

The Ramifications of Inclusive Education on the Teaching and Learning Environment in the Mainstream Classroom

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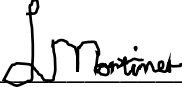
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DECLARATION BY THE CANDIDATE

I, Liesel Joy Mortimer, Student Number: 48241644, hereby declare that this research, **THE RAMIFICATIONS OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION ON THE TEACHING AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENT OF THE MAINSTREAM CLASSROOM**, is my own work and that sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references. It is submitted for the requirements of Doctor of Philosophy in Education, Psychology of Education.

I further declare that I submitted the thesis to originality checking software and that it falls within the accepted requirements for originality.

I further declare that I have not previously submitted this work, or part of it, for examination at UNISA for another qualification or at any other higher education institution.

 _____ 4 December 2025

L.J. Mortimer

Date

DEDICATION

I dedicate this to my dear children, my biggest achievement in life.

All I have ever done has been with the hope of showing you that all things are possible. Some just take longer and require more effort, but you can always achieve what you put your mind to. Never forget this: You are brave, you are strong, you can do anything. Just find your “why”.

I love you all more than life itself. And I am so incredibly proud of all of you.

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Through this lonely journey, I have been blessed with remarkable individuals who have supported me in my endeavours, and for this I am eternally grateful:

- My husband, who despite not understanding what I am doing, quietly supports from the side line, degree after degree.
- My dear children, who have sacrificed so much over the years in order for me to continue to accomplish my dream.
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ABSTRACT

Schools have had to adapt in order to accommodate learners with diverse needs since the drafting of the Salamanca Statement in 1994. This statement highlighted that the best way to combat discriminatory attitudes in schools was to establish regular schools with an inclusive orientation, and to portray “mainstreaming” learners with disabilities as part of national education plans.

This qualitative study investigated what the ramifications of Inclusive Education were on the teaching and learning environment of the mainstream classroom. This was achieved by observing teachers, over a week period, in their classrooms. The researcher gathered data through field notes taken during these observations, followed by face-to-face semi-structured interviews conducted with each teacher, at the conclusion of each day.

The data was transcribed through Thematic Analysis to produce a detailed narrative as to what the ramifications of Inclusive Education were on the teaching and learning environment of the mainstream classroom. The results showed that the age, number and form of diagnosis the learner has, in addition to the type of lesson being imparted, the individual teachers experience, training and personality, as well as the support offered by the parents and school, impacted on how Inclusive Education effected the mental health of the teacher, the ability of the other learners in the class to learn and the ability of the discipline structure to endure.

Lastly, recommendations and suggestions for further research, aimed at investigating what ramifications Inclusive Education has in other schools and other phases of education, as well as the causes of lack of parental support, were made. The study concluded with recommendations on how to best limit the ramifications of Inclusive Education in the mainstream classroom.

Key Terms: Inclusive Education, diagnosed learner, mainstream education, mental health, discipline structure, parental involvement, school support, cognitive challenges, developmental challenges, disabilities

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ADHD ATTENTION DEFICIT AND HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER

ADD ATTENTION DEFICIT DISORDER

ASD AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER

CEDU COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

ID INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY

MS MICROSOFT

NDD NEUROLOGICAL DEVELOPMENTAL DISORDERS

ODD OPPOSITIONAL DEFIANT DISORDER

SEN SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

SLD SPECIFIC LEARNING DISORDERS

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE OF THE RESEARCH

1.1 Chapter Overview

The chapter included the introduction and scope of the study; the issues posed by Inclusive Education on the learning and teaching environment in the mainstream classroom were also discussed. The research questions, study objectives, research aims and the conceptual framework underpinning this study were relayed. This was followed by a discussion of the research methodology used and how the study was operationalised.

1.2 Introduction and background to the study

Since Inclusive Education is a rights-based concept, it is associated with the notion that education is a human right (Florian, 2019); however, it is undeniable that learners with cognitive and developmental disabilities place an additional load on teachers. Teachers must make accommodations for these learners, taking up valuable teaching time from other learners in the class and frequently disrupting the classroom atmosphere. If one is to believe that every learner has the right to an uninterrupted learning experience, then this is a violation of the rights of the other learners in the classroom.

While Florian (2019) contends that calling these learners extra work diminishes their dignity and the dignity of the teachers who work with them, pointing out that many put in countless hours to make sure every learner has a positive educational experience, Section 12 of the Bill of Rights states that everyone has the right to security and freedom as stated in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act 108 of 1996). The right to live in an environment that does not endanger one's health or well-being is deemed to be covered by Section 24. These rights are infringed when teachers are required to create supplementary curricula and perform additional tasks, like cleaning, feeding, and creating resources for learners who are unable to follow the main curriculum. These extra duties and curriculum place additional strain on the teachers' mental health and wellbeing. Additionally, some of these learners can

become violent and disruptive which can lead to an unsafe and potentially hazardous atmosphere.

This mind-set is necessary for analysing the effects of Inclusive Education on the teaching and learning environment in traditional classrooms.

1.3 Problem Statement

The Salamanca Statement was drafted in 1994 and claimed that the best way to combat discriminatory attitudes was to establish regular schools with an inclusive orientation and to portray "mainstreaming" learners with disabilities as part of national education plans (UNESCO & Ministry of Education and Science as cited by Sakurai, R.,2021).

As noted by Horn, E., Parks, S., & An, Z. (2019), learners with severe and multiple disabilities present special demands and problems when they join an inclusive program. For teachers, it can be a daunting task to ensure that young learners with severe and multiple disabilities participate actively in all aspects of the classroom (in order to lead a meaningful and valued life) (Horn et al., 2019). This contributes to the stress that teachers already face in the mainstream classroom.

Further supporting this theory are Paramita, P. P., Sharma, U., Anderson, A., University of Waikato, and Monash University (2020), who hypothesise that a learner's intellectual capacity and learning difficulties can contribute to disciplinary problems, as low achievement and self-esteem are risk factors for showing disruptive behaviour (Kaplan, cited by Kessels & Heyder, 2022). Additionally, Marias and Meier (2010) assert that factors causing disruptive behaviours may be inherent in the individual. Learners with attention deficit disorder and attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder, according to Mafumbate and Mkhathjwa (2020), frequently exhibit maladaptive behaviour. Learners, furthermore, who experience oppression, undervaluation, and rejection may exhibit challenging behaviours in an effort to gain attention and acceptance (Nunan, J. S. R., & Department of Educational Psychology, School of Education, University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.,2018).

This brings to the fore that Inclusive Education may have ramifications on the mainstream classroom with regards to teachers' mental health and the disruption of the teaching and learning environment. This may, in turn, affect the other learners in the classroom, and exerting additional pressure on teachers to modify their discipline strategies to accommodate these learners. While much has been studied and researched as to how to implement Inclusive Education and why it should be implemented, there is little literature available challenging the acceptance of this law into mainstream schools.

1.4 Rationale and Significance of the Study

While it is undeniable that all learners have a constitutional right to an education and access to education, it is also important to remember that the Department of Education states under General Principles that no learner has the right to act in a way that will interfere with other learners' learning or injure another learner physically or psychologically. They also restate the policy that disruptive, disorderly, and offensive behaviour is unacceptable. In addition, it is declared that all learners will respect other learners' property and safety and that learners have the right to an education free from disruption and physical abuse (M. Reyneke, 2019).

It is therefore imperative that a study be undertaken to ascertain if the inclusion of learners with cognitive and developmental disorders in a classroom has ramifications on the learning and teaching environment of the mainstream classroom, through the disruption of the other learners' right to learn or causing them any physical and emotional harm, likewise the teacher who is teaching them. This study undertook to investigate if the inclusion of learners with special educational needs has ramifications on the teaching and learning environment in the mainstream classroom as it is important to ascertain whether policies and laws that are imposed on society are just and for the better good of all stakeholders involved and not merely adopted without careful consideration of the consequences.

In selecting this research topic, my motivation stemmed from a deep passion for understanding and supporting teachers' mental health. I have long believed that the demands of inclusive education - while essential for equity and fairness in classrooms

- can place unique pressures on educators, influencing their psychological well-being in ways that are often overlooked. This study was therefore designed to explore the extent to which inclusive education impacts teachers' mental health, with the aim of identifying both the challenges and the potential strategies that could mitigate these effects. By examining this intersection, I hope to contribute to a body of knowledge that not only highlights the importance of teacher well-being but also offers practical insights into how educational systems can better support those at the forefront of inclusive practices.

1.5 Aims and Objectives

The aims and objectives of this study were to ascertain what ramifications Inclusive Education had on the mainstream classroom regarding teachers' mental health, the discipline structure of the classroom and the ability of the other learners to learn, as per teachers perspectives.

1.6 Research Questions

The main research question was as follows:

1. What are the ramifications of Inclusive Education on the teaching and learning environment in the mainstream classroom?

With sub questions:

- 1.1 How does Inclusive Education affect the mental health of mainstream teachers?
- 1.2 How does Inclusive Education affect the ability of the other learners in the classroom to learn in the mainstream classroom?
- 1.3 How does Inclusive Education affect the discipline structure of the mainstream classroom?

1.7 Delimitations and Limitations of the Study

Limitations:

This study was limited by the following factor:

- The researcher utilised purposive sampling, which is a non-probability form of sampling, to contact a teacher who had a learner in their class who had been diagnosed with a learning issue. (A. P. Kubic & P. Kawalec, 2022). The chosen teacher then recruited other interested persons in a process known as snowball sampling (Mawhinney, L., & Rinke, C. R., 2019). The results can only be applied to the population from which the sample was taken because these types of sampling are non-probability (Andrade, 2021).

This study had the following delimitations:

- Only Grades RR- Grade 4 classrooms were included in the study due to most learners with learning challenges being referred to special needs schools before they reach higher grades at school.
- The study took place in a school in Buffalo City, South Africa. Therefore, the outcomes may not apply to other schools.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Introduction

In this section Inclusive Education was defined and its effects on the mainstream classroom were briefly discussed; this was followed by pointing out the gap which exists in literature. It concluded with the inclusion of the theoretical framework which underpinned this study.

Inclusive Education is defined as a process that focuses on the presence, participation, and achievement of all learners in mainstream classrooms (Booth, Ainscow, Black-Hawkins, Vaughn & Shaw as cited by Taiwo, M. & Florian, L., 2019). A child with a handicap is required, under the Salamanca Statement, to attend the neighbourhood school that the child would attend in the absence of the condition (Florian, L. 2019). Moreover, Within traditional educational environments, learners with special educational needs are entitled to realise their full learning potential (UNESCO as referenced by Woodcock, S., Sharma, U., Subban, P., Hitches, E., 2022).

In 2006, the founding states of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD) pledged to create an inclusive educational system where learners with special needs have the right to equitable access to the general education system, as stated in UN CPDR Article 24 (Goldan, J. & Schwab, S., 2020). 92 governments and 25 international organisations concurred on this equitable right. (Woodcock et al., 2022).

In summary, Inclusive Education is defined as a setting in which all learners get fair and equitable learning, participation, and educational opportunities in addition to being welcomed, cared for, and appreciated equally (Booth & Ainscow as cited by Woodcock, et al., 2022). According to Forlin, C., Scorgie, K., Strikwerda, H., Walker, J., Donnelly, M., Jane, S., and Aragon, A. B. (2019), parents have a right to the finest education and long-term results for their learners, and it is Inclusive Education that helps to achieve this.

2.2. Defining Mainstream Education

According to Pearson, J. (2001), the phrase "mainstream" refers to something that is typical or that possesses customary beliefs, behaviours, or attitudes. One way to conceptualise education is as the transfer of knowledge from teachers to learners. In order to apply teaching and learning techniques, a teacher must identify and establish learning objectives and cultivate teaching resources. This process is known as the integration of numerous parts inside the approach (Munna, A. S., & Kalam, M. A., 2021). When the two concepts are combined, it may be assumed that mainstream education refers to the scenario in which teachers use orthodox activities to teach learners in a typical way while maintaining conventional attitudes and views.

2.3. Needs of Learners with Cognitive and Developmental Challenges in the Mainstream Class

Learners that struggle academically may exhibit problematic behaviour (Miolanen, referenced by Kessels & Heyder, 2020). This is because underachievers frequently turn to disruptive behaviour as a substitute for positive reinforcement (Baumeister, cited by Kessels & Heyder, 2020).

To facilitate support of their learning and participation, these learners frequently require the assistance of a teaching assistant. However, to truly promote inclusion, these assistants must be responsive to all learners and not just those with special needs (Ainscow, cited by Woodcock et al., 2022). If they are not, this could be interpreted as microexclusion (Slee, as cited by Woodcock et al., 2022). According to Woodcock (2022), teachers that insist on hiring more teaching assistants in order to integrate these learners are actually undermining inclusion by projecting a learner's prospective deficit picture. This implies that genuine inclusion depends on the teacher's capacity to take care of these learners on his/her own, adding to the workload.

The learning and care demands of learners with severe and multiple disabilities are frequently complex as these learners require a lot of care, and that care must be provided all day long. Some of those needs include assistance with eating, posture,

help with mobility, and administering medication. Furthermore, if their learning objectives are not regularly addressed throughout the course of the school day, it is unlikely that they will be achieved (Orelove, Sobsey, and Filles, as cited by Horn et al., 2019). The teacher will have less time to instruct the other learners in the class, who also have a right to an uninterrupted learning day, as a result of this.

A classroom that strives to be inclusive views the role of the teacher as crucial. It can be difficult, though, to provide for a variety of learners' needs, talents, and abilities (Woodcock & Nicoll, 2022).

2.4. Effects of Inclusive Education on Teachers Mental Health

Disruptive learners decrease learning time and have an adverse effect on teachers' well-being (Nunan & Ntombela, 2021). Additionally, the difficulty of teaching these learners can lead to teacher burnout, a decline in self-efficacy, and compromise teachers wellbeing (Ford, as cited by Aasheim et al., 2020).

Some of these learners have the potential to turn violent, and attacks on teachers can impact their safety and diminish their authority (Segalo & Rambuda, 2018). In addition to the psychological trauma that teachers endure, attacks on them also cause them to lose money through the inability to work when injured and the cost of treatment (Marias & Meier as cited by Nunan & Ntombela, 2021). This is because they work in a highly stressful environment that impairs their abilities to attend work and raises their anxiety (Marias & Meier, cited by Nunan & Ntombela, 2021).

Teachers are also faced with the issue of developing and implementing curricula that both respects the expectations of the family and is representative of the variety present in their classrooms (Horn et al., 2019). This contributes even more effort/struggle to their already chaotic schedule.

These added pressures provided by the learner with additional needs, has a burdening effect on a teacher's mental health, which should be considered when implementing Inclusive Education in a classroom.

2.5. Effects of Inclusive Education on Teaching and Learning Environments

Teachers who struggle to manage challenging learners' disruptive behaviour waste time on academic instruction and sabotage their own and their learners' positive relationships; this further impairs the academic performance, school attachment, and social well-being of other learners in the classroom. (Conroy, cited by Handegård, B. H., Aasheim, M., Fossum, S., Reedtz, C., & Martinussen, M., 2020)

Learners who are targeted by other learners for acting in a demanding manner suffer both psychologically and physically (Shantone & Nunan, 2018). These victims suffer from excruciating physical and mental pain that may lead to psychological issues down the road (Kaiser & Rasminsky as cited by Shantone & Nunan, 2018). Furthermore, some learners with disabilities display unsettling behaviour, which can be distressing to other learners and can also cause emotional trauma (Shantone & Nunan, 2018).

When learners with challenges exhibit maladaptive behaviour, the teaching and learning process is often compromised, as a significant portion of the instructional day becomes devoted to managing these behavioural differences. Consequently, the academic potential of all learners may be hindered, since teachers are required to spend more time addressing discipline issues than engaging in effective teaching and learning. This imbalance highlights the strain placed on teachers in inclusive settings, where the dual responsibility of instruction and behaviour management can detract from overall educational outcomes (Mafumbate & Mkhathjwa, 2020).

2.6. Effects of Inclusive Education on the Discipline Structure of the Mainstream Classroom

According to Gitimohaddam, M., Chichkine, N., McArthur, L., Sangha, S. S., and Symington, V. (2022) the most common diagnosed learning and developmental disorders observed in the inclusive classroom are Intellectual Disabilities (ID), Down syndrome, ASD, and ADHD. Language disorders, hard of hearing or deafness, vision problems, neuromotor conditions (like cerebral palsy), and neuromuscular disorders (like Duchenne muscular dystrophy) are additional neurodevelopmental and

behavioural conditions that impact learners early and long-term development and achievement (Lipkin, P. H., Macias, M. M., Norwood, K. W., Brei, T. J., Davidson, L. F., Davis, B. E. & Voigt, R. G., 2020).

Conditions including dyslexia, dyscalculia, and developmental language disorder are typically identified through specialised education programs. Clinical services typically diagnose other learners, such as those with autism spectrum disorder, dyspraxia, or attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Selective impairments in reading or mathematics are uncommon, and most learners who struggle with one usually struggle with the other (Fletcher-Watson, S., & Armstrong, D. E., 2020).

This section will examine the usual behaviour of learners with ASD and ADHD. Due to Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), one of the most common neurodevelopmental disorders in childhood and adolescence, and its high prevalence and associated socioeconomic and familial costs (Reichow et al., as cited by Gitimoghaddam, M. et al., 2022), ADHD has attracted a lot of attention on a global scale. Salari, N., Hashemian, A. H., Shiri, M. H., Rahmani, A., Abdoli, N., Ghasemi, H., & Mohammadi, M. (2023).

Learners with ADHD often demonstrate impulsive behaviour, lack of self-control, difficulty focusing, excessive activity, and lack of self-control (Austerman J. as cited by Salari, N., et al., 2023). One of the primary symptoms of ADHD is hyperactivity, which can cause a learner to be psychologically and socially incompatible at home, at school, and in the community (Kaplan B.J. as cited by Salari, N., et al., 2023). According to Sharma A. & Couture J. as cited Salari, N., et al., 2023, the core characteristics of ADHD are a collection of behaviours that disrupt social status. These behaviours include excessive wobbling, finger play, and talkativeness, among others, and they can interfere with one's personal and academic life.

