the importance of engaging students with special needs and the daily challenges they face.

This situation calls for significant investment in relevant training in inclusive education (IE). Lecturers also face various challenges, including a lack of support from management. The researcher recommends establishing a functional funding model within a unique framework for special needs students. Currently students with any type of disability has to apply via NSFAS if they actually do report that help is necessary. A Unique Funding Model needs to be focused predominantly on TVET colleges, creating a special independent niche for budgeting for learners with special learning needs. This must be supported by a fully trained administration contingent for purposes of identification, screening, monitoring, reporting and feedback. Budgets for special needs learners should be directed to District levels to ensure a faster turnaround time for obtaining funding once assessment has been confirmed and approved. Included in the Funding Model, fund allocations for professionally developed lecturers in the area of special needs must be prioritised. This also includes having psychologists, counsellors, nurses and structures for accessing support on campus. For purposes of expediency and maintaining accountability, timeframes must be set and strictly monitored.

National directives against the unfair target-based filling of classes should not be ignored, as they negatively impact both students and lecturers. The National Government needs to implement a strategy that is fair for all students, with intervention from the Department of Higher Education and Training cascading down to relevant educational bodies to address the skills deficit among TVET lecturers. Consistent monitoring is essential to ensure compliance with IE standards.

This does not negate the need for general professional training but emphasises the importance of including special needs components such as sign language, simulated

centres and curriculum adaptations in tertiary institutions. Additionally, quality assurance of all programmes, courses and curricula remains crucial. The researcher, based on the study's findings, proposes establishing a fully functional disability unit with user-friendly infrastructure. The presence of specialists on campus continues to be a neglected area. Monitoring for support and intervention must be consistent, with follow-ups in all implementation areas. Effective mitigation of a distressed, fragmented and disjointed system requires functional policies, curriculum adaptations and parental or guardian engagement.

6.6 RECOMMENDATIONS

The researcher proposes several recommendations for TVET colleges. These recommendations may contribute to the improvement of theory, policy and practice on the inclusion of students with disabilities in the TVET college sector. These recommendations were drawn from primary and secondary data sources throughout the process of scientific research followed in the execution of this study. As such, the recommendations are as follows:

6.6.1 Establishment of a Unique Framework

A unique framework is necessary for implementation at TVET colleges, more specifically in considering the positioning of these institutions between schools and universities. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa presents a sound basis for the purposes of intervention and education (Landsberg, Kruger & Swart, 2011). The World Health Organisation wants to ensure that a child with disabilities receives holistic care (Landsberg et al., 2011). The same should apply to students entering TVET colleges. This framework points to the involvement which highlights the impairment of children and their personal limitations, and the direct impact on their ability to participate and engage in activities (Landsberg et al., 2011). The scholars make particular reference to Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory. His theory highlights the disposition, experiences and characteristics of the child that shapes their future. Landsberg Kruger and Nel (2005) highlight the complexity of understanding the learner within the interactions, interrelationships and the multiple layers to which they are connected. Makoelle (2014) firmly believes that if all educators understand that learners do not exist in isolation but rather within a supportive system including the staff, curriculum and the institution, this would

significantly influence the benefits of those with barriers to learning. There are noted changes in the trajectory of how relationships adapt and grow or even decline, bringing conflict within the home, conflict at institutional levels and on a positive note procures academic achievement.

6.6.2 Intervention and Monitoring

This must take place at a national level, cascading down to provincial and local levels. This remains a prime requisite. In my opinion, this is fundamentally due to the colleges' ignorance of basic legislation for IE. This must be followed through by the Director General and cascade down to rectors, principals and staff. Monitoring must be treated as both critical for success and progress of students. This can be carried out via active monitoring through a top-down approach to ensure compliance of legislation for the implementation of IE. The study is clear that right now there is neither compliance nor active monitoring. This leads to special needs students falling through the cracks. Feedback must be provided to the academic head and rector for further escalation.

6.6.3 Recruitment of Suitable Lecturers

Currently, the evidence shows that many lecturers enter the TVET sector with general academic qualifications. Continued professional development must take priority through relevant workshops for those already in the system and new lecturers must have been trained in special needs. The relevance is underscored by White Paper for Post-School Education and Training (DHET, 2013) that continuous professional development is deemed as fundamental to provide optimum teaching and learning.

The participants in the study voiced their frustrations at the current lack of training. Consequently, this leads to students struggling to cope. Mercer and Pullen (2009) refer to the USA No Child Left Behind Act of 2002 (NLCB) that mandated that teachers need to be highly qualified. They refer to the teachers being highly competent in the subjects they teach. This is not a grey area as education forms the cornerstone of our new democracy in South Africa. While South Africa struggles with under or unqualified people in the TVET sector, the USA states by law that where teachers are concerned, they must be highly qualified. This is enforced through

entering education with a relevant degree in the subject they teach and with this they require board certification. There is a causal gap between untrained, unqualified and under qualified lecturers' who struggle in delivering the necessary support which is undoubtedly a contributory factor to effective curriculum and course delivery. Lecturers mentioned the neglect of training needs and support, specifically in the area of special needs. This also occurs higher up the echelon beyond campus levels where neither the structural heads of the Department of Higher Education and Training focus on the critical monitoring of the recruitment of qualified lecturers who are trained in IE. Lecturers with general qualifications that are employed in colleges have general or very basic qualifications. The researcher is of the view that a rigorous process needs to be followed to enact legislation that determines competence of lecturers. TVET quality and skills development dictates how the labour market responds and is largely dependent on trainers and managers, teacher qualifications and the content that is presented (ILO, 2017). Mercer and Pullen (2009) posit that a suitably trained educator has an important influence on the programme quality and should be able to deliver teaching practices and assessments that are empirically based. Hofmeyer and Vally (2022:57) state that "the extent to which TVET lecturers in South Africa can be held accountable when such a small percentage are academically and professionally fully qualified is a vexed issue".

6.6.4 Curriculum Adaptation

Curriculum adaptation for all learners within the paradigm of IE demands introspection and retrospection. Curriculum must be aligned to create a fit for the Grade 9 students who enter TVET colleges with special needs. This should be done with the assistance of lecturers as currently the trend is that colleges align themselves with certain publishers, ignoring the area of inclusivity. Chitiyo (2013) maintains that a functional curriculum is needed that targets life skills for students with inclusive needs as a means for everyday functioning. He believes that these students require a curriculum that is systematic, carefully structured and designed to engage in a meaningful learning process. The curriculum integrity is dependent on the curriculum designers and educators involved in the actual delivery. Adelabu (2021) argues that TVET colleges have areas which are notably far from being satisfactory. He further extends this notion to the hands-on practical aspects as not

being adequately presented in the curriculum. Adelabu (2021) suggests that the current TVET colleges curriculum be revised and updated with to meet workplace demands. The researcher proposes an intensive overview of current policies to create one that is clear, well-articulated, coordinated and most importantly integrated to remedy the situation.

Wearmouth (2016) argues that education, health and social services tend to operate under their isolated banners. He postulates that there must be solutions for a multitiered support system with graded learning support, from which explicit, frequent and intensive interventions are used for learners. Lecturers must be duly trained to keep up with the continuous changes in order to allow equal opportunities into the working world.

Suffice it to say collaboration among the designers and lecturers is paramount to effective delivery and adaptation for both the special needs and normal learners. There is no one-size-fits-all here. Involvement of publishers must be considered. Drawing from Paulo Freire's framework that is referred to as libertarian and as a humanist praxis, pedagogy was regarded as belonging to the oppressed and marginalised (Phasha, Mahlo & Dei, 2017). Similarly mention is made that students who are increasingly challenged and confronted with problems maintain the right to be equally educated alongside their peers within mainstream classes (Armstrong & Barton, 2007; Kenworthy & Whittaker, 2000; Rioux, 2002). Loreman et al. (2010) assert that modification of the standardised curriculum for the suitability of the individual student with acutely different needs still has its critics. At this point, the viability of individualised curricula for learners with special needs in TVET seems to be a complex task considering the large class numbers. Educators are generally obligated to teach all students whether or not they have knowledge of the diverse needs that require special attention. The complexity of a system already under siege struggling to accommodate students, presents a system where students are seen as being different (Loreman et al., 2010). They further articulate current struggles in how LSEN learn in a regulated mainstream class. Lloyd (2008) states that the mere act of implementing individualised plans in the context of a curriculum that is not generally written to include all students can be viewed as exclusionary.

The surrounding issues for the provision of a suitable curriculum within the ambit of inclusive education and for all other students remains a central and pertinent aspect in the success of IE.

6.6.5 Procedures for Proper Access

A Grade 9 exit certificate with a unique number should be logged so that it will eliminate the issue of fraudulent certificates and reports used for access. A technological system should be established for verification and authenticity. Serious introspection is needed into why these gaps in the education system still exist. Stakeholders must find a way to ensure a follow through from primary through to high school and then tertiary institutions. This should be done through collaborative efforts with the schools and other stakeholders. An administration system similar to the universities should be set up to check that reports used for access is legitimate. This will also alleviate the problematic area of false entry certificates/reports. An initiative for the creation of a points-scoring system similar to those in universities should be established, however, due to the differentiation including special needs students, specific adaptive measures must be included. Currently there is no verification system in place. All reports are accepted as is. In retrospect, this adapted points-scoring system will obviously need to be designed to be a unique fit for TVET colleges for the admissibility of all students into the TVET colleges. Initiating a system similar to the points system required for university courses will go a long way to identifying special needs students and curb the use of fraudulent reports. This will assist in effective planning when mainstreaming special needs students. Currently, due to the social ills we face, many students enter the system to use the NSFAS as a living grant for themselves and their families.

6.6.6 Intervention through Varied Pedagogies and Simulation Centres

Differentiation in pedagogy is crucial both for inclusivity and success. Through training and workshops, differentiated pedagogies will permit progress towards a sustained measure of success. In a bid to accommodate all students, lecturers must be able to use differentiated strategies. This will work well with simulation centres where these strategies can be used. These simulation centres must be established at TVET campuses. This will assist with assessment procedures and the identification of special needs. By observation, many aspects may be identified for

further improvement. These centres may be complemented by simulation or role-playing games which are provided by selected voluntary organisations (Leicester, 2008). Simulations allow students to work within controlled environments and may improve their understanding of concepts. In doing so, simulation may provide an alternative means to standard assessment procedures. Currently, students work on tests, examinations and limited practical work.