These learners provide a problem for the classroom disciplinary plans since impulsivity, attention deficit disorder, and hyperactivity are typical symptoms of ADHD. An inattentive learner could find it difficult to focus, stay organised, and stay on track. Someone who is hyperactive may seem to move around a lot or fidget excessively. (Kaplan B.J. as cited by Salari, N., et al., 2023) An impulsive person may act without

thinking or battle with self-control, making it impossible for them to follow rules because their behaviour is out of their control.

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a neurodevelopmental condition that affects approximately one to two percent of learners (Lipkin et al., 2020). The core symptoms of ASD include restricted and repetitive behavioural patterns as well as difficulties in social communication (Baribeau et al., 2021). Anxiety disorders frequently co-occur with ASD, further complicating the educational experience for learners (Baribeau et al., 2021). Early behavioural, feeding, and sleep difficulties are common among learners with ASD, making classroom management particularly challenging (Lipkin et al., 2020). In addition, comorbidities such as attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), motor coordination difficulties, learning disabilities, anxiety disorders and intellectual disabilities are often present in learners diagnosed with ASD (Lipkin et al., 2020). Anxiety has been linked to a reduced quality of life for learners with ASD and contributes significantly to difficulties in social and adaptive functioning (Kerns et al., as cited in Baribeau et al., 2021). Emerging research suggests that the severity of anxiety symptoms may be connected to the inflexible, repetitive behaviours central to ASD (Baribeau et al., 2021). These behaviours, which are often assessed during diagnostic evaluations, are typically categorised into two subtypes: insistence on sameness, characterised by strict adherence to routines and rituals and repetitive motor behaviours, such as hand flapping (Baribeau et al., 2021).

According to the World Health Organization (2020), autism spectrum disorder is characterised by ongoing deficits in the ability to initiate and maintain social interaction and communication with others. As a result, it can be challenging to discipline autistic learners in the same classroom as non-autistic learners. Subjects exhibit a variety of constrained, monotonous, and unchangeable behaviour, interest, or activity patterns that are obviously abnormal or severe for the person's age and sociocultural setting. The disorder starts during the formative stage, although symptoms might not manifest in full until later, when social expectations outweigh their limited capacity. In most cases, deficiencies are a defining characteristic of an individual's functioning that is apparent in all contexts, though they may differ depending on the social, educational, or other context. Deficits are severe enough to result in deficiencies in personal, family, social, educational, occupational, or other significant areas of functioning. Since of

these traits, standard disciplinary techniques cannot be applied to these learners since they will be ineffective.

2.7. The Gap in Literature

Although inclusive education has been widely studied in terms of its benefits for learners with impairments, there remains a significant gap in research examining its broader ramifications for other stakeholders within the learning environment. Much of the existing scholarship emphasises access and equity for marginalised learners, yet little attention has been given to how these practices intersect with the rights, responsibilities and well-being of teachers, peers, and families. As Ydesen and Daniels (2024) note, inclusive education operates within complex landscapes of stakeholders, agendas and priorities, where tensions can arise when the rights of one group impinge upon those of another. This underexplored dimension underscores the need for further investigation into how educational systems can balance competing rights claims while ensuring that all members of the learning community feel safe, secure, and supported.

2.8. Theoretical Framework

A human rights-based approach is the theoretical framework that takes social rights into consideration. It is operationally focused on promoting and defending human rights and is founded on international human rights principles. It examines duties, disparities, and shortcomings with the goal of addressing biased behaviours and unjust power dynamics. Policies and programs are safeguarded under a system of rights and equivalent obligations created by international law under the human rights-based approach. It gives marginalised people the ability to assert their rights and makes responsibility bearers answerable for carrying out their responsibilities (Human Rights and Social Protection, 2015).

This study was underpinned by the theoretical framework for human rights, namely social and basic rights. It was guided by the knowledge that everyone has equal rights which include social rights such as access to education, no matter a person's physical or mental limitations; in addition to basic human rights such as the right to live a life

free from pain and fear. In this case, teaching and learning in a space that is not fearful or a threat to any person's physical or mental well-being.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Design/Approach

The study used a qualitative case study methodology in an effort to evaluate the effects of Inclusive Education in traditional classroom settings. An interpretivist approach was used to accomplish this goal since interpretivism provides accurate perceptions by infiltrating complex social behaviour (Irshairdat, 2022). According to Funk (2019), it was a suitable method for researching questions on meaning-making processes, such how Inclusive Education affects regular classrooms. This qualitative study began at the bottom and worked its way up to produce a rich, expressive description of the implications of Inclusive Education on traditional classrooms. As a result, the theory was developed inductively. It used words and texts along with observations to comprehend the social phenomena that Inclusive Education in the classroom deals with (Gephardt as cited by Azungah, 2018). The social phenomena was observed in authentic settings through classroom observations, documenting the impact of Inclusive Education on mainstream classrooms (Denny & Amp; Weckesser, 2022). Qualitative research was well-suited for this study because it tackles issues related to comprehending the significance and experiential aspects of human lives and social environments, while also examining the effects of Inclusive Education in traditional classroom settings.

It made sense to do a case study as part of a qualitative technique because it looked at a phenomenon (the effects of Inclusive Education) in a setting that was natural to it—a mainstream classroom—without the researcher changing the environment under investigation (Martinsuo, M. & Huemann, M., 2021). As a fundamental component of a case study, the research included a variety of data collection techniques, including field notes, interviews, and observations (Martinsuo, M. & Huemann, M., 2021). In order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the situation and meaning for those involved (teachers and learners), an extensive analysis was conducted to produce a description of a system (Inclusive Education) constrained by space (mainstream

classroom) and time (observation period) (Hancock, D., Algozzine, B. & Lim, J., 2021), as is synonymous with Case Studies.

The researcher was able to concentrate her investigation on the particular case within the constraints of time and space if she chose to use the Case Study method. Additionally, it made it possible to gather a variety of data for this study, including observations, field notes, and interviews. This allowed the researcher to examine the effects of Inclusive Education on the mainstream classroom's teaching and learning environment in greater detail. To help others researchers learn from it and adapt the concepts and lessons acquired to different contexts, the Case Study also offered a thorough grasp of the implications of Inclusive Education on traditional classrooms (K. Schoch, 2020).

3.2. Sampling

The researcher approached a class that had a learner with a diagnosed disorder enrolled, strategically choosing this group of learners using purposeful sampling, a non-probability kind of sampling (Kubiak, A., Kawalec, P., 2022). This enabled the researcher to concentrate on the Inclusive Education phenomena and its implications in greater detail (K. Schoch, 2020). It allowed the examination of cases with a wealth of information from which much may be learned about the main topic of the study (Patton as cited by Schoch, K., 2020). The teacher of this class continued to recruit more interested people in a snowball sampling technique until the desired sample size was obtained. When working with sensitive topics (learners with learning challenges) and vulnerable participants (school-age learners in this example), this sample strategy is effective (Mawhinney, L., Rinke, C. R., 2019).

The population being studied was class groups and their teachers in Buffalo City, who had a learner/learners with diagnosed learning, developmental or cognitive challenges, enrolled in their class.

The size of the sample group was 125 learners, who were divided into 5 classes, and their 5 teachers.

3.3. Data Collection Techniques

The researcher made use of Passive Participatory Observation, observing the teachers and learners in their classrooms and writing field notes. Each class was observed for a full school day. After the observations period, the researcher held semi-structured interviews with each teacher where they discussed the teachers' perceptions with regards to the main research question and three research sub questions, namely:

1. What are the ramifications of Inclusive Education on the teaching and learning environment in the mainstream classroom?
2. How does Inclusive Education affect the mental health of mainstream teachers?
3. How does Inclusive Education affect the ability of the other learners to learn in the mainstream classroom?
4. How does Inclusive Education affect the discipline structure of the mainstream classroom?

3.4. Data analysis

To generate and describe the definition of themes within the data, a progressive process of classifying, comparing, grouping, and filtering groupings of text segments was used in thematic analysis (Fossey, E., Harvey, C., McDermott, F., & Davidson, L., 2002). The emphasis was on developing categories inductively from the data itself.

First, the field notes and interview responses were vigorously and repeatedly read by the researcher to familiarise themselves with the data (Kiger, M. E., & Varpio, L., 2020). Hereafter, the data was coded by the researcher using an MS Word document to transcribe the information. This procedure involved going through the transcriptions line by line (Pieterse, 2020) and categorising the information based on keywords (Lianto, 2019). This allowed the researcher to discover trends (Fossey et al., 2002). According to Verweij cited by Pieterse (2020), data was divided into segments by assigning a brief name to each portion of the data. Colour highlighting tools were used for manual data coding on the MS Word document. These were organised into themes, which are distinct content components (Pieterse, 2020). These topics were

then identified and given names (Humble, N., & Mozelius, P., 2022). Next, in order to make sure that every data extract falls under the appropriate subject, the researcher went over each one in detail. Following the appropriate sorting of the data, the researcher defined each topic and provided a narrative description that highlights its relevance to the study objectives (Kiger, M. E., & Varpio, L., 2020). A written report was produced with a description of the findings that made sense of the data once an understanding of the meaning of the data was obtained through data analysis (Fossey et al., 2002).

3.5. Reliability and Validity

Reliability is defined by Syed and Nelson, cited by Elliot (2018) as the consistency of a measure over several assessments. To achieve the same conclusion in many circumstances, the study was kept dependable by including a variety of teachers, genders, cultural groups, and grade levels in the sample.

By using the coding method to reconcile the selected research question with the responses, validity was guaranteed to combat confirmatory bias; it also offered the chance to look for contradictory evidence in the data (Linneberg & Korsgaard, 2019).

3.6. Ethical Considerations

3.6.1 Informed Consent

As minors were included in this study, parental consent was sought before any learner was observed. This was done through a parental consent form informing the parents of the details about the study and how their learner would be involved. All teachers who took part were similarly informed and signed consent to participate.

3.6.2 Voluntary participation

No learner or teacher was included in the study without their free participation. No one was coerced into participating and all who freely consented were free to leave the

study if they wished, without explanation. This information was given, in writing, on a consent form provided at the beginning of the study.

3.6.3 Do no harm

All participants were treated free from stress, pain, anxiety, diminishing self-esteem or an invasion of privacy.

3.6.4 Confidentiality

All observational records were kept between the researcher and participants.

3.6.5 Anonymity

No names of any participants were used in the research findings.

3.6.6 Only assess relevant components

Only that which was relevant was transcribed.

4. DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Inclusive Education:

Inclusive Education is defined as a process that focuses on the presence, participation and achievement of all learners in mainstream classrooms (Booth, Ainscow, Black-Hawkins, Vaughn, and Shaw as cited by Taiwo, M and Florian, L, 2019).

Mental Disabilities:

Mental disabilities are long-term conditions characterised by clinically significant disturbances in cognition, emotional regulation, or behaviour, which result in substantial impairment in social, educational, or occupational functioning. They encompass a wide range of disorders, including mood disorders, anxiety disorders, psychotic disorders and neurodevelopmental conditions, and are recognised as disabilities when they persistently limit an individual's ability to participate fully in everyday life (World Health Organization, 2023).

Mental Health:

Good mental health can be defined as a state of well-being that allows individuals to cope with the normal stresses of life and function productively (Paolo, de Pablo, De Micheli, Dorien, Nieman, Correll, Lars, Vedel, Kessing, Pfennig, Bechdorf, Borgwardt, Arango & van Amelsvoort, 2020).

Discipline Structure:

Discipline is a way of guiding and helping learners to learn what is right and what is expected of them (Department of Education, cited by Obadire & Sinthumule, 2019). How the discipline is carried out, forms the discipline structure.

Maladaptive Behaviours:

Eyman and Call, as cited by Mafumbate and Mkhathjwa (2020) define maladaptive behaviours as those actions that prevent an individual from adapting to new circumstances, thereby displaying the following: passive aggressiveness, avoidance, withdrawal, self-harm, anger, substance abuse, and daydreaming, as well as vandalism, stealing, fighting and disrespect of teachers.

Mainstream Education:

Pearson, J. (2001), defines mainstream as that which is normal or having conventional ideas, attitudes or activities. This equates to an education system which is seen to be “normal/conventional” being referred to as mainstream education.

Learner:

A person who is acquiring a skill or knowledge through studying, experience or being taught (Pearsall, J. 2001).

Learning Environment:

The conditions and surroundings in which learning takes place. This includes the physical, social and emotional elements (Clapper, T. C., 2010).

Teaching Environment:

The conditions and surroundings in which a teacher is working under (Clapper, T.C., 2010).

Education:

Education can be seen as the transformation process of knowledge from teachers to learners. It is referred as the combination of various elements within the process where a teacher identifies and establishes the learning objectives and develops teaching resources to implement the teaching and learning strategies (Munna, A. S., & Kalam, M. A., 2021).

Teacher:

A teacher is defined by Pearson, J. (2001) as one who imparts knowledge to someone in how to do something, especially in a school or other recognised programme.

Learning disabilities:

Learning disabilities can be manifested as primary conditions such as having difficulty in acquiring specific academic skills, or as secondary conditions, comorbid to other developmental disorders such as attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder. Areas such as reading, reading comprehension, mathematics, written expression disabilities and

spectrum disorders all fall into this. Those with learning disabilities are at risk for academic deficiencies and related functional social, emotional, and behavioural difficulties as well as having poorer long-term social and vocational outcomes (Grigorenko, E. L., Compton, D. L., Fuchs, L. S., Wagner, R. K., Willcutt, E. G., & Fletcher, J. M., 2020).

Ramifications:

The Cambridge English Dictionary (2024) defines ramifications as being the possible results of a decision or action.

CHAPTER DIVISION

The thesis was divided into the following chapters and subsections:

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The chapter introduced the general purpose of the research, giving a broad outline of what was included in the thesis. One was introduced to the background of the problem, and the problem statement was provided. The purpose of the study was discussed, leading to the research questions which were investigated. There was a provision of a list of definition of terms used as well as an outline of the limitations and delimitations experienced by the study. The theoretical framework underpinning the study was shown, following a brief narration of the literature relevant to this study. An introduction to the research methodology used was covered. The ethical aspects involved in this study were explained, in addition to how they were addressed.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter contained a detailed account of literature which was relevant to the study. Inclusive Education was defined along with the meaning of mainstream classrooms. What constitutes good mental health and factors that can negatively influence this, were explained. Environments which are conducive to learning and teaching were evidenced alongside a description of maladaptive behaviour exhibited by learners. These narrations sought to capsule the ramifications Inclusive Education has on the teaching and learning environment in the mainstream classroom. This was done through the juxtaposing of the consequences of Inclusive Education with the needs of learners to have a positive learning environment and teachers, an environment free from stress and harm. The literature sought to explain that the needs of all stakeholders are equally important and the policies which seek to uphold this were quoted as such.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHOD (Qualitative)

This chapter saw a comprehensive presentation as to the research methodology which was used in this study. This included the sampling strategy and sample characteristics (such as age group, gender and demographics). The data gathering techniques and research design were detailed, in addition to, the procedures implemented to analyse the data.

The reliability and validity of the study were also addressed in detail. The ethical implications of the study were outlined and how these were circumvented, were included. The ethical clearance certificate and other relevant documents used to obtain permission to conduct the research were included in the Appendices.

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

Here the detailed findings were presented. As the study was qualitative in method, a narration was presented, after the meticulous examination of the field notes and interview responses transcriptions. These were coded thematically and transcribed into narrations of the findings, which were reflected in this chapter. The questionnaire, which was administered to the participants, was included in the Appendices.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS AND OUTCOMES

This chapter found the conclusions which can be deduced from the findings in relation to the research questions. Here, recommendations were given for future research which could be conducted, in addition to the conclusions drawn.

CONCLUSION

This chapter introduced the concept of Inclusive Education and outlined the ramifications it can pose for the teaching and learning environment within mainstream classrooms. First, the issue was framed through the presentation of research questions that aligned with the overall aims and objectives of the study. Second, these questions were positioned to guide the inquiry into how inclusive practices affect both

teachers and learners in mainstream contexts. The next chapter reviewed the relevant body of literature in support of this investigation, thereby establishing the theoretical and empirical foundation upon which the study was built.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 CHAPTER OVERVIEW

This chapter provided an overview of previous studies conducted in the field of Inclusive Education, conditions which are commonly found in the mainstream classroom, the consequences of these conditions and the effects they can have, both positive and negative, on the teaching and learning environment in the classroom.

2.2 INTRODUCTION

When it comes to Inclusive Education, all learners should be given fair and equitable learning opportunities, as well as a warm welcome, consideration, and equal worth, according to Booth and Ainscow, cited by Woodcock et al. (2022). Forlin, C., Scorgie, K., Strikwerda, H., Walker, J., Donnelly, M., Jane, S., and Aragon, A. B. (2019) assert that Inclusive Education contributes to parents' rights to the best education and long-term outcomes for their learners.

It is important to keep in mind that the Department of Education states under General Principles that no learner has the right to act in a way that will interfere with another learner's ability to learn or cause physical or psychological harm to another learner. This is true even though it is undeniable that all learners have a constitutional right to an education and access to education. They also restate the policy that disruptive, boisterous, and offensive behaviour is not permitted. It is declared that every learner has the right to an education free from interruption and physical abuse, and that every learner shall respect the belongings and safety of other learners (Reyneke, M., 2019).