6.6.7 Parental / Guardian Engagement

Collaborative intervention among therapists, parents, and lecturers' is a pivotal factor in ensuring a transition to a stronger support system and better results. Mercer and Pullen (2009) place emphasis on the collaboration between teachers in general and special education to ensure quality. Stevens (2007) articulates that parental involvement is essential for a student's success. Starr (2004) found that there is a significant relationship between parental involvement and the performance of children. The researcher asserts that parental involvement supersedes many aspects. According to Starr (2004), this has a greater impact on student's performance and success, far more important to students succeeding at every grade level, than education or family income

Loerman et al. (2010) is of the view that a formal assessment should be conducted of neurological, motor development, language and intelligence of students is critical, as teachers need to know what to do with the varied pieces of information. According to them, this information should be presented to educators in the form of a written report. Furthermore, Loerman et al. (2010) expounds on the fact that it is of great interest and value to both teachers and parents to take into consideration individual circumstances in order to address areas that require attention. Similarly, Costa and Faria (2017) emphasise the importance of deeply understanding parental motivations, expectations for their child's performance, and career aspirations. These factors significantly influence the extent and nature of parental impact on adolescent development, particularly among students in TVET colleges. Literature describes adolescence as a period of conflict, reorganisation and realignment of family bonds. The content and quality of relationships, rather than the isolated actions of either parent or adolescent, determine the nature and extent of parental influences on adolescent development (Bartle-Haring, Younkin & Day, 2012; Brković et al., 2014).

6.6.8 Ensure Quality Assurance of Programmes, Courses and Curriculum

Quality assurance is a vital component in the functioning of TVET colleges. However, the study brought to the fore a very selective interpretation of what this function entails. The interviews revealed a disjuncture and fragmented interpretation among the major role players. There may be a national quality assurance of programmes, curriculum and courses; however, it is imperative that this is done at a district and local level in consideration of the type of students being taught. Programmes, courses and the curriculum must be quality-assured before implementation. Currently, courses are being phased out due to non-accreditation indicating a gap in how and what is being quality-assured.

6.6.9 The Establishment of Disability Units Within TVET Colleges

Currently, TVET colleges do not enjoy the benefits of established disability units unlike other tertiary institutions. TVET colleges remain the so called stepchild within education sectors. Inclusivity seriously remains a side issue. TVET colleges require specialised disability units to support students ensuring equality for all students. The University of Pretoria is an example of an institution who boast of their commitment to ensure an integrated and inclusive learning experience for students who have disabilities (Sako, 2020). The aim is to create an enabled environment ensuring a human rights culture and equal access. TVET colleges should follow this prime example to enable an environment which is proactive and works towards social justice and equality.

6.6.10 The 70:30 Rule

TVET colleges need to go back to the drawing board where 70% of the work is supposed to be practical and 30% is based on theory. LSEN and others will benefit from this, which was initially the function of these institutions. Currently much of the work is purely academic, disadvantaging students, especially those that fall within the ambit of IE who may be better at practical work than theoretical work. According to Leicester (2008), there should ultimately be a permeation of values and issues of inclusion in college courses, and consultation with the community. Needham (2019) noted that the NC (V) was primarily theoretical and far less focused on industry skills and artisanship.

Instead of enhancing chances of employment, Needham (2019) noted that colleges were ill-equipped and ill-prepared for the task. TVET suffers from low status and a poor image in the majority of the reviewed countries. Even countries like Germany, where TVET has been well-regarded for generations, are now seeing a trend towards academisation, with the university pathway favoured and TVET a second choice for many students (James, 2023).

6.6.11 Funding and Resources Barriers

Lecturers lack access to training with assistive devices, such as recording apparatus, touch screen computers and even the use of sign language which could contribute to student empowerment. LSEN students may apply for funding via the Department of Health. Currently there is no person taking the responsibility to assist in effecting this vital function, hence the dire need for specialised units to be established. Savolainen et al. (2012) aptly describe the competitive scramble irrespective of the wealth of a country. South Africa being in the current predicament of high prices and inflation is no different.

In assisting to realign the curriculum in TVET colleges for the benefit of persons with learning disabilities and to maintain equality for all learners, partnerships with computer companies can be established for the design of appropriate software and specialised apps that can be integrated into assistive devices for learning. Keyboards can be elevated and made larger for easier access. Fully equipped simulation centres should be established to be used for additional support, training and assessment purposes with dedicated trainers for slower learners especially.

Visually impaired learners will benefit immensely should they have access to Braille and larger text versions of notes and books. Hearing impaired students should have hearing aids sponsored by the government to improve auditory transmission in the classroom. Audio recorders should be provided for slow learners and scribes could be provided for examinations and other written work. Students should be allowed the option to do oral examinations where writing is not possible. In addition, voice activated computers and iPads will play a monumental role to capture videos of lessons. This would assist especially where experiments are being performed for example in science laboratories and workshops so that the slower student can watch multiple times to keep up with his peers. Additional funding should be directed to

TVET colleges to establish dedicated highly specialised Special Needs Units to both students and lecturers. Fully-fledged, specialised and technologically equipped centres may just be the equaliser in creating a fair and equitable system of education for all students.

There are many priorities that national state funds need to cater for in terms of economic, social, healthcare, defence and welfare, forcing education budgets to be strictly controlled (Savolainen et al., 2012). However, mainstreaming students has led to the need for increased training that requires an increased budget. Government does not subsidise all moneys for training so relevant stakeholders should ensure there is public engagement to source funding. There needs to be strict monitoring and accountability of this budget to avoid malfeasance. The researcher proposes an increased training budget for this project as there is poor implementation of mainstreaming. The ILO (2017) argues that most TVET colleges draw on funds from various sources and recognise the benefits for society, enterprises and individuals. The researcher agrees that national training funds could be used to target disadvantaged groups, including people with disabilities or the introduction of disability-specific schemes (ILO, 2017).

6.6.12 Time Constraints

Chapter 5 provided feedback on issues of time in dealing with IE students. Government must consider minimising the paperwork and increasing teaching time so that students' needs are met. This is the core business of teaching and learning. However, administrative loads that lecturers deal with daily are particularly overwhelming. Portfolios of assessment per subject per level and resources files must be updated daily. Filing contributes to the excessive workload, besides general assessments which is part of normal lecturing. This takes away much-needed teaching time in an ordinary environment. Gul et al. (2021) concede that this has become a burdensome aspect of the workload in recent years, including the paperwork that has become a norm which teachers deal with daily but has nothing to do with actual teaching. They highlight the filling in of reports, reorganisation of the curriculum, record-keeping, filling of forms and development of materials coupled with the resistance of government to take note and make any meaningful changes to class sizes and pupils' indiscipline. To all intents and purposes, Gul et al. (2021)

maintain that it is a system riddled with bureaucracy and extra-curricular activities, which has depleted the joy of teaching.

6.6.13 Policy

The United Nations has worked tirelessly towards the adoption of decisions concerning equal rights for students with disabilities and UNESCO has developed a resource package for educators in support of this (Savolainen et al., 2012). In essence, drawing from the work of Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy and IE, Phasha et al. (2017:103) maintain that "the subject of IE has dominated numerous debates in and outside academia, because of the belief that educational systems reproduce and perpetuate social inequalities and contribute to policy flaws". From a South African perspective, policy remains riddled with implementation problems. The ILO (2017) contends that South Africans are the beneficiaries of the:

- Skills Development Act of 1999
- The Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act No. 4 of 2000
- White Paper on the rights of Persons with Disabilities of 2015 (ILO, 2017)

It remains incumbent from a national perspective, to review all policies for the transformation of the current landscape. Inevitably, this must include a policy on relevant training of individuals to be proficient and highly skilled in IE. The formation of a separate entity for the close monitoring of implementation and compliance to improve the success rates of students living with disabilities is crucial. Currently, we have the NSDS in place which was developed by the Department of Labour which identifies critical areas for redress of past inequalities.

I propose an intensive overview of current policies to create one that is clear, well-articulated, coordinated and most importantly integrated to remedy the situation.

6.6.14 Overcoming the Stress of Lecturers'

Currently there is a noted overcrowding of classes. Classes should be reduced to the proper ratio to reduce the stress of educators. Makoelle (2016) notes that proper teaching and learning will not take place where there are overcrowded classrooms. This creates additional stress and decreases work performance. As a coping

mechanism, Makoelle (2016) underscores that lecturers neglect of learners with barriers, essentially favouring those students that are able to grasp concepts quickly and easily. Yeo, Chong, Neihart and Huan (2014) also points out that the behaviour of some learners with special needs is challenging, coupled with instructional difficulties of diverse learners is increasingly stressful on the educator. Inclusive classrooms need re-organising to facilitate inclusive classrooms that will contribute to training teachers in fostering a value system that shapes teacher attitudes (Yeo et al., 2014).

Involving the lecturers across the TVET sector and other tertiary institutions in discussions and forums on aspects of mainstreaming would allow for the sharing of best practices. Assistance in the form of monitoring, support and IE training will go far in allowing lecturers to develop a more positive attitude. Another major area is to make greater use of technology to maintain records as lecturers are still inundated with mass paperwork causing a duplication of many processes. This will alleviate much of the stress they bear.

6.6.15 Inclusion of Specialists

All campuses should have a psychologist, a therapist and structures for referral so that students and lecturers have access to discuss and deal with issues as they arise. If this is done within a proper time framework there will be early detection and resolutions. Counsellors should be stationed permanently at campus or at college level to improve access for lecturer and student wellbeing.

6.6.16 Professional Development of TVET Lecturers'

The issue of relevant TVET qualifications has been an area of a highly questionable nature. Based on international practice, Young (2006) views professional development as the responsibility of universities and colleges in partnership, where knowledge of the curriculum and specialist vocational knowledge can be discussed. He maintains that these type of partnerships could be created between curriculum specialists, specialists in appropriate disciplines in cohesion with other professional bodies to avoid generic teaching.

The findings reveal neglect of this area within the tertiary sector with special reference to TVET colleges. While accommodation is provided for in schools with

specialised training for educators, this study exposes the gap in training for lecturers. In as much as policies that do exist state that every person has a right to education, higher education does not provide any guidance on how these students may be assisted as no viable resources are available. It is essential that policymakers engage with relevant stakeholders on what and how current practices should change. Management equally mentioned a number of issues, non-plausible, stating that little is done right now to assist the TVET sector. Qualifications should include a special needs component for all lecturers at TVET colleges in order to engage and support students with special learning needs. Structures for referral of students that cannot cope within a mainstream sector should be formed to address such issues. Like universities disability units should be addresses as a core structure within campuses.