However, when a learner enrolls in an inclusive program, he/she face unique challenges and needs because of their severe and multiple disabilities (Horn & Kang as cited by Horn, E., Parks, S., & An, Z.,2019). For young learners with severe and multiple disabilities to lead meaningful, valued lives, it can be a challenging task for teachers to ensure that they actively participate in all aspects of the classroom (Horn et al., 2019). This adds to the stress that these teachers already experience in the

mainstream classroom. The hypothesis that a learner's intellectual capacity and learning difficulties can contribute to disciplinary problems, or in the larger social context or external systems in which the individual exists, is further supported by Paramita, P. P., Sharma, U., Anderson, A., University of Waikato, and Monash University (2020). Low achievement and self-esteem are risk factors for showing disruptive behaviour (Kaplan, cited by Kessels & Heyder, 2022). Furthermore, according to Marias and Meier (2010), an individual may be born with certain characteristics that lead to disruptive behaviours. For instance, according to Mafumbate and Mkhatjwa (2020), learners with Attention Deficit Disorder and Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder typically display negative behaviour. Having said this, in an attempt to gain attention and approval, learners who experience oppression, undervaluation, and rejection may also engage in challenging behaviours (Nunan, J. S. R., & Department of Educational Psychology, School of Education, University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa., 2018).

This chapter will include findings of previous research studies concerning Inclusive Education issues that teachers face globally and in South Africa. Possible consequences of this phenomenon will be investigated while considering the effects that these consequences have on teaching and learning. What the law says with regards to Inclusive Education will be uncovered followed by an in-depth look at the various learning disorders usually experienced in the classroom with an overview of expected behaviours of these learners. The chapter will be concluded having addressed the need for the main research question:

“What are the ramifications of Inclusive Education on the teaching and learning environment in the mainstream classroom?”

And sub questions:

1. “How does Inclusive Education affect the mental health of mainstream teachers?”
2. “How does Inclusive Education affect the ability of the other learners to learn in the mainstream classroom?”

3. “How does Inclusive Education affect the discipline structure of the mainstream classroom?”

2.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework that takes social rights into account is based on human rights. It is based on international human rights principles and operationally concentrates on promoting and defending human rights. To resolve biased behaviours and unfair power dynamics, it looks at responsibilities, disparities, and deficiencies. Under the human rights-based approach, policies and programs are protected by a set of rights and corresponding obligations established by international law. It empowers those who are marginalised to speak up for their rights and holds those who bear responsibility accountable for fulfilling their obligations (Human Rights and Social Protection, 2015).

The theoretical framework for human rights, specifically social and basic rights, serves as the foundation for this study. It is informed by the understanding that every individual possesses equal rights - fundamental human rights like the freedom from suffering and terror, as well as social rights like the right to an education, regardless of one's physical or mental disabilities. In this instance, instruction and learning should take place in an environment free from fear or threats to anyone's bodily or mental health.

2.4 A SYNOPSIS OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

The Normalisation Act, passed by the Danish Parliament in 1959, marked the beginning of the normalisation movement and allowed mentally disabled people to live as close to a normal life as possible. This is when Inclusive Education first gained traction (Bank-Mikkelsen as cited by Ohba, A. & Malenya, 2022).

The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education, which was drafted in 1994, is where the idea of school inclusion originated (UNESCO as cited by A. Rapp & A. Corral-Granados, 2024). According to UNESCO, as referenced by Rapp, A., and Corral-Granados, A. (2024), this document contains

normative principles for inclusion that recognise institutions that include all learners, highlight differences as assets, fostering learning and attend to individual needs. Scholars studying Inclusive Education refer to the Salamanca Statement to emphasise the significance of social justice, democracy and the elimination of all forms of exclusion and prejudice (Hernandez-Torrano as referenced by Rapp & Corral-Granados, 2024).

The creation of Inclusive Educational environments has been increasingly well-known worldwide because of changes in legislation and educational policy. With Article 24 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Lindner, K. & Schwab, S., 2020) stating that State parties recognise the right of persons with disabilities to education and they realise this right without discrimination, the development of an inclusive school environment for learners with special needs has become an aim for compulsory schools. State Parties shall guarantee an Inclusive Education system at all levels and lifelong learning in addition, based on equitable possibilities (United Nations as cited by Lindner, K. & Schwab, S., 2020).

Teachers have a critical role in mobilising the United Nations' 2006 Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the 2015 Sustainable Development Goals, which have paved the way for reform towards Inclusive Education (Rouse as cited by Dignath, C., Rimm-Kaufman, S., Van Ewijk, R., & Kunter, M., 2022). One of the most important educational innovations in schools across the globe now is Inclusive Education for learners with special needs (Savolainen et al as cited by Dignath, C., et al., 2022). The right of learners with special educational needs to get an education in mainstream schools is the primary motivator behind the establishment of Inclusive Education policies (Dignath, C., et al., 2022).

Inclusive Education concentrates on educational policies and organisations in addition to all learners, with and without disabilities. Since this inclusion has political ramifications, theoretical frameworks that address it frequently refer to UNESCO or regional regulations (Rapp, A., & Corral-Granados, A., 2024). No learners shall be denied entrance to or excluded from school on the basis of gender, race, or any other cause not justified by the Education Act (Cap 211, Revised Edition 1980) (MOE as cited by Ohba, A. & Malenya, F., 2022). These include mental disabilities, learning

disabilities, emotional and behavioural disorders, autism, down syndrome, hearing impairments, vision impairments, physical impairments, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, mental handicaps, gifted and talented, deafblind, orphaned, abused, etc. (Ohba, A & Malenya, F., 2022).

A school model known as 'Inclusive Education' usually describes a situation in which learners with special needs attend class with learners without special needs for the majority of the day. It is a reaction to the human rights movement, which called for equal rights for all individuals in all spheres of public life, irrespective of their gender, race, socioeconomic status, or handicap, as previously stated. One of the foundations for bringing the concept of inclusion into all spheres of global society is the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Regardless of the type of disability, the UN Convention placed focus on the education system to support learning and wellbeing in the classroom with access to all mainstream schools (Saloviita, T., 2020).

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals reflect the ambition and struggle that educational systems around the world face in extending and universalising an inclusive approach. According to UNESCO cited by Molina, S., Marauri, J., and Flecha, R., (2021), Inclusive Education is teaching all learners together in classrooms that acknowledge and address the variety of needs of learners and guarantee high-quality instruction for all through appropriate curricula, organisational structures, teaching methods, and resource use. It also involves removing obstacles that prevent learners from attending, participating in and achieving, in general education classes. To overcome special education practices that have historically separated learners based on a medical model of disability, the original concept of Inclusive Education concentrated on the education of a specific group of learners: those with special educational needs (Kurth et al as cited by Molina et al., 2021). Accordingly, it is widely accepted that Inclusive Education can assist learners with disabilities and other SEN develop socially and academically and that this can help them realise their right to a shared, high-quality education in mainstream settings (United Nations as cited by Molina et al., 2021).

Both a right and a way to realise other rights is education. From this vantage point, the UN maintains that the learner's best interests should come first and that education

should be made available, accessible, acceptable and flexible. It is believed that education facilitates the development of skills required for active participation in society. The desegregation of learners with disabilities marked the beginning of the movement toward Inclusive Education, which has grown out of the necessity to rethink education so that it is accessible to everyone, including those with disabilities (Graham, L., 2020). This is because learners with disabilities have a legal right to Inclusive Education, and the United Nations has made providing high-quality education for these populations a top priority. This is partly because of the notable financial benefits from their higher productivity, which leads to increased employment; likewise, family members of school-aged learners with disabilities benefit financially from their increased production (Graham, L. 2020).

It should be highlighted that because disability is an individual trait, the human-rights concept rejects the idea that it limits the ability to exercise human rights. On the other hand, disability is the drawback or limitation that comes from social restrictions that prevent people with certain impairments from engaging in certain activities (L. Graham, 2020). In light of this, equality of opportunity will be justified by opening and granting access to conventional schools to all learners, irrespective of their unique qualities. According to Lindner and Schwab (2020), there is a growing need for teachers to create classroom environments that promote engaging instruction for all learners, as a result.

As was previously established, Inclusive Education is teaching all learners in the same classroom, regardless of their physical or mental abilities (UNESCO, as cited by Dignath et al., 2022). Since learners with Special Educational Needs (SEN) have a right to access Inclusive Education, their exclusion from these settings constitutes discrimination (Lindsay as cited by Dignath et al., 2022). This action is universal and reflects the shift in values occurring in many societies (Dignath et al., 2022). Instead of focusing on fostering inclusion for certain groups, the goal should be to change the school into a long-term democratic endeavour that reduces all types of exclusion while offering learners a quality education (Nevoy & Ohna as cited by Rapp, A., & Corral-Granados, A., 2024).

According to Bowman as cited by Saloviita, (2020), teachers are more likely to welcome learners with mild impairments than those with severe intellectual disabilities

or behavioural issues. As a result, it should be understood that, including all learners with special needs is a process, particularly when learners with severe disabilities are served by the school, which directly affects the curriculum areas (Duque, E., Gairal, R., Molina, S., & Roca, E., 2020). A process rather than a place, Inclusive Education is said to be a journey. On the other hand, integration is defined as the process of integrating individuals with disabilities into mainstream schools that already exist, assuming that the individual is able to adapt to these institutions' standards, (Graham, L. 2020), but Inclusive Education is a novel approach to education that seeks to foster community and collaboration among learners from diverse backgrounds. Every learner is engaged, making social contributions and learning in accordance with their aptitudes. In an ideal world, it would also entail building communities within classrooms and schools (Nilholm, C., 2021). Inclusive Education is characterised by co-teaching, grouping, adjustment of all learning areas and aspects, individual motivation and feedback with learners' personal assistance (Lindner, K. & Schwab, S., 2020).

Because it has been demonstrated that learners with special educational needs do better than learners in more segregated environments in both the social and academic domains, Inclusive Education benefits learners with special education needs (Oh-Young & Filler as cited by Molina, S., Marauri, J., Aubert, A. & Flecha, R., 2021). According to Kefallionou et al., as cited by Molina, S., Marauri, J., Aubert, A., & Flecha, R. (2021), Inclusive Education is justified from both an educational and social standpoint because it has been shown to improve the academic outcomes of learners with disabilities and the social inclusion of these individuals has a positive impact on their ability to pursue further education and qualifications, find employment and form personal relationships in the community.

2.5 THE EFFECT OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION ON THE DISCIPLINE STRUCTURE IN THE MAINSTREAM CLASSROOM

2.5.1 The Discipline Structure of the Classroom

The word 'discipline' comes from the Latin word 'discipulus', which means to punish someone in order to maintain order and control or to teach them to follow rules and manage their behaviour (Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English as cited by

Zoubir, M., 2020). According to Hammer as cited by Zoubir, M. (2020), discipline is related to teaching learners' self-control and is founded on an agreement between the teacher and learners to increase learning efficiency.

One of the most important issues to address in the classroom is discipline. The difficulty lies in developing proactive plans to stop disruptive behaviours while skilfully and constructively handling learners' misbehaviour. To stop disruptive behaviours in the classroom, teachers put policies and procedures into place (Zoubir, M., 2020). Establishing norms provides the framework for proper behaviour which is essential to establishing discipline. Learners who believe that the rules are fair and unambiguous, and who understand the repercussions of disobeying these rules, are less likely to misbehave and have a more favourable opinion of their teachers and the school as a whole (Bear as cited by Vidic, T., 2022). The most challenging aspect of a teacher's job is managing a classroom because she/he must be able to supervise and regulate several activities at once. The most important factor in guaranteeing a well-managed classroom is the teacher's capacity to recognise potentially incorrect behaviour, act on it immediately, and maintain emotional objectivity (Vidic, T., 2022).

While classroom discipline refers to the specific control of learners' behaviour during certain activities, classroom management encompasses everything that occurs in the classroom. Traditionally, effective classroom management has been defined as using techniques to assign seats, enforce learners to follow instructions and encourage active listening (Zoubir, M., 2020). To encourage conformity, it entails taking control of learners' behaviour (Wong & Wong as cited by Zoubir, M., 2020). It is what teachers do to help learners learn more effectively and efficiently (Zoubir, M., 2020). Creating a positive learning environment is the primary goal of effective classroom management (Jones & Jones as cited by Zoubir, M., 2020).

To ensure that everyone, misbehaving or not, learns as quickly and effectively as possible, classroom management also involves planning or directing complete sets or sequences of learning activities (Seifert & Sutton as cited by Zoubir, M., 2020). The main idea is to use a variety of techniques to establish a structured and healthy learning environment that will empower learners academically, socially and emotionally (Zoubir, M., 2020).

While discipline focuses on the behaviour of the learner while completing these duties, classroom management deals with how activities are carried out and done (Marshall as cited by Zoubir, M., 2020). Stated differently, discipline is about controlling behaviours and exercising self-control, whereas classroom management is about processes, routines, and structure (Zoubir, M., 2020). Controlling disruptive behaviour, promoting appropriate behaviour and preserving positive relationships with learners are all aspects of effective classroom management (Phelan & Schonour as cited by Zoubir, M., 2020). The goal of the classroom structure is to facilitate the smooth operation of activities in the classroom. It describes how routine and common classroom tasks should be completed (Seifer & Sutton as cited by Zoubir, M., 2020). With this framework, instructional time will be maximised and disruptive behaviours will be reduced. In order for learners to behave in an orderly and appropriate manner in the classroom, it is necessary (Wong & Wong as cited by Zoubir, M., 2020). It speaks of actions that are morally right and good (Turiel as cited by Zoubir, M., 2020). The methods are established by the teacher, who also instructs the learners and puts them into practice right away (Wong & Wong as cited by Zoubir, M., 2020).

2.5.2 Threats to a Discipline Structure

Misbehaviour by learners is becoming a bigger issue (Vidic, T., Duranovic, M., & Klasnic, I., 2021). As a result, academic attainment is declining and delinquent behaviour is rising (Bryant, Schulenberg & Bachman as cited by Getachew, A., et al., 2020). It is also becoming more varied and serious (Sueb, R., Hashim, H., Hashim, K., & Izam, M., 2020).

Concerns about learner behaviour and classroom circumstances are significant factors for teachers quitting their existing jobs. Teachers often have internal professional discontent stemming from conflicts about learner discipline and classroom management. According to Ingersoll cited by Ramos, G., and Hughes, (2020), teacher turnover increases with the severity of discipline problems. Teachers' burnout is linked to difficult classroom environments (Tsouloupas, Carson, Mathews, Grawitch & Barber, cited by Ramos, G., & Hughes, 2020). For new teachers, behavioural issues are the main source of concern, as uncertainty and inconsistent methods of enforcing

discipline lead to fear and inefficiency (Buchanan, Prescott, Schuck, Aubusson, Burke & Louviere as cited by Ramos, G., & Hughes, T., 2020). Therefore, according to Thinodeaux as cited by Ramos, G., and Hughes, T., (2020), one of the main reasons teachers quit their jobs is because of poor learner discipline.

Effective classroom management is crucial for both teaching and learning to take place. As stated by Cho, V., Mansfield, K., & Claughton, J. (2020), disruptive classroom behaviour, on the other hand, negatively impacts learner learning, the school climate, and the teachers' well-being. This is because disruptive behaviour throws off the lesson's flow, undermines learner learning and calls into question the authority of the teachers (Kessels, U., & Heyder, A., 2020).

Misbehaviour by learners is defined as behaviour by learners that interferes with the teaching-learning process and makes it difficult to conduct classes. It has detrimental effects on teacher job satisfaction, learner achievement and academic work (Vidic, T., 2022). It involves tasks that disrupt the educational process, upset teachers at work and need them to chastise learners nonstop (Arbuckle & Little as cited by Vidic, T., 2022). According to Charles as cited by Vidic, T., (2022) misbehaviour is defined as behaviour that is improper for the circumstance or environment in which it occurs. It is behaviour that obstructs classroom work, violates the explicit rules or tacit norms of the classroom and stops the teaching and learning process (Dalgic & Bayhan as cited by Vidic, T., 2022). While learner misbehaviour negatively impacts the entire school atmosphere, disciplinary issues have a detrimental impact on the school and the classroom environment (Barnes as cited by Jensen, M., 2021). Behaviours that are inappropriate for the teaching process are referred to as learner misbehaviour and they are an issue in schools all around the world. It hinders learners' learning and keeps teachers from completing their assigned coursework, which is a hindrance to learners (Vidic, T., 2022). According to Zoubir, M. (2020), it is disruptive and incorrect behaviour that has a detrimental impact on classroom instruction, learning and order. According to Selwyn, as cited by Getachew, A., et al., (2020), misbehaviour is the deliberate act of deviating from the norm, and behavioural problems include externalising behaviours, aggressive behaviours and disruptive behaviours in the classroom (Wang, M., et al., 2020).

Examples of misbehaviour in the classroom include: failing to pay attention in class or follow directions (Vidic, T., 2022); having a noisy classroom; having incorrect or incomplete attributes; being late (Prasetyarini, A., Hikmat, M., & Thoyibi, M., 2021); missing class; learners getting up from their seats; interrupting or not following instructions; failing to complete tasks and cheating (Finn as cited by Jensen, M., 2021). Speaking out of turn, interfering with other learners' activities, yelling at them, acting in an oppositional or noncompliant manner when a teacher asks them to, externalising aggressive behaviours (Lynch as cited by Kessels, U., & Heyder, A., 2020). Additionally, oppositional defiance disorder, conduct disorder and interfering with other learners' classroom interactions (Morgan & Sideridis as cited by Kessels, U., & Heyder, A., 2020). The most common learner misbehaviours, as reported by Dalgic and Bayhan and cited by Vidic, T. (2022), include talking nonstop during class, avoiding tasks, arriving late, verbally attacking peers and teachers, showing no interest in the material being covered in class and damaging school property. Furthermore, misbehaviours listed by Vidic, T. (2022) include not paying attention in class, passive irresponsible learner behaviour (such as talking and laughing during sessions) and disobeying task directions. Similar behaviours are noted, including verbal abuse (Zoubir, M. 2020), theft, smoking, inciting violence, disrespecting teachers (Ambo University as cited by Getachew, A., et al., 2020), nonverbal noise, disobedience, talking out of turn, idleness, hindering others, physical aggression, and untidiness.