Lecturers are in dire need of relevant training to counteract the complexities surrounding mainstreaming of students. The majority of lectures concurred that relevant training is not provided to deal with IE. According to James (2023), South Africa's TVET colleges have long been view as the 'Cinderella' in the post-school education and training sector. Perceptions of students that enter TVET colleges do not meet the requirements for university entrance, and lecturers' qualifications are considered inferior. As a researcher immersed within a TVET college, what is noted is that many lecturers do not have industry experience nor the relevant professional development which is a direct contributory factor to inferior education. Again, the elephant in the room is special needs. If this is the case, how will special needs students cope in a fractured system where nothing has been done to address professional development, social justice and academic equality? It is evident that a sense of limbo remain as lecturers wait for to gain a professional qualification due to few organizations having the ability for capacity to deliver relevant qualifications.(Wedekind, 2013).

Lecturers need various workshops on how to integrate normal and special needs students. This includes a focus on how lessons should be planned and developed. The researcher's view is that teacher training colleges should re-open as a matter of national concern. Many lecturers enter the system with unrelated degrees and proceed to the Post Graduate Certificate in Education without the relevant didactics and experiential aspect. This further contributes to ineffective teaching and learning.

Didactics is an integral component for the dissemination of informed effective teaching and learning. As much as didactics and pedagogy have similarities, they also differ in that pedagogy is particularly directed to the use of effective strategies, instructions and teaching while didactics is a discipline concerned with the science of teaching (Hofmeyr & Vally, 2022). The issue is one that is simple and needs a concerted well-researched exercise to include students with special needs to alleviate the burden placed on lecturers currently delivering a standardised non-adapted didactical and pedagogical approach.

6.7 THE PROPOSED FRAMEWORK

The researcher has set out a proposed framework in Figure 6.1 for a viable solution to effect planning for IE if proper protocols are followed. This is to alleviate the fragmented manner in which IE is dealt with at the different levels. The researcher is of the opinion that the framework could work towards improving the current climate, within TVET colleges. It could further serve to effect proper accommodation of special needs students, planning for training needs and proper compliance.

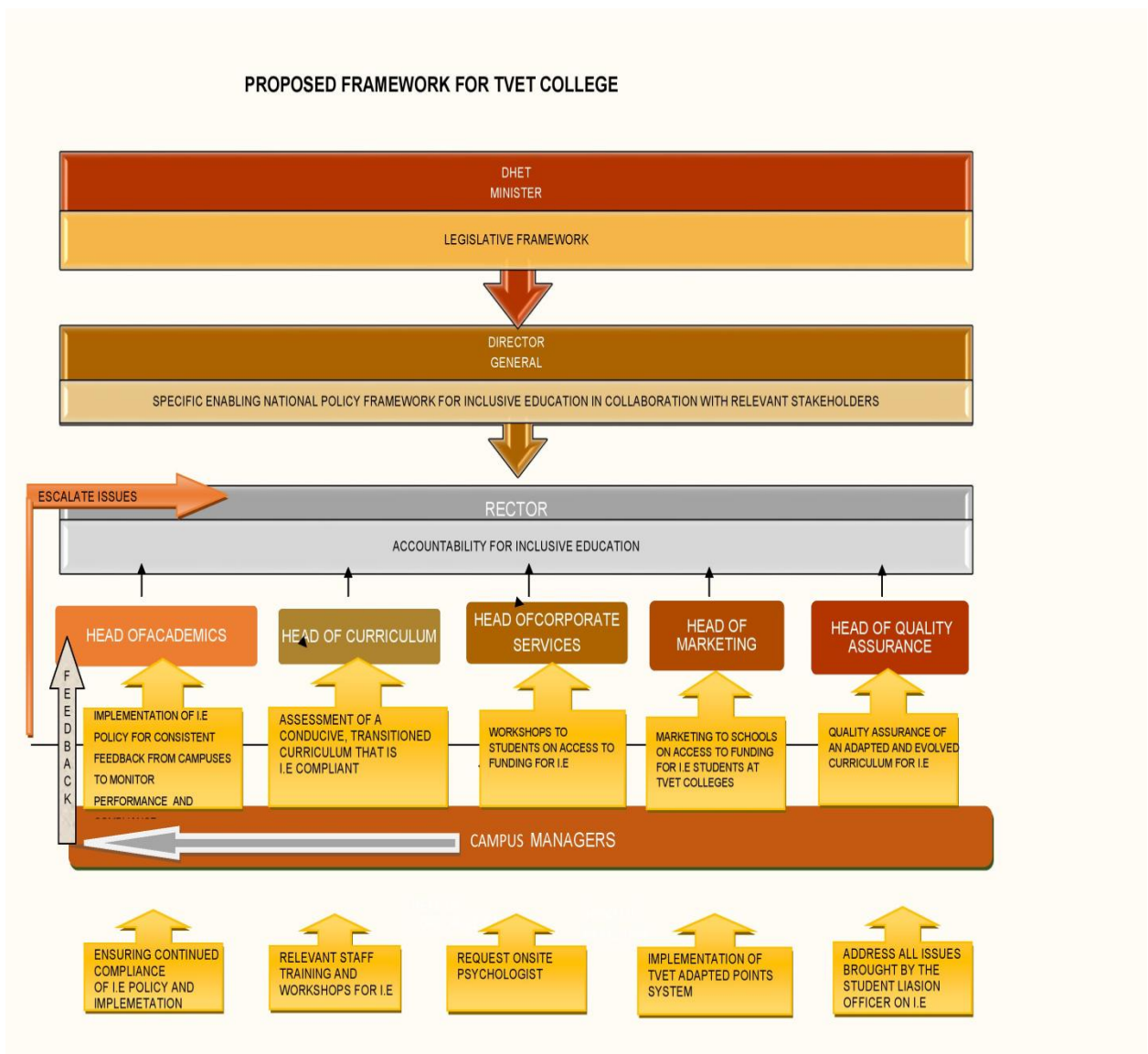


Figure 6.1: Proposed IE framework for TVET colleges

The framework was constructed by the researcher based on the findings presented in Chapter 5.

6.8 AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The data on the mainstreaming of students shows that it is a deeply entrenched issue which affects both lecturers and students. More research is required into mainstreaming students in TVET colleges to ensure compliance. The data obtained from participants pointed to a poorly structured system and non-existent ability to cope with LSEN in mainstream classes. Participants were mostly negative about their ability to accommodate the students that had special needs. Access to

education is mandated by law as Section 28 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996 explicitly states: “Everyone has the right – (a) to a basic education, including adult basic education; and (b) to further education, which the state, through reasonable measures, must make progressively available and accessible.”

However, further research into this area is needed as mainstreaming is a complex area to navigate. Further research will produce a much-needed and suitably designed system that is accessible to all.

The erection of a fully functional disability unit with user-friendly infrastructural capacity must be prioritised. Basing specialists based on campus continues to be a neglected area. Monitoring for purposes of support and intervention is essential. Functional policy, curriculum adaptation and parental/guardian engagement would ensure an effective means to mitigate a distressed, fragmented and disjointed system. However, it is necessary to be open to the understanding that with mainstreaming comes distinct advantages and disadvantages as indicated in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1: Advantages and disadvantages of inclusion and mainstreaming

INCLUSION	MAINSTREAMING
Advantages	Advantages
More opportunities to develop social skills	Smaller teacher – student ratio
Students with disabilities benefit from the general curriculum	More one-on-one instruction
Students without disabilities may learn to appreciate individual differences	
More opportunities for cooperative learning with peers without disabilities	
Disadvantages	Disadvantages
General education teachers may not know how to provide the requisite special education services	Students who are pulled out of the regular education class may miss essential instruction and activities in the regular class
Attitudes of peers without disabilities affect students with disabilities	Students who are pulled out may have limited time to interact with their peers with disabilities
Regular classrooms may not be equipped with the required specialised services	Students who are pulled out may be confused if expectations of the special education teacher

INCLUSION	MAINSTREAMING
	differ from those of the regular education teachers
	Providing special education services out of the regular classroom may reinforce the stigma they often experience from their peers
	There may be a lack of coordination between regular and special educators

Adapted from Chitiyo (2013)

Even though there may be a measure of focus on special needs within TVET colleges, this is far from the proper implementation of policies, access and effective accommodation. Proper functioning requires due diligence and the cooperation of all relevant stakeholders to ensure that TVET colleges are fully compliant and remain accountable. The paralysis of institutions to act on inclusivity has compromised the image and integrity of the sector.

The following areas could be researched in future studies:

- Research into a dysfunctional, fragmented, TVET system;
- Reasons into the non-implementation of basic policy regarding IE;
- Research on the areas of course relevance and programmes for employability; and
- Research into the area of a compromised recruitment drive for relevant lecturers.

Currently the TVET colleges are not regarded as institutions of first choice. Colleges need to be responsive to the needs of the economy as the function of TVET colleges has somehow been lost along the way. There needs to be accountability for the type of citizens that are currently being produced. This study has provoked thinking around IE, the neglect of this area and how the future implementation of IE should be managed.

6.9 FINAL REMARKS

The conclusion drawn by the researcher is that it is pivotal for all major stakeholders to afford the area of mainstreaming due diligence. This should start with the investment of funding to train any lecturer/educator entering educational institutions. Integrated policies should be aligned sufficiently to provide integrity to this niche so

that there is no separation in how special needs or 'normal' students are accommodated.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: REGISTRATION APPLICATION



0704 NIBET

FELIAY H MBE
18 WYACHTIN ROAD
Newlands West
JHB
2000

STUDENT NUMBER : 3042-313-7
REGISTRATION MARK : NADITHAN LA
REGISTRATION TEL : 0120412702

DATE : 2010-01-22

Dear Student

I wish to inform you that your registration has been accepted for the academic year indicated below. Kindly activate your Unisa mylife (<https://mylife.unisa.ac.za/portal>) account for future communication purposes and access to research resources.

COURSE : FHE (EDUCATION) (90018)

TITLE : EXPERIENCES OF TECHNICAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING LECTURERS WITH STUDENTS LIVING WITH SPECIAL LEARNING NEEDS IN A MAINSTREAM CLASSROOM CONTEXT IN FIVE COLLEGES OF Kwa-SAZI BUREAU

SUPERVISOR : Prof KH DICKSON (kdickson@unisa.ac.za)

CO-SUPERVISOR : Prof KH DICKSON (kdickson@unisa.ac.za)

ACADEMIC YEAR : 2010

TYPE: THESIS

SUBJECTS REGISTERED: TENDRIL PhD - Education (Adult Education)

A statement of account will be sent to you shortly.

You must re-register online and pay every academic year until such time that you can submit your dissertation/thesis for examination.

Students registering for the first time for a dissertation or thesis must complete a research proposal in their first year of study. Guidelines will be provided by your supervisor/contact person.