According to Fernandez-Balboa, as cited by Vidic, T. (2022), there are three categories of misbehaviour on the part of learners: Being distracted, failing to complete the tasks at hand, or engaging in other activities that disturb the norms and order of the classroom; learners' nonparticipation; and learners' verbal or physical actions directed at other learners or teachers.

According to Johnson, Goldman and Claus as cited by Getachew, A., Tekie, T., & Bayisa, (2020), learners who engage in inappropriate behaviour disrupt the teaching and learning process in the classroom and often struggle to manage interpersonal relationships both inside and outside of the classroom. This makes it difficult to build relationships between teachers and learners as well as between learners and learners.

In addition to boredom, a lack of parental supervision, substance abuse, low socioeconomic status, inadequate monitoring, a lack of commitment from teachers, peer pressure and unclear rules; the main causes of learners' misbehaviour were teachers' lack of preparation, their inability to implement effective lesson plans, their ineffective time management and their failure to follow the established disciplines. Major causes include learners' low academic achievement, lack of enthusiasm in learning and inefficient communication from teachers (Getachew, A., et al., 2020). According to Zoubir, M. (2020), teachers can reduce extraneous behaviour by fostering an atmosphere that encourages learners to concentrate on their studies.

Exclusionary school discipline techniques, such as suspension, have been shown to be largely ineffectual and are often administered disproportionately to learners who identify as having special education needs, male students and learners of colour (Irby, as cited in Cho et al., 2020). In contrast, several strategies have been identified as more effective in addressing disruptive behaviour in the classroom. These include the use of praise as a form of positive reinforcement, which encourages learners to adopt appropriate behaviours and the provision of constructive feedback, which helps learners overcome disruptive tendencies by guiding them toward more productive actions. Additionally, classroom management strategies play a critical role in maintaining order and fostering a supportive learning environment. Within this context, teachers hold a central responsibility in managing disruptive behaviour, as their ability to balance discipline with empathy directly influences both classroom climate and educational outcomes (Rafi, Ansar, & Sami, 2021).

2.5.3 The Effects of Inclusive Education on the Discipline Structure of the Classroom

Both learners and teachers are negatively impacted by disruptive behaviour; teachers experience high levels of stress, burnout and low levels of perceived teaching efficacy and job satisfaction (Collie as cited by Kessels, U., & Heyder, A., 2020). Since misbehaviour in the classroom can lead to poor academic outcomes like low grades, scores on standardised tests, or low graduation rates, teachers are particularly concerned about how to handle discipline issues in the classroom (Tsouloupas et al., 2010; Breslau as quoted by Kessels, U., & Heyder, A., 2020).

ADHD, which has two main subtypes—inattentive and hyperactive—is one of the most prevalent disabilities in the classroom (Raue & Lewis as cited by Pfeifer, M., Reiter, E., Henrickson, M., & Stanton, J., 2020). When learners are not paying attention, they struggle to stay focused in daily situations, miss important information, avoid direct communication, find it difficult to plan their tasks and activities and become quickly side-tracked by irrelevant ideas and outside stimuli. According to Pfeifer et al. (2020), hyperactive learners exhibit symptoms such as restlessness, excessive chatting, fidgeting, difficulties waiting for their time, interruption or intruding on others and being constantly on the go. With its hallmarks of impulsivity, hyperactivity and inattention, attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) poses difficulties for teachers and learners in the educational setting (Daley & Birchwood as cited by Ward, R., Kovshoff, H., & Kreppner, J., 2021). It is a severe, long-lasting neurodevelopmental condition that significantly impairs social and academic functioning across a variety of settings (American Psychiatric Association, as cited in Ward et al., 2021). Learners with ADHD cause more disruptions in the classroom, which makes peers bully or taunt them, aggravating their behavioural symptoms (Gwernan-Jones as cited by Ward, R., et al., 2021). The teacher needs to be aware of how to help the other learners in the classroom who may be afraid of or lack an understanding of the learner with ADHD. Many times, learners think that teachers are powerless to deal with the problematic behaviour since they do not know why the ADHD sufferer is not adhering to the same norms (Ward et al., 2021). This is because learners with ADHD respond differently to events that are motivationally relevant, like incentives and punishments, than do typically developing learners (Van der Oord, S. & Tripp, G., 2020). As a result, it can be difficult for teachers to come up with alternative means of discipline for these learners.

Problem behaviour can follow academic challenges (Moilanen as cited by Kessels, U., & Heyder, A., 2020). As academic failure threatens one's self-esteem, low achievers may turn to problem behaviour as a substitute source of self-esteem (Cook as cited by Kessels, U., & Heyder, A., 2020). This is one reason why learning difficulties increase learners' inappropriate classroom behaviours (Baumeister as cited by Kessels, U., & Heyder, A., 2020). As a result, learners who do poorly are more likely, than those who perform well, to behave disruptively (Kessels, U., & Heyder, A., 2020). As a face-saving tactic, effort withdrawal is a behavioural self-handicapping approach (McCrea &

Hirt as cited by Kessels, U., & Heyder, A., 2020). Learners who do poorly gain from acting disruptively by achieving perceived popularity and intelligence. This provides an explanation for learners' disruptive behaviour since it makes them attribute their academic failure to face-saving measures like teacher reprimands. These learners foster an environment where failure does not serve as a barometer of their aptitude by giving up, delaying and selecting extracurricular activities above studying (Kessels, U., & Heyder, A., 2020). When learners misbehave, they are unintentionally trying to feel important and seek attention; as a result, they become disheartened and behave badly (Dreikurs as cited by Zoubir, M., 2020). The desire for dominance or supremacy is the cause of this unacceptable behaviour. According to Dreikurs and Cassel, as cited by Zoubir, M. (2020), learners who are late, disobey instructions, or neglect tasks do so in an effort to attract attention or to demonstrate their independence. Individuals who display violence instead of compassion and a dependence on power instead of reason may have developed these traits from adults who have also shown them this behaviour (Kohn as cited by Zoubir, M., 2020).

According to Dreikers, as cited by Zoubir, M. (2020), when learners intentionally engage in misbehaviour in an attempt to seek social recognition, it is a reaction to the educational environment or curriculum that fails to meet their basic needs for survival, love, belongingness and self-worth. When learners' needs are not satisfied, misbehaviour happens (Maag as cited by Zoubir, M., 2020). According to Dreikers, as cited by Zoubir, M. (2020), there are five main reasons why people misbehave: boredom, the need for attention, power, retaliation and a lack of confidence. Many behaviours can be linked to issues with the material that learners are being asked to study (Kohn as cited by Zoubir, M., 2020). In contrast, learners may find the job so challenging that they are unable to complete it (in the case of SNE learners) or so simple that they find it dull (this would apply to talented learners). In both situations, learners will often become side-tracked by actions that are not related to their work in an attempt to accelerate the clock (Zoubir, M., 2020).

Low academic achievement is a risk factor for developing behavioural issues among learners with special educational needs and disabilities (Oldfield as cited by Duque, E., Gairal, R., Molina, S., & Roca, E., 2020) and learners who struggle with reading are

more likely to experience a variety of emotional and behavioural challenges (Maughan as cited by Snowling, M., Hulm, C., & Nation, K., 2020).

As social exclusion of learners can affect their learning difficulties and behaviour problems (Krull as cited by Duque, E., et al., 2020), poor early school experiences can result in school avoidance, disruptive behaviour, teacher conflict, suspension and exclusion (Walker, S., & Graham, L., 2021). Social exclusion of learners with SNE is common because of their unique characteristics. Social skills are necessary for conflict avoidance, self-expression, understanding others and situational adaptation (Brodeski & Hembrought as cited by Zoubir, M., 2020). Living harmoniously within a social group, acting honourably and effectively interacting with others are all crucial (Jureviciene, Kaffemaniene & Ruskus as cited by Zoubir, M., 2020). Individuals who have developed their problem-solving and social skills are able to adapt to changing circumstances and conditions with ease. People who lack social skills become more reliant on the society they live in (Gedviliene & Bauziene as cited by Zoubir, M., 2020). Effective communication, decision-making, conflict resolution, self-control and social skills in connection to discipline tactics are the most important social skills for the classroom. Effective communication is the capacity to express oneself both orally and nonverbally in ways that are appropriate for the cultural context, as well as to convey ideas and thoughts in a clear and effective manner (Gailiene as cited by Zoubir, M., 2020). According to Wangi, as cited by Zoubir, M., (2020), conflict resolution is the capacity to identify practical solutions by identifying the root of the issue. In order to make the best and most logical decisions, one must be able to analyse data and experience, as well as solutions and results (Gailiene as cited by Zoubir, M., 2020). The capacity to manage emotions, urges and stress is determined by one's level of self-control (Goleman as cited by Zoubir, M., 2020). At the start of the academic year, learners are not aware of the system of values that social skills and discipline techniques relate to. It contains messages and behaviours that teachers could miss but that learners are supposed to pick up (Ozdemir as cited by Zoubir, M., 2020).

Learners with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) often experience a loss of language, social skills and communication abilities, which makes it challenging for them to acquire essential social competencies. They may also exhibit disruptive and self-harming behaviours, hyperactivity, irritability, elevated anxiety, transitional difficulties,

focus issues and notable sleep abnormalities (Dube, as cited in Al-Beltagi, 2021). In addition, learners with ASD may display unusual behaviours such as stereotypy, aggression, neurological impairments and reduced responsiveness (Al-Beltagi, 2021). Sleep disturbances are particularly significant, as they contribute to a wide range of difficulties including learning problems, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), inattention, anxiety and aggression. Indeed, a greater proportion of behavioural issues are associated with poor sleep compared to restful sleep (Al-Beltagi, 2021).

For learners with non-verbal autism, gastrointestinal (GI) illnesses—such as chronic constipation, diarrhoea, abdominal pain and gastroesophageal reflux—can exacerbate behavioural challenges. These conditions are common among individuals with ASD and may lead to irritability, aggression, or self-injurious behaviours due to the discomfort they cause (Al-Beltagi, 2021). Similarly, allergic diseases can worsen behavioural symptoms, as pain and discomfort from allergic reactions contribute to irritability and reduced concentration. In some cases, core autistic symptoms and behavioural difficulties may be linked to allergic neuroimmune activation (Xu, Snetselaar, Jing, Liu, Strathearn, & Bao, as cited in Al-Beltagi, 2021). The concept of ‘allergic irritability’ has been introduced to describe episodes of irritability, reduced concentration, tantrums and related symptoms. These episodes are often accompanied by increased aggression, anxiety, sleep difficulties, hyperactivity and daytime fatigue (Klein, Ziering, Girsh, & Miller, as cited in Al-Beltagi, 2021).

Behaviour intervention techniques are seen by teachers as time-consuming. Furthermore, when working learners who have specific educational needs, typical behavioural treatments are insufficient to significantly reduce the behaviours alone (Yassine, J., Tipton-Fisler, L., & Katic, B., 2020). The way the learning environment is arranged spatially is important because the teacher's decision should minimise distractions and promote focus among learners (Seifert & Sutton as cited by Zoubir, M., 2020).

Teachers' knowledge should include what constitutes classroom misbehaviour, its' causes and teacher models for dealing with it in addition to reflecting on and analysing the limitations of typical disciplinary tactics in order to cope with the disruptive behaviours of the young people. Standards of anticipated behaviour are known as rules. Teachers and learners agree on what is and is not appropriate when it comes to

setting regulations. Disruptive behaviours are unavoidable in an unorganised and unpredictable classroom; therefore teachers must plan ahead for how they will impart knowledge, control the physical space and put tactics in place to stop unpleasant events (Zoubir, M., 2020). Peers, developmental shifts and lower academic accomplishment are all variables that affect misbehaviour among learners (Vidic, T., 2022). Learners need to understand what behaviours are appropriate and inappropriate in the classroom (Zoubir, M., 2020). The results of one's previous or current actions have an impact on one's behaviour. Due to the fact these behaviours affect those around them; teachers must educate learners about the repercussions of their acts to help them become conscious of how their activities affect both them and their peers (M. Zoubir, 2020).

Regular learners who are in the same class as learners with emotional behavioural problems tend to have lower test scores in mathematics and reading in the early school years (Fletcher as cited by Francisco, M., et al., 2020). This has a negative effect on the academic and social outcomes of regular learners in inclusive classrooms (Gilmore, A., as cited by Francisco, M., Hartman, M., & Wang, Y., 2020). According to Gottfried, as cited by Francisco, M., et al. (2020), learners without disabilities typically exhibit worse self-control, more behavioural issues and poorer interpersonal skills when they are in the same class as regular learners.

2.6 THE EFFECTS OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION ON THE MENTAL HEALTH OF MAINSTREAM TEACHERS

2.6.1. The Requirements of Special Needs Learners in the Inclusive Classroom

Teaching is an emotional labour that necessitates emotional regulation in accordance with standards and guidelines specific to the profession. This degree of supportive teacher-learner interaction is enhanced when working with vulnerable learners since it is crucial that they experience warmth, concern, and open communication (Graham, L., 2020). According to Bjorn cited by Sundqvist, C., and Hannas, B. (2021), learners with disabilities may need assessments, interventions and technological adaptations in the areas of reading, writing and maths. As a result, teachers must possess specialised knowledge regarding learning disabilities and assessments.

The issues that are commonly observed in school settings include deafness/hard of hearing, intellectual and motor disabilities, behavioural disorders and various medical diseases. Furthermore, according to Lipkin, P., Macias, M., Norwood, K., Brei, T., Davidson, L., Davis, B. and Voigt, R. (2020), autism (ASD), language difficulties and vision disorders. Three main categories of specific learning disabilities are identified: reading impairments, written expression impairments and mathematical impairments. When a learner has trouble learning and applying academic skills including reading comprehension, spelling, written expression, number sense, numerical facts, computation and mathematical reasoning, these can be recognised. According to research, a learner with a particular learning impairment will have academic skills that are significantly below what is predicted for his/her age (Pfeifer, M., Reiter, E., Hendrickson, M. & Stanton, J., 2020). According to Gitimoghaddam, M., Chichkine, N., McArthur, L., Sangha, S., & Symington, V. (2022), conditions such as intellectual disabilities, Down's syndrome and autism spectrum disorders fall within the category of neurological developmental disorders that are commonly observed in schools. Frances, L., Quintero, J., Ferdandez, A., Ruiz, A., Caules, J., Fillon, G., & Soler, C. (2022) report the following prevalence rates for certain disabilities:

Intellectual disability – 0.63%

Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder – 5-11%

Specific Learning Disorder – 3-10%

Communication Disorders – 1-3.42%

Motor Disorders – 0.76%-17%

Developmental problems are not as well-diagnosed as they should be (Zwaigenbaum & Penner as cited by Frances et al., 2022). According to a study by Petersen that Frances et al., (2022), cited, 15-20% of learners are affected by these diseases. Worldwide, the prevalence of neurological developmental disorders (NDD) ranges from 4.7% to 88.8%. These differences are based on methodological elements like estimating techniques as well as socio-contextual phenomena; and, in poor nations, NDDs are typically under diagnosed. In any case, ADHD is by far the most common NDD diagnosed. According to the World Federation of ADHD International Consensus Statement study 5.9% of youth meet the diagnostic criteria for ADHD (Faraone, S.,

Banaschewski, T., Coghill, D., Zheng, Y., Biederman, J. Bellgrove, M., et al. as cited by Frances et al., 2022). Meanwhile, Gitimoghaddam, M., Chichkine, N., McArthur, L., Sangha, S., & Symington, V. (2022) suggest that ASD has garnered significant attention globally because of its high prevalence and related social and familial costs.

According to Ashle and Fletcher-Watson (2020), dyslexia, dyscalculia and developmental language problems are typically diagnosed through specialised education services, while attention-deficit, dyspraxia and autism spectrum disorder are diagnosed through clinical services to evaluate the needs of learners with these afflictions in the classroom, the researcher will scrutinise each of the commonly occurring conditions mentioned above, in the paragraphs below. The commonly associated symptoms for each will be discussed to reveal what would be required to accommodate them in the mainstream classroom.

Teachers have a critical role in guaranteeing the success of including autistic learners in the classroom, as the number of autistic learners attending mainstream schools rises (McKinlay, J., Wilson, C., Hendry, G., & Ballantyne, 2022). A neurological disorder called autism affects 1-2% of learners. Learners with anxiety disorders frequently have restricted/repetitive behavioural patterns and social communication difficulties (Van Steensel, Bogels & Perrin as cited by Baribeau, D., Vigod, S., Pullenayegum, E., Kerns, C., Miranda, P., Smith, I. & Szarmari, P., 2021). People with anxiety disorders typically have lower quality of life because of struggles with social and adaptive functioning (Kerns, Kendall, Zickgraf, Miller & Herrington as cited by Baribeau et al., 2021). People with autism are incapable of recognising, interpreting, or comprehending the mental states of others. In addition, they struggle with executive functioning, intense, consuming hobbies, sleep disorders and sensory sensitivity. Early childhood is marked by difficulties with sleep, learning and behaviour (Lipkin et al., 2020). It is also marked by deficits in social interaction, executive functioning, sensory-perceptual abilities, and behaviour, including emotional or agitated states, aggressive behaviour, or physical complaints (Fernandez-Prieto, M., Moreira, C., Cruz, S., Campos, V. Marinez-Regueiro, R., Taboada, M., & Sampaio, A., 2021). As part of a diagnostic assessment for ASD, constrained and repetitive behaviour is regularly and reliably measured (Szatman, Georgiades, Bryson, Zwaigenbaum, Roberts & Mahoney as cited by Baribeau et al., 2021). The range of constrained, repetitive, and rigid

patterns of behaviour, interests, or activities that are abnormal or excessive for the individual's age and sociocultural context, as well as the persistent deficits in the ability to initiate and sustain reciprocal social interaction and social communication, typically result in impairment in personal, family, social, educational, occupational, or other important areas of functioning. Although they may change depending on the social, educational, or other context, they are typically an ubiquitous aspect of an individual's functioning and are visible in all circumstances (World Health Organization, 2020).