If you intend submitting your dissertation/thesis for examination you have to submit an intention to submit form (available on the website www.unisa.ac.za) at least two months before the date of submission. If submission takes place after 15 December, but before the end of February of the following year, you do need not to re-register and pay registration fees for the next academic year. Should you submit after the end of January, you must formally re-register online and pay the full fees.

Please access the information with regard to your personal libraries on the following links:
<https://bit.ly/3u0q4v>

Yours faithfully,

Prof KH DICKSON
Acting Registrar





University of South Africa
Prater Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, City of Tshwane
PO Box 392 UNISA 0003 South Africa
Telephone: +27 12 429 3111 Facsimile: +27 12 429 4150
www.unisa.ac.za

Appendix B



UNISA COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Date: 2021/08/11

Ref: **2021/08/11/30683157/43/AM**

Dear Ms N Pillay

Name: Ms N Pillay

Student No.:30683157

Decision: Ethics Approval from
2021/08/11 to 2026/08/11

Researcher(s): Name: Ms N Pillay
E-mail address: nalini196807@gmail.com
Telephone: 0737769111

Supervisor(s): Name: Prof MM Dichaba
E-mail address: dlchabamm@unisa.ac.za
Telephone: 012 481 2727

Name: Dr EM Nkoana
E-mail address: nkoanem@unisa.ac.za
Telephone: 012 484 2808

Title of research:

Lecturers' experiences with Students with special needs in mainstream classes in TVET Colleges in the KWA- Zulu Natal District.

Qualification: PhD ABET

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for the period 2021/08/11 to 2026/08/11.

The medium risk application was reviewed by the Ethics Review Committee on 2021/08/11 in compliance with the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

1. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to the relevant guidelines set out in the Unisa Covid-19 position statement on research ethics attached.



University of South Africa
Pretter Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, City of Tshwane
PO Box 392 UNISA 0003 South Africa
Telephone: +27 12 429 3111 Facsimile: +27 12 429 4150
www.unisa.ac.za

APPENDIX C: PERMISSION FROM CENTRAL OFFICE

**Request for permission to conduct research at the UTVET
Colleges in KwaZulu-Natal**



DATE: 11/05/2021

Mr/Ms _____ (Academic Head)

44 Burger Street

Pietermaritzburg

3201

Dear Mr/Ms

My name is Nalini Pillay. I am currently conducting research under the supervision of Professor M.M. Dichaba and Co – Supervisor Doctor E Nkoana from the Department of Adult Basic Education towards a Doctorate in Education (Adult Education. at the University of South Africa. I am seeking permission to conduct this study titled “UNDERSTANDING THE EXPERIENCES OF TECHNICAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (TVET. LECTURERS IN DEALING WITH STUDENTS LIVING WITH DISABILITIES IN THREE UMGUNGUNDLOVU CAMPUSES”

The study being undertaken investigates the position of special needs students within mainstream classrooms. Inclusive education has become an important and relevant subject for discussion from a human rights and social justice perspective, more over in the interest of creating an equitable system of access into education and training. Although there is currently legislation that favours and places a more critical emphasis on how schools should deal with disabilities, TVET colleges are still struggling on how the implementation of inclusive education should be instituted

The study includes interviews with lecturers and other academic staff and students, however, poses no threats or risk of harm to the participants. All participants will be protected through the use of pseudonyms and the Campuses will be referenced as Campus 1, 2, 3 etc. There will be no incentives or reimbursements involved and the researcher will ensure that all protocols are observed with special reference to issues of confidentiality.

Yours sincerely

_____ (signature of researcher)

Nalini Pillay (MRS. –Researcher

APPENDIX D: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT THE UTVET COLLEGES IN KWAZULU-NATAL

DATE: 11/05/2021



To The Campus Manager

Dear Mr/Ms

My name is Nalini Pillay. I am currently conducting research under the supervision of Professor M.M. Dichaba and Co – Supervisor Doctor E Nkoana from the Department of Adult Basic Education towards a Doctorate in Education (Adult Education. at the University of South Africa. I am seeking permission to conduct this study titled “UNDERSTANDING THE EXPERIENCES OF TECHNICAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (TVET. LECTURERS IN DEALING WITH STUDENTS LIVING WITH DISABILITIES IN **THREE** UMGUNGUNDLOVU CAMPUSES”

I would appreciate your assistance in allowing me interviews with yourself, four staff members and two students to meet the goal of my studies. I will respectfully schedule times that are convenient for you and will call before I arrive. This is an important study and will assist both students and staff in identifying problem areas regarding special needs students.

The study being undertaken investigates the position of special needs students within mainstream classrooms. Inclusive education has become an important and relevant subject for discussion from a human rights and social justice perspective, more over in the interest of creating an equitable system of access into education and training. Although there is currently legislation that favours and places a more critical emphasis on how schools should deal with disabilities, TVET colleges are still struggling on how the implementation of inclusive education should be instituted.

The study includes interviews with lecturers and other academic staff and students, however poses no threats or risk of harm to the participants. All participants will be protected through the use of pseudonyms and the Campuses will be referenced as Campus 1, 2, 3 etc. There will be no incentives or reimbursements involved and the researcher will ensure that all protocols are observed with special reference to issues of confidentiality.

Yours sincerely

_____ (signature of researcher)

Nalini Pillay (MRS. –Researcher

**APPENDIX E: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT THE
UTVET COLLEGES IN KWAZULU-NATAL**

DATE: 11/05/2021



Dear Lecturer

My name is Nalini Pillay. I am currently conducting research under the supervision of Professor M.M. Dichaba and Co – Supervisor Doctor E Nkoana from the Department of Adult Basic Education towards a Doctorate in Education (Adult Education. at the University of South Africa. I am seeking permission to conduct this study titled “UNDERSTANDING THE EXPERIENCES OF TECHNICAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (TVET. LECTURERS IN DEALING WITH STUDENTS LIVING WITH DISABILITIES IN THREE UMGUNGUNDLOVU CAMPUSES”

I would appreciate your participation in the above study. As Lecturers are directly involved with students it would assist my study greatly as you have been identified as having vital information on the issues involved,

I look forward to your assistance.

Yours sincerely

_____ (signature of researcher)

Nalini Pillay (MRS. –Researcher

APPENDIX F: OBSERVATION CHECKLIST



A. CLASSROOM IMPLEMENTATION FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

	YES	NO
DIVERSITY ACCOUNTED FOR IN THE CLASSROOM		
RESOURCES AVAILABLE FOR ACCOMMODATING INCLUSIVE STUDENTS		
CLASSROOM IS INCLUSIVE FRIENDLY		

B. SUPPORT AND MANAGEMENT OF THE CLASSROOM

	YES	NO
ADDITIONAL SUPPORT PROVIDED FOR INCLUSIVE STUDENTS		
ABILITY TO HANDLE DIFFERENT BEHAVIOURS WITHIN AN INCLUSIVE CLASSROOM		
CONSIDERATION FOR SLOW LEARNERS CONSIDERING ADDITIONAL TIME NEEDED TO COMPLETE WORK		

C. DIFFERENTIATED METHODOLOGIES

	YES	NO
DIFFERENTIATED METHODOLOGIES FOR TEACHING INCLUSIVE STUDENTS		
CURRICULUM MODIFICATION/ADAPTATION FOR INCLUSIVE LEARNING		
ADEQUATE MANAGEMENT OF CLASSROOM FOR DIFFERENTIATED ACTIVITIES		

APPENDIX G: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS: MANAGERS



1. How would you define inclusive education?
2. Do you believe that this College is ready to accommodate students with disabilities in mainstream classrooms? Please explain.
3. What should an Inclusive College look like?
4. Do you think that this College represents the ethos of an Inclusive College?
5. How involved are you in the area of inclusive education?
6. How often does monitoring take place to ensure that special needs learners are having their needs met?
7. What training has been offered to staff in the area of special needs where this is lacking?
8. In terms of curriculum, is the current curriculum suitable for both students with special needs and the 'normal' students? Please explain.
9. Can you point out the necessary structures that are in place for referring students with special needs should problems arise?
10. What support is currently being offered to Lecturers to assist in meeting the needs of all students, considering the complexity of having both special needs students and normal students in a mainstream classroom?

APPENDIX H: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS: LECTURERS



1. What is your understanding of inclusive education?
2. What is your opinion regarding the admission of special needs students into mainstream classes?
3. Do you have the requisite qualifications or training in the area of special needs?
4. How do you assist students that exhibit special needs and need additional support? Please explain.
5. Do you think that the current curriculum serves the needs of both normal and special needs students? Please explain.
6. What are some of the major challenges you experience in the implementation of inclusive practices in your classes? Please explain.
7. What are some of the structures that are in place for additional support for students with special needs?
8. What support is currently being offered to you by Senior Management to ensure that student needs are being met?
9. In your opinion do you think that more needs to be done to assist special needs students? Please explain.
10. Do you believe in your position as a Lecturer within a mainstream class that academic performance is affected in any way? Please explain?

APPENDIX I: TURNITIN REPORT

PAPER NAME

30683157 PHD %287%29 September.doc
x

AUTHOR

NALINI PILLAY

WORD COUNT

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CHARACTER COUNT

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APPENDIX J: CONFIRMATION OF PROFESSIONAL EDITING



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23 September 2024

Declaration of editing

**EXPERIENCES OF TECHNICAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING LECTURERS WITH STUDENTS
LIVING WITH SPECIAL LEARNING NEEDS IN A MAINSTREAM CLASSROOM CONTEXT IN TECHNICAL
VOCATIONAL AND TRAINING (TVET) COLLEGES OF KWA-ZULU NATAL**

by
NALINI PILLAY

I declare that I have edited and proofread this thesis. My involvement was restricted to language usage and spelling, completeness and consistency. I did no structural re-writing of the content.

I am qualified to have done such editing, being in possession of a Bachelor's degree with a major in English, having taught English to matriculation, and having a Certificate in Copy Editing from the University of Cape Town. I have edited more than 500 Masters and Doctoral theses, as well as articles, books and reports.

As the copy editor,

- I am not responsible for detecting, or removing, passages in the document that closely resemble other texts and could thus be viewed as plagiarism.
- I am not responsible for editing AI generated text.
- I am not accountable for any changes made to this document by the author or any other party subsequent to the date of this declaration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J Baumgardt'.

Dr J Baumgardt
UNISA: D. Ed. Education Management
University of Cape Town: Certificate in Copy Editing
University of Cape Town: Certificate in Corporate Coaching



Jacqui Baumgardt
Full Member
Membership number: BAU001
Membership year: March 2024 to February 2025
+44 7895146059
jacquibaumgardt@gmail.com
<https://jaybe9.wixsite.com/bluediamondsediting>
www.editors.org.za



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