People with autism frequently engage in self-harming behaviour which is a pattern of violent actions directed at oneself (Matson as cited by Steinfeldt-Kristensen, C., Jones, C., & Richards, C., 2020). According to Weiss, as cited by Steinfeldt-Kristensen et al. (2020), common manifestations include head banging, self-biting, skin scratching, hair tearing and striking oneself against hard surfaces. The individual and their families suffer because of this self-harming behaviour (Steenfeldt-Kirstensen et al., 2020). In addition to shielding other learners from experiences that could traumatise them, teachers would have to keep an eye out for and stop these kinds of instances occurring. In addition to selective eating, difficulty swallowing, unusual behaviours during meals and toileting issues, other concerns might include food refusal, anxiety disorders, obsessive-compulsive disorders, attention-deficit hyperactivity disorders, mood disorders, sleep disorders, epilepsy, gastrointestinal disorders and feeding disorders (Al-Beitagi, M., 2021). Toileting problems present a challenge to the teacher, who must assist the learner with his/her personal hygiene practices while still instructing the other learners in the class. A language impairment, peculiar vocalisations like humming, grunting and guttural noises, peculiar sensory reactions like spinning, staring at lights, or sensitivity to particular sounds and trouble with transitions have also been reported (Dube, W., Farber, R., Mueller, M., Grant, E., Lorin, L. & Deutsch, C. as cited by Al-Beitagi, M., 2021). To avoid losing instructional time, the teacher must get around these odd vocalisations and sensory reactions that may disturb the other learners in the class. For learners who are nonverbal or have poor language skills, teachers must devise other methods of evaluation and communication.

Selective impairments in arithmetic or reading are uncommon and most learners who

have one also have the other (Astle & Fletcher-Watson, 2020). Learners with ASD frequently have medical comorbidities because neurological abnormalities frequently co-occur in areas of developmental or behavioural issues (Al-Beitagi, M., 2021). It is possible for a learner diagnosed with ASD to also have learning or intellectual disabilities, ADHD, anxiety, or a motor coordination impairment (Lipkin et al., 2020). Of these, 46–84% have gastrointestinal issues and 80% have sleep difficulties. Learners with autism frequently have medical comorbidities, which has a substantial effect on how they behave and develop because these diseases may cause or worsen the atypical behaviour that autistic learner's exhibit. It can be difficult to diagnose these comorbid diseases since autistic learners typically have communication disorders (Al-Beitagi, M., 2021). Learners with ASD may have metabolic abnormalities that cause them to feel fatigued for no apparent reason and may make them very sick, requiring longer timeframes to recover from illnesses. Additionally, both during and after the illness, they could have developmental regression (Al-Beitagi, M., 2021). Due to behavioural problems brought on by ADHD and frequent absences, these symptoms all provide difficulties for the classroom teacher, necessitating catch-up or remote instruction.

Along with speech and language challenges, learners with cerebral palsy typically struggle in these similar areas as those with ASD (Lipkin et al., 2020). Mobility interventions are necessary in the classroom to help learners access the learning environment and engage in the curriculum, which will ultimately lead to independent living, employment and postsecondary transition. Rather than concentrating on correcting the deficits, one must support task-oriented outcomes and involvement for learners with cerebral palsy in their natural environments (Benson, K., Capone, K., Duch, K., & Palmer-Casey, C., 2020).

Problems in academic skills like reading, writing, or math are indicative of specific learning disorders (SLDs); and these skills lay the groundwork for further, more sophisticated learning (American Psychiatric Association as cited by Crisci, G., Caviola, S., Cardillo, R. & Mammarella, I., 2021). Academic problems mostly concern issues connected to reading and mathematics. Difficulties with word recognition and reading fluency are among the academic indications of dyslexia (reading issues). Mathematical difficulties in learners, or dyscalculia, manifest as difficulties with

fundamental number processing, arithmetic concepts and calculation abilities. Deficits in arithmetic thinking, written expression, grammar, reading comprehension and problem-solving abilities can also be associated with SLD (Somale as cited by Crisci et al., 2021). It is estimated that between 5% and 15% of people have SLD (Devine as cited by Crisci et al., 2021).

Even with appropriate teaching, learners with dysgraphia have writing abilities inconsistent with their age and cognitive level. It is a condition that affects writing skills at any level and can cause issues with composition, grammar, fine motor coordination, letter formation, legibility, spacing, spelling and pace of writing (Chung, Patel, & Nizami, 2020). It will be noted if the learner does not meet the age-appropriate grade level or does not progress at a rate that is appropriate for their age. These learners are then often mistakenly classified as careless or indolent. Low self-esteem, low self-perception, and poor social functioning have all been linked to inadequate handwriting (Feder, K., Majnemer, A., & Synnes, A. as cited by Chung et al., 2020). It is frequently linked to learning disabilities such as dyslexia. According to Chung et al. (2020), learners who struggle with writing also frequently struggle with reading and other neurodevelopmental difficulties. According to Chung et al. (2020), the educational setting is the primary context for interventions designed to address dysgraphia and other learning impairments. These interventions are typically categorised into three levels. The first is accommodation, where learners access the mainstream curriculum with supportive or assistive resources without altering the educational content. The second is modification, which involves adapting the learner's goals and objectives and providing services to reduce the impact of the disability. The third is remediation, which entails offering specific interventions aimed at decreasing the severity of the learner's disability. Within this framework, it is essential that the school system assess learners' needs and provide the necessary support to ensure equitable access to education (Chung et al., 2020).

Accommodations should be directed to decrease the stress associated with writing. Specific devices should be utilised along with extra time to complete tasks and alternative ways of demonstrating knowledge alongside technological accommodations. Furthermore, modifications may be required to the learner's academic program (Chung et al., 2020).

Dyslexia is a term used to describe learners who struggle with decoding (reading aloud) and spelling. It is used to describe learners who exhibit difficulties learning to read and write. Learners who struggle with reading are more likely to experience a variety of emotional and behavioural issues as adults and when these issues persist into adulthood, they are linked to lower educational attainment, higher rates of unskilled employment and frequently periods of unemployment (Maughan, B., Rutter, M. & Yule, G. as cited by Snowling, M., Hulme, C., & Nation, K., 2020). However, dyslexia should only be incapacitating if the person still cannot meet the literacy requirements of employment or study even after the necessary accommodations—which the class teacher should put in place—are made (Snowling, M., Hulme, C., & Nation, K., 2020).

Three traits characterise Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity condition, a neurological condition affecting development: impulsivity, hyperactivity and deficit in attention. According to Sayal (as cited by Ward, R., Kovschoff, H., & Kreppner, J., 2021), it is one of the most common neurodevelopmental disorders in young people, affecting 2.2% to 7.2% of the global population, or 1 in 20 learners (Huss, M., Holling, H., Kurth, B., Schlack, R. as cited by Kerner auch Korner, J., Visser, L., Rothe, J., Schulte-Koerne, G., & Hasselhorn, M., 2021). A learner's psychological and social incompatibility at home, school and community may result from these learners' inability to focus, lack of self-control, impulsive behaviours and excessive activity (Kaplan, B. as cited by Salari, N., Ghasemi, H., Abdoli, N., Rahmani, A., Shiri, M., Hashemian, A. & Mohammadi, M., 2023). Inappropriate motor activity, excessive wobbling, finger play, and talkativeness are among the behaviours that disrupt social status displayed by learners and cause disruptions to their personal and academic lives (Sharma, A. & Couture, J. as cited by Salari et al., 2023). Due to impulsivity, attention deficit disorder, and hyperactivity the learner could struggle to remain focused, be organised and stay on target. (Leffa, D., Caya, A., & Rohde, L., 2022), The learner can walk around a lot and have excessive fidgeting and they have trouble exercising self-control and frequently act without thinking. When completing schoolwork, they have a tendency to be careless and are unable to pay attention to detail (Salari et al., 2023). Girls are known to display symptoms of inattentiveness, verbal aggression, depression, anxiety, eating disorders and low self-esteem, but boys tend to display more outward

symptoms like running, physical aggression and impulsivity (Rucklidge, J. as cited by Salari et al., 2023). In addition, compared to females without ADHD, girls with learning problems in reading, spelling and maths had higher rates of ADHD (Kerner auch Korner, J., Visser, L., Rothe, J., Schulte-Koerne, G., & Hasselhorn, M., 2021). Due to deficiencies in working memory, organisational abilities and self-control, learners will perform less well in the classroom and succeed less academically (DuPaul & Stoner as cited by Ward et al., 2021). The neuropsychiatric association, as cited by Coghill, D., Banaschewski, T., Cortese, S., Asherson, P., Brandeis, D. Buitelaar, J and Simonoff, E., (2021), states that the persistent, impairing, developmentally inappropriate, inattentive/disorganised and hyperactive, impulsive behaviours that lie at the far end of a normally distributed continuum of this neurological disorder cause considerable burden at an individual, family and societal levels, which has a significant impact on quality of life and day-to-day functioning. According to Able, S., Johnston, J., Adler, L., & Swindle, R. as cited by Coghill et al., (2021), this increases their risk of poor educational outcomes, accidents and injuries, teenage pregnancies, family conflict, criminal behaviour and incarceration, as well as other psychiatric and neurodevelopmental disorders. As a result, it is clear that these learners have low self-esteem, poor academic performance, poor health and a terrible quality of life in addition to their ADHD symptoms. Learners with ADHD are typically less popular among their peers than learners without ADHD and it causes more unpleasant family interactions. Furthermore, comorbid conditions increase the expenses of ADHD to the health system, which are significant (Kerner auch Korner, J., Visser, L., Rothe, J., Schulte-Koerne, G., & Hasselhorn, M., 2021). In order for these learners to realise their full potential, teachers will need to assist them to reduce their behavioural issues. To avoid losing valuable teaching and learning time, the teacher will also have to work hard to prevent these learners from disturbing the rest of the class.

Learners with intellectual disabilities struggle with a variety of areas, including motor, social, and communicative skills as well as autonomously handling everyday life tasks. According to Leonard S., Msall M., Bower C., Tremont M. (2021), learners with Downs syndrome have mild-to-moderate intellectual disabilities; while some are able to communicate and handle daily living activities, others are not able to do so. Williams, K., Jacoby, P., Whitehouse, A., Kim, R., Epstein, A., Murphy, N., and Downs, J., cited Leonard, S. et al. and according to Williams et al. (2021), learners with intellectual

disabilities are susceptible to poor health and challenges with daily tasks like walking and communicating. As per the findings of Totsika, V., Liew, A., Absoud, M., Adnas, C., and Emerson, E. (2022), intellectual disability is the leading cause of death for learners under five years old and is among the top 10 causes of disease burden worldwide. According to their claims, 15% of learners have characteristics suggestive of an intellectual disability and 2-3% of learners have an intellectual disability. When ill for prolonged periods of time, these learners may require remote instruction and will need extra support in order to physically access the learning environment. In addition, the teacher must devise a communication strategy for a learner who is incapable of communicating via traditional means.

A teaching assistant is one strategy utilised to meet the needs of SNE learners. This type of support has proven to be very beneficial in the classroom, providing organised interventions in one-on-one or small-group settings that have a significant, positive influence on learners' academic performance. The teaching assistant should support the teacher, not take his/her position. For learners with complicated learning characteristics, they are frequently utilised as informal teaching aids (Graham, L., 2020). A co-teaching paradigm has been suggested by researchers as a way to enhance Inclusive Education. All learners are said to gain from this, particularly those who experience learning impairments (King-Sears, Jenkins & Brawand as cited by Sundqvist, C., & Hannas, B., 2021). Citing Groom and Rose, Ward et al. (2021) assert that they are crucial in helping learners with ADHD. The majority of parents whose learners have an intellectual disability want their learners to go to a regular school where co-teaching is offered. Most of the benefits that parents see are associated with their learners' social needs and skill development (Tryfon, M., Anastasia, A., & Eleni, R., 2021). It is crucial to remember that teaching assistants cannot assume complete responsibility for the instruction given and do not possess the teacher competency necessary to oversee Inclusive Education in mainstream classrooms. However, as demonstrated by a study by Wenster, Blatchford and Russel, cited by Sundqvist, C., and Hannas, B. (2021), learners who received a lot of support from teacher assistants appeared to make significantly less academic progress than learners who received much of their support from the teacher. This suggests that teacher aids can be very involved in teaching and the learning processes of their learners, which may have a

negative effect on learners. They contend that the preparation and direction of the teacher assistants is to blame for the detrimental effects.

All teaching and learning systems in schools must be modified to meet the requirements of all learners, regardless of their differences. The goal of reducing educational disparities through inclusive practices is to encourage everyone to achieve their academic goals. Teachers have unique needs when working with learners who have neurodevelopmental problems, especially in normal classroom settings. To help learners, support measures such as ability grouping, cooperative learning, peer learning, extensive visual aids and curriculum differentiation must be implemented (Van der Merwe, M., Fourie, J., & Yoro, A., 2020). In addition, accessible furniture such as tables and chairs should be taken into account to promote user-friendliness (Gin, L., Guerrero, F., Cooper, K. & Brownell, S., 2020).

All learners and young people have a basic right to active engagement in community life since it is essential to their wellbeing (United Nations, as referenced by Gin.) It is essential to participation because this engagement provides access to opportunities and significant locations, fosters social inclusion and connection and increases freedom and independence (Hammel as cited by Gin et al., 2020). For these learners who might not always be able to participate fully in class, flexible attendance must still be considered while encouraging active participation. Active learning programs can suffer from absenteeism, thus it is important to let these learners participate in class from home, the hospital, or any other location (Gin et al., 2020).

The South African Education Department's policy is that the learner-to-teacher ratio for elementary schools is 40:1, for post-primary institutions it is 35:1 and for both, it is 30:1. The South African Schools Act of 1996, however, prohibits denying admission of any learner to a public school. According to the Republic of South Africa's Constitution, all learners are entitled to a basic education. As a result, enrolment in standard schools exceeds the ideal learner-teacher ratio. Large class sizes are a problem that prevents Inclusive Education from being successfully implemented in most mainstream schools in South Africa. Under these circumstances, it becomes difficult for teachers to provide individualised support for each learner in the inclusive classroom without sacrificing academic quality or time for the other learners. This is because large class

sizes make it difficult to successfully implement any Inclusive Education principles (Materechera, E., 2020). Teachers may view Inclusive Education as unachievable due to the additional load of meeting the time needs of the program. For teachers, another barrier is a deficiency of inclusive education-focused professional development.

At the school level, realities coexist and engage in interactions with one another. Teachers are in favour of Inclusive Education as long as there is enough time for instruction, classrooms are limited to a reasonable size and mainstream teachers have sufficient training in Inclusive Education (Materechera, E., 2020). Training programs are important for general education teachers to make up for their lack of special education expertise and to acquire the teaching strategies they need to support their learners. When teachers are ill-prepared to work with learners who have learning difficulties, it vexes them. Therefore, it follows that all teacher-education programs should include training on the facilitation of Inclusive Education in addition to special education teachers (Crispel, O., & Kasperski, R., 2021).

It has been demonstrated that teacher job satisfaction is lower in schools with large enrolments of learners with special education needs. According to these teachers, one of the most important needs in educating learners with SEN is professional development (Holmqvist, M., & Lelinge, B., 2021). Teachers are frequently ill-prepared to address these situations due to a lack of professional support for working with learners with disabilities, procedural concerns with accommodating learners, difficulties with particular classroom contexts and challenges with teaching approaches (Gin et al., 2020).

2.6.2. Good Mental Health Defined

A condition of well-being that enables people to manage with day-to-day stressors and perform effectively is known as good mental health. Additionally, it gives people the resilience and abilities that they need to deal with unusual and possibly harmful stressors in the most effective way possible (Fusar-Poli, P., de Pablo, G., De Michell, A., Nieman, D., Correll, C., Kessing, L. & van Amelsvoort, T., 2020).

Beyond the absence of disease, mental health is essential to both our societal and personal health and wellbeing. It is a mental health condition that gives people the

ability to handle life's stressors, realise their potential, study and work effectively and give back to their communities. It affects our thoughts, feelings and behaviours and is essential to our health and wellbeing. It supports our capacity to form bonds with others, make decisions and shape the environment in which we live. It is essential to socioeconomic, communal and personal development and is a fundamental human right (World Health Organization, 2022).

2.6.3. The Needs to Attain Good Mental Health

Reshaping the physical, social, and economic aspects of environments in homes, workplaces, schools and the wider community can better protect mental health and prevent mental health conditions. This is outlined in the World Health Organization's Comprehensive Mental Health Action Plan 2013–2030, which represents a commitment from all countries to improve mental health and mental health care. Positive family relationships, high-quality education, respectable working conditions, safe neighbourhoods, community cohesion and shared cultural meaning and identity are all variables that may be thought to be protective of mental health. It has been demonstrated that having a job with respectable working circumstances is especially crucial for mental health (World Health Organization, 2022).

Suicide prevention techniques, positive parenting, preschool education and enrichment programs, school-based social and emotional learning initiatives and mental health promotion and protection in work environments are among the interventions where evidence and experience of mental health benefits have been demonstrated (World Health Organisation, 1992).

Lower degrees of loneliness and higher levels of social support are predictive of positive mental health. Positive mental health is correlated with better self-rated health, positive health behaviours and a lower rate of GP consultations; negative mental health is most strongly predicted by lower levels of social well-being (Van Lente, E., Barry, M., Molcho, M., Morgan, K., Watson, D., Harrington, J., & Mc Gee, H., 2012). Studies observing this occurrence found a favourable correlation between more

positive views toward inclusion and assistance from other teachers in the classroom (Saloviita, T., 2022).

2.6.4. Scenarios which have a Negative Consequence on Mental Health

Teachers have identified several factors that contribute to their professional stress; these include: inadequate pay, being overworked and worries about school culture, particularly the classroom environment (Ramos, G., & Hughes, T., 2020). According to Shinefeld et al. (2016), detrimental elements of poor mental health include psychopathology, psychiatric disorders and health issues.

Teaching involves a variety of occupational demands, such as physical, psychological, social and organisational aspects that call for consistent work and may have physiological or psychological consequences. Teachers attribute poor mental health in schools to quantitative work overload such as overwhelming administrative tasks, counselling support to learners and mediation with parents (Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti & Shaufeli as cited by Lazarides et al., 2020).

Stressors in daily life also pose a significant risk to mental health. Chronic stress from daily life is a stronger predictor of mental health and well-being than acute stress (Newnham, Pearson, Stein & Betancourt as cited by Schonefeld, P., Brailovskaia, J., Bieda, A., Zhang, X., & Margraf, J., 2016). Stress is acknowledged as a significant risk factors a source of the appearance of symptoms of anxiety and depression. These predictors are the culminating consequences of daily stressors (Schonefeld et al.cited by D'Angelo and Wierzbicki, 2016)

Unwanted disruptions in the classroom negatively impact learners as well as teachers. As teachers view learners 'misbehaviour as mostly burdensome, disciplinary issues can be extremely stressful work-related stressors (Buchnan as cited by Jensen, M., 2021). Jensen cites Ingersoll (2021) as saying that disciplinary issues and misbehaviour by learners are particularly distressing and that there is a connection between teacher turnover and learner discipline. Moreover, there is a strong correlation between learner misconduct and teacher exhaustion. Misbehaviour by

learners, as well as teachers 'emotional weariness, depersonalisation and a lack of personal success, have the worst negative effects on mental health. Teachers with higher burnout see more problematic behaviours in their learners because it makes them feel more exhausted, depersonalised and less like they've accomplished anything. Hence, it is probable that there is a cyclical relationship between learner misbehaviour and burnout (Aloe, A., Shisler, B., Norris, B., Nickerson, A., & Rinker, T., 2014).

While teachers' intentions to leave their employment are influenced by their emotional climate, the classroom climate predicts the dropout rate among learners. Teachers who work in environments where there is a lack of positive energy in the classroom experience negative emotions and are more inclined to want to quit. There is a strong correlation between the learner-teacher ratio and the emotional climate of the classroom as described by the learners and the reported burnout of the teachers. Resignation from teaching is more common among teachers who deal with misbehaviour from learners (Jensen, M., 2021).

Research indicates that when there is an extra teacher in the classroom, the emotional climate is improved and disciplinary issues and turnover intentions are decreased. Teachers face social isolation in the course of their work, which results in a lack of social support. Including an extra teacher resource could assist teachers with their everyday responsibilities and serve as a social support system for them. This would discourage teachers from intending to quit by making them feel more supported and mitigating the harmful effects of stress factors at work. One effective strategy to mitigate the negative correlation between teachers' intentions to leave the classroom and the emotional climate in the classroom is to add an additional teacher to the class (Jensen, M., 2021).

As previously shown, learners will perceive the emotional climate of the classroom more negatively and will be more likely to plan to leave if there are disciplinary issues. Because teacher turnover is negatively correlated with learner progress, school management should be aware that teachers' views of discipline issues may negatively affect their attitudes toward their jobs and raise plans to resign (Ronfeldt as cited by Jensen, M., 2021). As a result, school administration ought to concentrate on strategies that motivate teachers to continue in their field. One key component of a

positive learning environment is teachers' perceptions of their ability to keep the classroom in order (Marzano as cited by Jensen, M., 2021). Increasing teachers' competency in managing discipline issues in the classroom while making sure the school environment promotes learning and supports the well-being of all learners is one strategy to lessen discipline difficulties. Academic success and the well-being of learners are positively correlated with a positive emotional climate in the classroom (Mashburn as cited by Jensen, M., 2021). These responsibilities are in danger when there are discipline issues, and the emotional climate in the classroom worsens. According to research, teachers' negative reactions to disruptive behaviour from learners have a significant emotional influence on them as well as their professional wellbeing (de Ruiter, J., Poorthuis, A., Aldrup, K., & Koomen, H., 2020). Teachers' professional well-being is significantly influenced by how they consistently handle disruptive learners who can be difficult to work with (Aloe as cited by de Ruiter et al., 2020), while the well-being of new teachers is greatly impacted by effective classroom management (Sutton, Mudrey-Camino & Knight as cited by Lazarides, R., Watt, H., & Richardson, P., 2020).

Our emotional well-being is as vital as our physical health. With it, we may study and work effectively, manage life's stressors, recognise our own potential and actively engage in our communities. Our capacity to connect, operate, cope and flourish will be intact. Mental health issues can cause disruptions to our thoughts, feelings and behaviours. They can also jeopardise our physical health and interfere with our relationships, schooling and employment. The interplay between a person's vulnerability and the stress brought on by traumatic events and ongoing pressures leads to mental health disorders. Stressors in a person's life, which are impacted by family, community and environmental structural elements, also have an impact on their mental health. Our place on the mental health continuum can be affected by a wide range of individual, familial, communal and structural factors that can either strengthen or weaken our mental health. Individuals who are more frequently exposed to adverse conditions including poverty, violence and inequality are more likely than others to suffer from mental health disorders (World Health Organization, 2022).

2.6.5 Poor Mental Health

People's lives are severely impacted by poor mental health and mental health services and systems are still inadequate to address the demands of the public. It is a fundamental human right and an essential component of our overall health and well-being. People with low mental health are those who are unable to connect, function, cope, and prosper. Mental health disorders have significant economic repercussions (World Health Organisation, 2022).

2.6.6 The Consequences of the Needs of SEN learners on Teachers Mental Health

The management of today's organisations places a high value on employee mental health. Fostering mental well-being facilitates the enhancement of the work environment and is linked to favourable effects on workers and the outcomes of assignments (Meyers, M., Van Woerkom, A., Bakker, A., as cited by Bulinska-Stangrecka, H., & Bagienska, A., 2021). As stated by Zaniboni, S., Truxillo, D., Rineer, J., Bodner, T., Hammer, L., Krainer, M. and cited by Bulinska-Stangrecka et al. (2021), job satisfaction is one of the elements that greatly contributes to good mental health and happiness is a critical sign of good mental health at work (Hunefeld, L., Gerstenberg, S., & Huffmeier, J. cited by Bulinska-Stangrecka et al., 2021). A person's subjective evaluation of his/her real and expected work environments determines his/her level of job satisfaction. According to Diener, E., Oishi, S., and Lucas, R. as cited by Bulinska-Stangrecka et al., 2021, job satisfaction is the cornerstone of a positive work environment. Everyone has the fundamental human right to mental health and is entitled to the best possible level of mental health. One such right is the protection against hazards to one's mental health (World Health Organisation, 2022).

In light of this, the researcher will look at how Inclusive Education affects teachers' work environments and, consequently, their mental health in the paragraphs that follow.

The reasons teachers perceive Inclusive Education as a threat are that they expect stress (Jensen as cited by Dignath et al., 2022), fear they will be faced with an increased workload (Pearman as cited by Dignath et al., 2022), or feel a threatening mind-set due to a lack of resources (Sharma & Desai as cited by Dignath et al., 2022).

Referrals and diagnostic questionnaires are routinely completed by teachers working with learners who have special needs. In addition, they must conduct interventions and play a crucial role in connecting with parents (Sciutto, as quoted by Ward et al., 2021), both of which add to their already heavy workload.

Teachers who require assistance with mental health disorders may also face financial consequences. Specifically, the upfront expenses of care as well as the ongoing indirect costs of lower economic output and greater unemployment rates due to being incapacitated (World Health Organisation, 2022). Teachers who already struggle with mental health issues are put under additional strain by these financial obligations.

Due to the behavioural challenges that they must deal with, teachers who work with learners who have ADHD report higher levels of stress. This can harm the relationships between teachers and learners and intensify conflict (Greene, as cited by Ward et al., 2021). Learner misbehaviour has a detrimental effect on learning and a significant impact on teachers, raising their level of job unhappiness (Cothran & Ennis as cited by Vidic, T., 2022). It affects the onset of burnout syndrome, which raises teachers' stress levels and ultimately results in them leaving the teaching profession (Aloe as cited by Vidic, T., 2022). Teacher resignation is more common among those who fail to effectively address misbehaviour by their learners (Ingersoll as cited by Vidic, T., 2022). It is evident that learner misconduct has a detrimental impact on learners' academic performance and teachers' job satisfaction, as it lowers their own productivity and motivation to work. This is concerning because the biggest obstacle to high-quality school functioning is thought to be resigning from the teaching profession (Vidic, T., 2022). According to Vidic (2022), teachers cite inadequate pedagogical preparation, the school environment and learner behaviour and motivation as their reasons for quitting.

Teachers become disengaged from their learners and less enthusiastic about their lessons when misbehaviour occurs (Bolce as cited by Getachew, A., Tekle, T., & Bayisa, K., 2020). This leads to teacher stress, dissatisfaction and ultimately burnout (Morrissette as cited by Getachew et al., 2020). Teacher burnout is caused by strong negative relationships between misbehaviour on the part of learners and teachers' self-efficacy, personal success and job satisfaction (Vidic, T., Duranovic, M. & Klasnic, I., 2021). Teachers face additional challenges and stress when dealing with the self-

injurious behaviours, disruptive behaviours, unusual vocalisations and sensory responses, feeding issues, increased anxiety, irritability, difficulty with transitions, hyperactivity, attention problems and sleep disturbances of autistic learners (Dube, W., Farber, R., Mueller, M., Grant, E., Lorin, L., Deutch, C. as cited by Al-Beltagi, M., 2021). For those with autism, incontinence is a major obstacle to a high-quality living. Lower cognition and linguistic levels correspond strongly with the age at which bowel and urine training is completed in learners with autism (Richardson, D. as cited by Al-Beltagi, M., 2021). Due to sensory hypersensitivity, communication issues, issues with self-confidence and a limited attention span, learners with autism have difficulty toilet training (Al-Beltagi, M., 2021). Dealing with these problems in the classroom presents the teacher with greater difficulties, which increases pressure and leads to stress. Learners with ASD who suffer from metabolic abnormalities may experience prolonged periods of illness, unexplained exhaustion and developmental regression both during and after the illness (Al-Beltagi, M., 2021). During their time of absence, it would be expected of teachers to help learners with the lag and stay in touch with them. Due to communication, behavioural and anxiety issues, learners with ASD have a 30% increased risk of medical emergency compared to their classmates without the disorder (Al-Beltagi, M., 2021). Teachers will have to attempt to avoid these situations by being more vigilant.

Teachers believe that efficiency and effectiveness are highly dependent on time (Hargreaves as cited by Materechera, E., 2020). One significant limitation that separates what teachers can achieve from what is expected of them is time. Teaching demands significant time and Inclusive Education demands even more. Teachers are often struggling with time constraints and the sense of never having completed their duties. For lesson planning, providing feedback and providing individualised learner assistance to each learner who faces learning obstacles, teachers require time. Teachers find it difficult to complete their current tasks when they do not have sufficient time. Inclusive Education calls for even more time to implement strategies that support learners who face learning obstacles, such as one-on-one teacher-learner support. Teachers consider Inclusive Education to be unrealistic and unworkable because of their ongoing frustration with time constraints. They believe their devotion and commitment to care are compromised by the timely demands of Inclusive Education (Materechera, E., 2020).

Special Education Needs Teachers have a high stress level, low self-efficacy, low job satisfaction and a high risk of burnout (Emery & Vandenberg as cited by Holmqvist, M., & Lelinge, B., 2021). High levels of self-efficacy are necessary to reduce the likelihood of burnout (Lauermann & Konig as cited by Holmqvist, M., & Lelinge, B., 2021). As a result of this high level of stress, there is very little support for Inclusive Education. Acceptance of the idea, however, is correlated with the particular instructor categories and the worry about additional work for teachers. Teachers' attitudes toward Inclusive Education are more positive when they have sufficient access to educational materials and are confident in their support systems (Saloviita, T., 2020).

2.7 THE EFFECTS OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION ON THE ABILITY OF OTHER LEARNERS TO LEARN IN THE MAINSTREAM CLASSROOM

2.7.1. The Requirements of Learners to Learn

A high teacher turnover rate may hinder learners' academic progress (Jensen, M., 2021). Before reaching their fifth year of employment, over 50% of public-school teachers in the United States resigned from their positions (Ingersoll as cited by Jensen, M., 2021). Likewise, significant rates of leaving the field have been observed in Norway, Australia, China and England (Jensen, M., 2021). This suggests that to foster a favourable learning environment, learners need a low staff turnover rate.

Learners' academic, behavioural and socioeconomic results are influenced by the classroom environment (Chapman as cited by Wang, M., Degoi, J., Ameniya, J., Parr, A., & Guo, J., 2020). One of the main objectives of educational reform programs is to enhance the dynamics and atmosphere of the classroom. According to Cohen, as cited by Wang et al. (2020), classroom climates have a critical role in fostering both the academic and psychological welfare of learners as well as the quality of their education. The organisation and structure of the classroom; curricular, disciplinary, and pedagogical methods; and the interpersonal interactions between learners, teachers and peers are all components of the classroom climate (Jones as cited by Wang et al., 2020).

The term 'socioemotional support' refers to aspects of the classroom environment that promote learners' emotional health, including friendliness, security, connectivity and

the calibre of interactions with peers and teachers (Birch & Ladd as cited by Wang et al., 2020). By making connections that foster the psychological well-being required for learning new experiences and forming connections with others, teachers who are offering emotional support to learners are appealing to their need for understanding (Pianta & Hamre as cited by Wang et al., 2020). By being sensitive to and respectful of learners' social and emotional needs, learning about their interests and backgrounds outside of the classroom and incorporating their perspectives into the curriculum, teachers can foster a healthy social learning environment in the classroom (Quin as cited by Wang et al., 2020).

Classroom organisation and management refers to the methods teachers use to create daily routines in the classroom. These methods include using preventative strategies to reduce disciplinary events (Emmer & Stough as cited by Wang et al., 2020), managing disruptive behaviour successfully and justly (Rimm-Kaufman, Curby, Grimm, Nathanson, & Brock as cited by Wang et al., 2020) and consistently reinforcing classroom rules. According to Downer, as cited by Wang et al. (2020), the purpose of classroom organisation is to establish easily managed and effective learning environments that fulfil learners' requirements for autonomy and capacity while promoting their continued engagement in the learning process.

To guarantee that learners' psychological needs are met, an ideal classroom environment necessitates efficient instruction, constructive interactions and well-organised behaviour control (Connell as cited by Wang et al., 2020). Learners are more likely to be interested in their studies, acquire academic and socioemotional skills and experience adaptive psychological welfare when their psychological needs are met. According to self-determination theory, an individual's assessment of how competent, independent and connected they feel, in a given context, (Deci & Ryan as cited by Wang et al., 2020) links contextual factors to patterns of development. Learning and development are maximised when learners feel their learning environment satisfies their needs for competence, independence and connection (Connell & Wellborne as cited by Wang et al., 2020). When learners believe their classroom is appropriately structured and know what they need to do to succeed there, their demand for competence is nurtured. Learners' desire for connection is satisfied when teachers and peers create an emotionally supportive atmosphere and

independence is fostered when learners have the ability to choose their own behaviours and decisions (Skinner, Kindermann, Connell, & Wellborn, as cited by Wang et al., 2020).

The standard of the classroom that teachers establish determines the academic and personal success of their learners. Teachers respect learners by addressing misbehaviour through targeted interventionist approaches that centre on the teaching/learning process (Zoubir, M., 2020).

2.7.2. Circumstances which Negatively Affect Learners' Ability to Learn

Low academic achievement is linked to misbehaviour (Morgan & Sideridis as cited by Kessels, U., & Heyder, A., 2020). Misbehaviour hinders learners' ability to study and makes it difficult for teachers to complete the assigned material. These behaviours usually include not paying attention in class, acting carelessly and passively by giggling or talking during instruction, or disobeying directions on how to do tasks (Vidic, T., 2022). Teachers who witness such behaviour must exert more effort to address it, as this behaviour slows down the teaching process. If ignored, it is discovered to worsen, intensify, increase in frequency and affect even more learners (Sun & Shek as cited by Vidic, T., 2022).

It can be challenging to keep learners focused and engaged in what the teacher is teaching in the classroom if there is a lack of order (Marzano, Marzano & Pickering as cited by Zoubir, M., 2020). This is because there will be disruptions to the class (Walters & Frei as cited by Zoubir, M., 2020). Since effective learning cannot occur in a badly managed environment, learners' distracting misbehaviour puts lessons at danger of failing (Barton, Coley & Wenglinsky as cited by Zoubir, M., 2020). Therefore, the classroom should be controllable with straightforward rules (Zoubir, M., 2020).

Due to its link to subpar school-level results, attention-deficient hyperactivity disorder poses a risk to learning (Tan, T., Liu, Y., Damjanovic, V., Ledford, E., Li, G., & Li, Y., 2022). ADHD symptoms have a detrimental effect on learners' emotional involvement in school. However, strategies to lessen tension in the learner-teacher connection may

help learners with ADHD become more engaged in the classroom, which could lead to better long-term results (Rushton, S., Giallo, R., & Efron, D., 2020).

According to Jensen, M. (2021), teacher turnover is linked to poor educational quality, lower learner achievement and decreased learning (Kini & Podolsky as cited by Jensen, M., 2021). Teacher turnover has a detrimental impact on learners' performance (Jensen, M., 2021). Teaching becomes challenging when there are disciplinary issues since it takes more energy and resources for teachers to maintain discipline and carry out classes as scheduled (Skaalvik & Skaalvik as cited by Jensen, M., 2021). They are an impediment stressor that keeps teachers from reaching their objective of imparting knowledge to learners (Jensen, M., 2021) and stress at work is a powerful indicator of employee attrition. Thus, it may be concluded that learner misbehaviour and disciplinary issues have a positive correlation with teacher turnover and teacher intention to leave the profession (Kelly as cited by Jensen, M., 2021). Jensen, M. (2021) cited Skaalvik and Skaalvik as saying that teachers' impressions of disciplinary issues and emotional tiredness are related to their intention to resign.

According to Wang et al. (2020), there are three fundamental classroom elements that are related to learner-teacher interactions: instructional support, socioemotional support and classroom organisation and management. Given that classrooms with more organisation and less chaos have demonstrated greater gains in reading achievement (Ponitz, Rimm-Kaufman, Brock & Nathanson as cited by Wang et al., 2020), it can be said that teachers' ability to manage learner behaviour is important for learning motivation and engagement (Clunie-Ross as cited by Wang et al., 2020). This suggests that the learning environment in the classroom affects learners' academic performance, social skills and socioemotional health (Wang et al., 2020).

2.7.3. The Effects of Inclusive Education on Learners' Ability to Learn

Research has shown that Inclusive Education has a positive influence on learners without disabilities, leading to a variety of social and personal advantages (Graham, L., 2020). Most of the time, inclusion has positive effects on academic achievement (Oh-Young & Filler as cited by Dignath, C. et al., 2022) and learner social contact (Nakken & Pijl as cited by Dignath, C., et al., 2022) without having negative effects (Wilberger & Palko as cited by Dignath, C., et al., 2022). This is when research compares learners

in inclusive settings with those who stay segregated in specialised programs. According to research, Inclusive Education has no detrimental effects on learners who do not have special education needs (Kalambouka as cited by Dignath, C., et al, 2022).

Engaging in interactive learning activities with classmates who have special educational needs (SEN) provides significant benefits for learners without SEN. These interactions help them build new friendships by teaching them to appreciate and accept others for who they are, while also accommodating variations in skills. Through such experiences, learners acquire knowledge and abilities related to encouraging peers to participate, developing patience and experiencing satisfaction from observing improvements in others' behaviour. Moreover, they benefit cognitively from the effort required to explain themselves to classmates with SEN and from the unique insights contributed by those peers (Molina Roldan et al., 2021).

It is recognised that Inclusive Education can help learners with disabilities and other SEN develop socially and academically and that this can help them realise their right to a shared, high-quality education in mainstream settings (United Nations as cited by Molina Roldan, S., et al., 2021). In both the academic and social areas, the advantages of Inclusive Education for these learners in more integrated settings surpass those in more segregated settings (Oh-Young & Filler as cited by Molinda Roldan, S., et al., 2021). Both the educational and social aspects of inclusion are supported by research, which shows that Inclusive Education improves learners with disabilities' academic performance and has a positive effect on their later social inclusion in terms of obtaining additional education and training, obtaining employment and forming relationships with others in the community (Kefallinou as cited by Molinda Roldan, S., et al., 2021).

In agreement, Ruijs and Peetsma, as cited by Molinda Roldan, S., et al., (2021), state that Inclusive Education, as opposed to non-inclusive education, has a neutral to positive impact on learners with and without special education needs, particularly in terms of academic accomplishment. They argue that there is no proof that including learners with special needs has negative consequences. As stated by Molinda Roldan, S., et al. (2021), many findings on learners with SEN featured a positive or neutral side impact. The presence of learners with SEN has a notable, but small, positive impact on

learners without SEN's academic progress. No appreciable adverse effects were discovered in any of the situations that were investigated (Szumski, Smogorzewska & Karwowski as cited by Molinda Roldan, S., et al., 2021). The social development of their classmates without disabilities was not adversely affected by the inclusion of learners with disabilities. The academic performance of learners without special education needs was slightly but favourably impacted. Furthermore, the advantages of Inclusive Education have been linked to successful teaching strategies that are typified by learning exchanges, like peer tutoring, cooperative and dialogic learning, or group problem-solving, which are advantageous for all learners in the classroom (Kefallinou as cited by Molinda Roldan, S., et al., 2021). These findings bolster the argument that Inclusive Education does not conflict with most learners' rights to a high-quality education because both learners with and without special education needs stand to gain from receiving an Inclusive Education (Molinda Roldan, S., et al., 2021).

A rich and varied environment with learning interactions among various learners is a crucial component of Inclusive Education (Molinda Roldan, S., et al., 2021). All learners are given the chance to enter the milieu with an understanding of what it is about and how one can contribute to coping with it by implementing group work in schools in the form of communities of mutual learners, which allows for a balance between individuality and group efficiency as everyone advances according to their ability (Bruner as cited by Molinda Roldan, S., et al., 2021).

Learners without special needs get a rare chance to experience diversity first-hand when they are in an engaged learning setting alongside learners with special needs. They share the same learning environment and time with learners their own age, who frequently require extra care due to unique qualities that set them apart from most learners in one way or another. This is a crucial first step in fostering positive attitudes toward diversity and inclusion in education and society. Education about diversity, valuing its potential and promoting inclusion in society cannot be fully realised if it is not grounded in the real-world experiences of sharing these learning opportunities with people who have special needs. Through interactions and dialogue surrounding shared learning activities, interactive learning environments enable learners to share not only the space and time for learning, but also the opportunity to learn about diversity and its value based on the individual experiences of those with whom they

are working on the activity. By working with learners who have more than just a name and a face—they also have a personality, preferences and struggles—teachers may teach their learners about diversity. Learners without special education needs exhibit a shift in attitude as they become more aware of diversity, embrace it and display more respect for it. Through Inclusive Education, learners who are generally developing can learn to esteem others not just for their obvious qualities but also for other traits that can paint a more complete image of a person and make it possible to see other interesting aspects. A variety of social skills can be developed by learning interactions with peers who have special education needs, changing one's perspective and attitude and acknowledging the strengths and limitations of others (Molinda Roldan, S., et al., 2021).

When developing learners share learning activities with learners with SEN in interactive learning environments, they have to put in extra cognitive effort to explain themselves to their SEN peers. It means placing oneself in the other person's position, trying to comprehend their challenges and coming up with solutions to help them get past them so they can benefit from their cognitive work and reinforce what they have learned. However, it also means acknowledging one's own challenges in the process of attempting to be understood and making every effort to succeed in doing so. This makes learning problems more relatable to learners who do not typically face them and emphasises the need to work hard to accomplish goals, which helps learners become humbler about their own skills and more sympathetic and understanding of their peers with SEN. Learners have the chance to recognise that everyone has both strengths and weaknesses when they are in shared interactive learning environments with learners who have special education needs. Learners without SEN do not always know everything and learners with SEN sometimes surprise people (Molinda Roldan, S., et al., 2021).

Therefore, it can be concluded that inclusive placements for learners with severe disabilities have several advantages in the areas of academics, social skills, communication, self-determination, employment and behaviour. Increased communication and social interactions (Fisher & Meyer as cited by Argan, M., et al., 2020), increased self-determination skills (Hughes, Cosgriff, Agran & Washington as cited by Argan, M., et al., 2020) and greater growth in academic achievement and the

use of academic skills are all associated with participation in inclusive settings (Kurth & Mastergeorge as cited by Argan, M., Jackson, L., Kurth, J., Ryndak, D., Burnette, K., Jameson, M., & Wehmeyer, M., 2020). Due in large part to their access to peer models and social networks, learners with severe disabilities demonstrate greater progress in social skills (McDonnell, Johnson, Polychronis, & Riesen, as cited by Argan, M., et al., 2020). People without disabilities also gain from inclusive environments since they help these learners advance further in maths and reading (Cole, Waldron, & Majd as cited by Argan, M., et al., 2020). Increased academic achievement, assignment completion and class involvement are just a few of the benefits that learners who offer peer supports in inclusive environments exhibit (Cushing & Kennedy as cited by Argan, M., et al., 2020).

In comparing general education classrooms to self-contained special education classrooms, the former offers more opportunities for accessing the general education curriculum (Soukup, Wehmeyer, Bashinski, & Bovaird as cited by Argan, M., et al., 2020); the latter improves access to content area expertise and age-appropriate instructional materials (Kleinert as cited by Argan, M., et al., 2020); and the latter increases naturalistic peer supports (Carter & Hughes as cited by Argan, M., et al., 2020). Higher levels of social interaction and increased participation in academic activities are observed (Kurth & Mastergeorge as cited by Argan, M., et al., 2020; Lyons, Cappadocia & Weiss as cited by Argan, M., et al., 2020). Learners without special education needs have more opportunity for learning and cognitive growth thanks to Inclusive Education. Positive effects, or neutral in the worst situation, have been observed for these learners instead of any negative ones (Kalambouka as cited by Molinda Roldan, S., et al., 2021).

These investigations were conducted using small sample sizes; thus caution should be exercised when interpreting the results. Further research is advised to broaden the sample size and examine quantitative data (Molinda Roldan, et al., 2021). This is because some studies present an opposing viewpoint, claiming that Inclusive Education in the classroom is detrimental to general learners, as discussed in the paragraphs that follow:

Firstly, the psychology of education faces a challenge in determining the instructional strategies and learning environments that best support the learning of all learners, particularly those whose unique learning styles make learning more challenging for them, as is the case for learners with special needs (Duque, E., et al., 2020). When it comes to peers with special needs and their social acceptance, teachers can make a big difference (Schwab as cited by Duque, E., et al., 2020), which is significant since learners' behaviour issues and learning disabilities may be impacted by social exclusion (Krull as cited by Duque, E., et al., 2020).

It is important to keep in mind that inclusion benefits all learners, regardless of their impairment. According to recent studies on the topic using longitudinal data on early childhood education, there may be a negative impact on the academic and social outcomes of regular learners in inclusive classrooms (Gilmore, A., as cited by Francisco, M., et al., 2020). This is because regular learners who attend classes with learners who have emotional behavioural problems typically perform worse on maths and reading tests in their early school years (Fletcher, J., as cited by Francisco, M., et al., 2020). Regular learners who are in the same class as people with disabilities typically have more behavioural issues, less self-control and poorer interpersonal skills, which has an impact on the non-cognitive development of these learners (Gottfried, M., as cited by Francisco, M., et al., 2020). There has not been much study done on the social and academic benefits of inclusion for ordinary learners as well (Francisco, M., 2020).

Low-achieving learners are more likely to engage in disruptive behaviour, which furthers their future low accomplishment (Zimmermann as cited by Dignath, C., et al., 2022). Disruptive learner behaviour is a common occurrence in the classroom, a source of stress for teachers and a barrier to learning for young learners (Sullivan as cited by Kessels, U., & Heyder, A., 2020). Risk factors for disruptive behaviour include being male, having low self-esteem and showing minimal accomplishment (Kaplan as cited by Kessels, U., & Heyder, A., 2020). Low-achieving learners may use disruptive behaviour to project a masculine image, greater popularity ratings and an impression of indifference to effort (Kessels, U., & Heyder, A., 2020). According to Dicke, Elling, Schmeck and Leutner as cited by Lazarides, R., et al., (2020), effective classroom management is a major concern for new teachers. It is also crucial for teachers' well-

being (Sutton, Mudrey-Camino, & Knight, as cited by Lazarides, R. et al., 2020) and for the academic success of their learners (Emmer & Evertson as cited by Lazarides, R. et al., 2020). Disruptive learner behaviour can have a negative impact on learner achievement and teaching as well as teachers' occupation satisfaction (Vidic, T., 2022).

Disturbances in the classroom are caused by the self-harming and disruptive behaviours, peculiar sensory responses and vocalisations, elevated anxiety, irritability, trouble transitioning, hyperactivity and attention issues linked to individuals with ASD (Dube, W., et al as cited by Al-Beltagi, M., 2021). Furthermore, a common comorbidity among those with ASD is epilepsy. A brain condition known as epilepsy is characterised by recurring seizures or convulsions along with episodic, unpredictable changes in mental status. Teachers may have to deal with this in the classroom and other learners may observe it as well. Anxiety, anger, hyperactivity, inattention and other health issues are brought on by the sleep abnormalities that are common with autism and these issues lead to troublesome behaviour that needs to be addressed in the classroom. Compared to those who get enough sleep, a greater proportion of behavioural issues, including stereotypy and self-harming behaviour, are brought on by poor sleep. GI issues can make people with ASD feel pain and discomfort as well as hinder their ability to learn. Learners with nonverbal autism may have behavioural issues as a result of these conditions. These behavioural issues can manifest as self-harm, posturing, or sudden outbursts without clear explanations (Al-Beltagi, M., 2021). Common vocal behaviours that could indicate the existence of GI issues include persistent coughing, throat clearing, guttural vocalisations, new-born spitting, ear rubbing and/or difficulty swallowing. The following motor behaviours are linked to the presence of GI disorders: aggressive or self-injurious behaviour, certain repeated behaviours, neck or body posture and the desire for belly pressure. According to Prosperi, M., Santocchi, E., Muratori, F., Narducci, C., Calderoni, S., Tancredi, R., Morales, M., Guiducci, L., as cited by Al-Beltagi, M. (2021) there is a high association between underlying GI illnesses and aggressive behaviours.

It is feared that integrating learners with diverse backgrounds and learning styles into regular classes will hinder the progress of other learners, consume more time and

require more resources (Webster & Blatchford as cited by Boyle, C., & Anderson, J., 2020), impacting academic learning. According to Hienonen as cited by Molinda Roldan, S., et al., (2021) there is a correlation between the performance of learners with special education needs (SEN) in regular courses and that of their classmates without SEN.

2.8 COST-BENEFIT EXPLORATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

According to the World Health Organization (2022), human rights encompass a wide range of fundamental and social entitlements that all individuals are entitled to enjoy fully and equally. These include the right to life, equal recognition before the law, access to justice, liberty and security of the person, and freedom from exploitation, violence, and abuse. In addition, individuals have the right to live independently and be included in the community, as well as to access facilitation and rehabilitation services. Human rights also extend to health, education, work, and employment, alongside the right to an adequate standard of living and social protection. Finally, participation in political and public life is recognised as a core human right, ensuring that all people can contribute to and be represented within society (World Health Organization, 2022).

According to Tasioulas, as cited by Materechera, E., (2020), human rights are rights that have been internationally agreed upon in treaties or conventions that specify how individuals should be treated. The Republic of South Africa's Constitution, as cited by Materechera, E. (2020), states that everyone is entitled to the same fundamental liberties and protections, regardless of their nationality, place of residence, gender, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, language, sexual orientation, disability, or any other status. According to Materechera, E. (2020), the Australian Human Rights Commission, human rights are intimately associated with principles such as justice, equality of opportunity, fairness, and universal access to education for all learners.

According to Hienonen, as cited by Molina Roldan, S., et al., (2021), some researchers discovered that having SEN learners in a regular class was associated with their peers without SEN performing slightly worse. On the other hand, other researchers discovered that Inclusive Education had neutral to positive effects on learners with and without SEN when compared to non-inclusive education (Ruijs & Peetsma, as cited by Molinda Roldan, S., et al., 2021).

Rich and varied learning interactions between heterogeneous learners are made possible by the inclusive educational environment, which fosters opportunities for learners to engage meaningfully with peers of diverse abilities (Molinda Roldan et al., 2021). As learners begin to understand difference, accept it and show respect toward it, they develop positive attitudes toward diversity and both educational and social inclusion (Molinda Roldan et al., 2021). This process also enhances their awareness of other types of difficulties, such as behavioural challenges, thereby broadening their perspective on diversity in the classroom (Molinda Roldan et al., 2021). Learners without special educational needs (SEN) benefit from these interactive learning environments in several ways. They foster positive attitudes by learning to accept and value differences in others while recognising their own strengths, which can lead to new friendships. They also improve their social skills by developing patience and finding fulfilment in assisting peers to participate and learn. Finally, inclusive settings create opportunities for academic growth and cognitive development, as learners benefit from the contributions of learners with SEN and from the cognitive demand of explaining concepts to others (Molinda Roldan et al., 2021).

For learners with severe disabilities, inclusive placements offer several advantages in the areas of academics, social skills, communication, self-determination, employment and behaviour (Argan, M., et al., 2020). As inclusive educational environments foster more positive attitudes toward diversity (Smith & Williams as cited by Molinda Roldan, S., et al., 2021), inclusive environments also benefit peers without disabilities (Cole, Waldron & Majd as cited by Argan, M., et al., 2020). Solidarity can be learned in the school context, and it contributes to creating genuine attitudes of inclusion beyond the norms that benefit everyone (Hernandez Arteaga as cited by Molinda Roldan, S., et al., 2021). Also, inclusive environments benefit peers without disabilities as.....

It is beneficial for inclusion when learners without disabilities are able to recognise the effects of various types of impairments and generally have a positive perception of the abilities of learners with various kinds of impairments (Smith & Williams as cited by Molinda Roldan, S., et al., 2021). According to Tafa and Manolitsis as cited by Molinda Roldan, S., et al. (2021) developing learners educated in inclusive programs with learners with SEN typically exhibit increased respect, awareness and acceptance of

their peers' needs, develop less prejudices and are more helpful and supportive towards people with disabilities. By changing the attitudes of non-disabled learners toward individuals with disabilities, Inclusive Education can help challenge debilitating attitudes and promote the development of a more inclusive society (Beckett as cited by Molinda Roldan, S., et al., 2021). The positive attitudes of non-SEN learners toward SEN learners are enhanced by opportunities to establish strong friendships between SEN and non-SEN learners (Grutter as cited by Molinda Roldan, S., et al., 2021). According to research, inclusion has a positive effect on cognitive ability development. Learners without special education needs who attend inclusive classrooms with learners with special education needs had higher theory of mind development than their classmates who attend traditional classrooms (Smogorzewska as cited by Molinda Roldan, S., et al., 2021). They employ prosocial behaviours and have a better awareness of diversity, tolerance and acceptance of others (Smogorzewska as cited by Molinda Roldan, S., et al., 2021).

It is countered that pro-inclusion advocates mistakenly think that general education is a fundamentally superior environment to specialised education for fostering learning and guaranteeing social justice. Additionally, it is proposed that these advocates are unduly preoccupied with placement, when the quality of instruction is what matters. Effective education, not placement, is said to be the best way to support learning and give learners the social justice they are entitled to (Kauffman, Anastasiou, Badar, Travers, & Wiley as cited by Argan, M., et al., 2020).

It is also important to remember that South Africa's shortage of SEN teachers will lead to a greater number of SEN learners being excluded from classroom settings, while learners in resource schools will concurrently receive a subpar education (Holmqvist, M., & Lelinge, B., 2021). Large classrooms that affect physical space, time, a lack of professional training and lack of support are some of the factors that make it difficult to successfully implement Inclusive Education (Meterechera, E., 2020).

Further investigation may broaden the scope of the analysis (Monda Roldan, S., et al., 2021). It is important to keep in mind that inclusion applies to all learners, regardless of their disability and that most of the research focuses on the effects of inclusion on learners with disabilities, with relatively few studies examining the effects of inclusion on regular learners in general education classrooms. According to current research on

the impact of inclusion on regular learners (Gilmore as cited by Francisco, M., et al., 2020), regular learners may have detrimental consequences on their social and academic outcomes in inclusive classes. This led to the conclusion that further research is required to determine the social and academic effects of inclusion on regular learners as well (Francisco, M., et al., 2020). This will allow for the collection of actual data on the social and academic effectiveness of inclusion for both learners with and without disabilities. It would also be more advantageous for teachers and service providers to conduct additional studies on the social and academic effects of inclusion on regular peers as well as learners with disabilities, since inclusion gives all learners equitable opportunities.

2.9 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it is important to recognise that Inclusive Education is concerned with providing high-quality instruction for all learners. First, the advantages of inclusion must be considered not only for learners with special educational needs but also for the broader learner population. Second, it is necessary to acknowledge that a definition of Inclusive Education which genuinely encompasses all learners is often inconsistent with existing research, as much of the literature has focused primarily on specific categories, such as those with disabilities or other special educational needs, while overlooking its impact on other learner groups (Messiou, as cited in Molinda Roldan et al., 2021). Finally, the evidence demonstrating that inclusive approaches are beneficial—or at the very least not detrimental—for all learners, including those without special educational needs, is essential in order to advance the broader goal of expanding and universalising Inclusive Education (Molinda Roldan et al., 2021)

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 CHAPTER OVERVIEW

This chapter sought to explain how the study's aims and the research questions were approached and answered through Qualitative Research Methods.

3.2 INTRODUCTION

The research question and sub questions which were central to this study:

1. What are the ramifications of Inclusive Education on the teaching and learning environment in the mainstream classroom?

And

1.1. How does Inclusive Education affect the mental health of mainstream teachers?

1.2. How does Inclusive Education affect the ability of the other learners to learn in the mainstream classroom?

1.3. How does Inclusive Education affect the discipline structure of the mainstream classroom?

To investigate the answers to these questions, the researcher made use of an Interpretivist Research Paradigm, Qualitative Research Design and Case Study methods involving observations, field notes and semi-structured interviews for data collection which were transcribed using Thematic Data Analysis.

3.3 THE RESEARCH PARADIGM AND JUSTIFICATION

The purpose of the study was to evaluate the effects of Inclusive Education on the mainstream classroom's teaching and learning environment. Since interpretivism penetrates complex social behaviour and yields precise insights, an interpretive

technique was used to achieve this goal (Irshairdat, 2022). Since interpretivism is predicated on constructivism, which holds that humans construct and carry out the social world through social interaction, it was appropriate to pursue investigations pertaining to real-world practices (Funk, 2019). For example, what effects does integrating learners with special educational needs have on the mainstream classroom? (Goldkuh, 2012 as cited by Irshaidat, 2019).

As the goal of the study is to determine how Inclusive Education affects traditional classroom settings, the interpretivist paradigm of phenomenon interpretation relies on cultures, texts, theories, concepts, and behaviour to help understand human decision-making (Thanh & Thanh, 2015 cited by Irshaidat, 2019). The interpretivist paradigm's foundational scientific theory holds that the only source of real knowledge is human cognition (Turyakikayo, E., 2021). Instead of being viewed as a universal empirical truth, knowledge is thought to be socially produced (Goodall & Roberts as cited by Turyakikayo, 2021). According to interpretivists, people's experiences and understanding form the basis of their subjective, culturally and contextually placed knowledge (Ryan as cited by Turyakikayo, 2021). They feel that it cannot be disregarded that the social surrounding impacts on conduct and identity (Irshaidat, 2019); this study similarly highlights the presence of special educational needs learners as influencing the teaching a learning environment of the regular classroom. Interpretive researchers assert reliability through ongoing comparisons to findings, starting with a general question about the topic and then gathering data from diverse sources, as the study undertook to collect data from various sources such as observations and interviews (Kelliher cited by Irshaidat, 2019).

3.4 THE RESEARCH DESIGN AND JUSTIFICATION

The study used a qualitative case study methodology to evaluate the effects of Inclusive Education in traditional classroom settings. An interpretivist approach was used to accomplish this goal since interpretivism provides accurate perceptions by infiltrating complex social behaviour (Irshairdat, 2022). According to Funk (2019), it is a suitable method for researching questions on meaning-making processes, such as how Inclusive Education affects regular classrooms. This qualitative study began at the bottom and worked its way up to produce a rich, expressive description of the

implications of Inclusive Education on traditional classrooms. As a result, the theory was developed inductively. It used words and texts along with observations to comprehend the social phenomena that Inclusive Education in the classroom deals with (Gephart as cited by Azungah, 2018). The social phenomena were observed in authentic settings through classroom observations, documenting the impact of Inclusive Education on mainstream classrooms (Denny & Weckesser, 2022). Qualitative research was a suitable method for this study because it aims to address questions about the development of an understanding of the meaning and experience dimensions of human lives and social worlds, and this study aimed to address the implications of Inclusive Education on the mainstream classroom.

It makes sense to do a case study as part of a qualitative technique because it looks at a phenomenon (the effects of Inclusive Education) in a setting that is natural to it—a mainstream classroom—without the researcher changing the environment under investigation (Martinsuo, M. & Huemann, M., 2021). As a fundamental component of a case study, the research included a variety of data collection techniques, including field notes, interviews, and observations (Martinsuo, M. & Muemann, M., 2021). In order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the situation and meaning for those involved (teachers and learners), an extensive analysis was conducted to produce a description of a system (Inclusive Education) bound by space (mainstream classroom) and time (observation period) (Hancock, D., Algozzine, B. & Lim, J., 2021), as is synonymous with Case Studies.

The researcher was able to concentrate her investigation on the particular case within the constraints of time and space by choosing to use the Case Study method. Additionally, it made it possible to gather a variety of data for this study, including observations, field notes, and interviews. This allowed the researcher to examine the effects of Inclusive Education on the mainstream classroom's teaching and learning environment in greater detail. To help others learn from it and adapt the concepts and lessons acquired to different contexts, the Case Study also offered a thorough grasp of the implications of Inclusive Education on traditional classrooms (K. Schoch, 2020). Since the investigation in this qualitative study began at the bottom and worked its way up, the theory was developed inductively in an effort to offer a comprehensive, descriptive account of how Inclusive Education affects the teaching and learning

environment of the mainstream classroom (Azungah, 2018). To comprehend the social phenomena (Gephart cited by Azungah, 2018) involved, it used texts and words through observations and interviews.

The social phenomena that occurred in the classroom were observed in authentic contexts, documenting actual experiences instead of pledged experiences (Denny & Weckesser, 2022). Semi-structured interviews, which are a mainstay of qualitative research investigations, were used to extract more data. It was a fitting approach for this study because qualitative research seeks to answer issues related to gaining an understanding of the meaning and experience dimensions of human lives and social worlds (Fossey, E., Harvey, C., McDermott, F., & Davidson, L., 2002). This study sought to answer the question of what the ramifications of Inclusive Education on the teaching and learning environment in the mainstream classroom, are. Purposive, convenient, and snowballing sampling techniques are frequently used in qualitative research (Denny & Weckesser, 2022). In this study, both the Snowballing and Purposive approaches were used. Like the goals of this study, qualitative research employs methods that describe and explain people's experiences, behaviours, interactions, and social contexts without the use of statistical procedures or quantification (Strauss A, Corbin, J., cited by Fossey et al., 2022; National Health and Medical Research Council, cited by Fossey et al., 2022).

3.5 POPULATION OF INTEREST

According to Pandey and Pandey (2021), the population refers to the group from which a sample is drawn. In this study, the population consisted of learners who had a diagnosed learning disorder and were enrolled in classes within a school in Buffalo City. The sample was selected based on specific criteria, including the presence of at least one learner with a formally diagnosed learning disorder in the classroom. This ensured that the research focused on inclusive education contexts where such learners were present. Recruitment of participants followed these criteria and continued until data saturation was evident; thereby ensuring that sufficient depth of information was obtained to address the research objectives (Pandey & Pandey, 2021).

3.5.1. Sampling design and techniques

The method of choosing study participants is known as sampling. It guarantees that data will be gathered from the most informed individuals, making it a crucial component of any research effort (Ahlin, 2019). The entire population is represented by a small group that is chosen. Its goal is to gather trustworthy and correct data with the least amount of expense, time, and effort feasible. This allows for the completion of a potentially lengthy and comprehensive study with a lot less time, money, and resources (Pandey & Pandey, 2021). One can infer information about the population from which the sample was taken by looking at its characteristics (Pandey & Pandey, 2021).

According to Panday & Panday (2021), sampling has the following benefits:

1. More adaptability
2. Economical
3. Quickness of generalisation
4. More exactness and precision in the observation
5. Research is conducted more quickly.
6. Extended range
7. Reduces the expense of data acquisition

They also list the following drawbacks:

1. Confidentiality
2. The challenge of choosing a sample that is actually representative
3. Require competent researchers
4. Sample participants could be erratic
5. Only under specific circumstances where sampling is feasible

It is important to emphasise once more that sampling for this study had more advantages than complications.

A sample that has been defined with the study's objectives in mind is said to be purposeful (Andrade, 2021). To maximise the representativeness of learners with learning problems through the deliberate selection of this group, the researcher used Purposive Sampling, which is also a non-probability form of sampling, as she approached a school with special educational needs learners enrolled (Kubiak, A. P., & Kawalec, 2022). Samples chosen via non-random techniques are referred to as non-probability sampling (Panday & Panday, 2021). Because the sample is known to be representative of the entire population, it was chosen. The concept is to choose the sample based on factors that are thought to be significant for the research (Panday & Panday, 2021); in this example, these factors include learners with diagnosed learning disabilities. A drawback of this approach is that the results can only be applied to the population from which the sample was taken. The more purposeful the sample, the more constrained the external validity will be (Andrade, 2021). But as Andrade (2021) points out, studying a population as a whole is rarely possible, and this study is no exception.

Additionally, Panday and Panday (2021) raise the following issues with purposive sampling:

1. There is doubt about the criteria's dependability
2. Understanding the populace is crucial
3. Mistakes made when classifying sample participants
4. The incapacity to draw broad conclusions about the entire population

These reservations were considered in this study, which also made an effort to dispel them by utilising the researcher's familiarity and expertise with this sample group.

After the school's principal showed interest in the research, he was asked to find a teacher who would be willing to participate. As a result, Snowball Sampling began at the selected school with this teacher and continued to find other interested individuals until the desired sample size was attained. A sampling technique known as 'Snow-Ball Sampling' is one in which the sample grows larger and larger while the research is conducted (Panday & Panday, 2021). When working with vulnerable participants (school-age learners in this example) and sensitive problems (learners with diagnosed

learning disorders), this is a useful sampling technique (Mawhinney, L., & Rinke, C. R. (2019).

The researcher requested that the principal suggest a class that includes a learner with a diagnosed disorder, thereby purposefully selecting this group of learners through purposeful sampling, which is a non-probability sampling method (Kubiak & Kawalec, 2022). This approach allows the researcher to focus more closely on the phenomenon of inclusive education and its implications (Schoch, 2020). Purposeful sampling enables the examination of cases rich in information, from which valuable insights can be drawn about the central topic of the study (Patton, as cited in Schoch, 2020). Following this, the teacher of the selected class will continue to recruit additional participants using a snowball sampling technique. Recruitment of participants will be stopped once data saturation is evident; ensuring that sufficient depth of information has been achieved. This sampling strategy is particularly effective when working with sensitive topics, such as learners with learning challenges, and vulnerable participants, such as school-age learners (Mawhinney & Rinke, 2019).

3.5.2. Sample size

The class groups and their teachers that have an enrolled learner with a diagnosed learning, developmental, or cognitive problem will comprise the study population.

There will be 125 learners in the sample group, split up into 5 classes with their 5 teachers.

3.6 DATA COLLECTION

The researcher used Passive Participatory Observation, observing the teachers and learners in their classrooms during a school day, taking field notes of her observations. According to Jerolmack and Khan cited by Jorgensen (2020), participant observation is a technique for gathering data about individuals and issues pertaining to them in a particular setting. There are two types of involvement: passive and active. Passive participation involves the researcher being at the location but not interacting with the

subjects or their activities in any other way (Jorgensen, D. 2020). This is the recommended approach used in this study if one wishes to understand how and why Inclusive Education affects the teaching and learning environment in the mainstream classroom (Spradley as cited by Thomas, S. 2019).

Before beginning Participant Observations, there are a few aspects to keep in mind. These are all outlined below. Techniques to get around these restrictions, which were used in this investigation, are also covered:

1. Gaining access to the field - the researcher asked permission to do the research at a school with which she had a good relationship. She then contacted the Department of Education to get official approval.
2. Expensive to perform: Fortunately, the researcher was able to do her research outside of her regular working hours, lowering the research's financial repercussions.
3. Subjectivity in data collection can be checked for by the researcher by having semi-structured interviews with the participant and looking through her completed field notes.

After every observation, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with the teachers; they are included in Annexure C. In a semi-structured interview, the researcher establishes the overall framework by determining, in advance, the topics to cover and the key questions to pose. The interviewee is given some leeway in terms of what to say, how much to say, and how to say it, and the specific structure is worked out during the process (Rabionet, S. 2011).

Although Kakilla (2021) lists flexibility, the capacity for in-depth discussion, and the capacity to spark original thought as benefits, it is also impossible to overlook the drawbacks they list. In this study, they were identified and worked around in the following ways:

1. Language limitations may restrict research - The researcher and all interviewees shared the same first language.

2. The researcher only allowed 30 minutes for each interview, which circumvented time issues for the interviewee.

3. Because it necessitates attentive listening, it is not suitable for group interviews; instead, the researcher conducted one-on-one interviews.

To fully comprehend the effects of Inclusive Education on the mainstream classroom from the teacher's point of view, interviews were conducted. To ensure that the teachers' memory of the experience remained intact, the interview was conducted on the same day as the observation. Because the researcher was considerate of the teachers' time and wanted to sustain their motivation to continue with the project, the interviews usually took 30 minutes to complete. During data analysis, the researcher took notes for additional transcribing. For a total of 5 observations and 5 interviews, the researcher went through this procedure once again with each teacher and for every observation period.

To summarise, the researcher's role was clearly defined as that of a passive participant observer. The researcher observed teachers and learners throughout a full school day, carefully documenting classroom interactions and behaviours in detailed field notes without intervening in the teaching or learning process. This non-intrusive approach allowed the researcher to capture authentic dynamics within the inclusive classroom environment. After completing the observation sessions, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with the teachers of the observed classes. In this phase, the researcher's role shifted to that of an interviewer, guiding the discussion to elicit teachers' perspectives on the primary research question and three related research questions:

1. What are the ramifications of Inclusive Education on the teaching and learning environment in the mainstream classroom?

and

1.1. How does Inclusive Education affect the mental health of mainstream teachers?

1.2. How does Inclusive Education affect the ability of the other learners to learn in the mainstream classroom?

1.3 How does Inclusive Education affect the discipline structure of the mainstream classroom?

3.6.1. Goals of the Observation Period

The best method for evaluating learners' behaviour is observation (Panday & Panday, 2021). It observes people as they express themselves in a variety of contexts and activities to ascertain their thoughts and behaviours. Given that it is more accurate and concrete, it is a more natural method of data collection (Panday & Panday, 2021). The purpose of the field notes in this study was to increase the validity and reliability of the observations while also focusing the observation to conduct a methodical analysis of the ramifications of Inclusive Education on the teaching and learning environment in the mainstream classroom.

3.6.2. Structure of the Observation Period

Observations are particularly beneficial to gain understandings into a certain setting and authentic behaviour – as opposed to reported behaviour or opinions (Hak as cited by Busetto, L., Wick, W., & Gumbinger, C., 2020). Qualitative observations can be either participant or non-participant in nature. This study undertook non-participant observations. In non-participant observations, the observer is an outsider i.e. present in, but not part of the situation, trying not to affect the setting by their presence. Observations can be planned or ad hoc. This study undertook planned observations, observing each class for a school day. During the observation, the researcher took notes on everything that was happening around them. Written notes were taken during the observations. Afterwards, these field notes were transcribed. The advantages of conducting observations include minimising the distance between the researcher and the researched, the potential discovery of topics that the researcher did not realise were relevant and gaining deeper insights into the real-world dimensions of the research problem at hand (van der Geest as cited by Busetto et al., 2020).

3.6.3. Goals of the Interview

According to Kakilla (2021), semi-structured interviews are crucial instruments for acquiring knowledge via group work, conversations, and themes derived from various

life experiences. One can read both verbal and nonverbal cues in others by having in-depth talks. The flexibility allows for unconstrained interview responses which could inspire the implementation of novel concepts (Kakilla, C., 2021).

These interviews had the following objectives: to help the researcher gain a deeper understanding of what she saw in the classroom; to confirm that subjectivity and bias were eliminated through the teacher's review of the field notes; and to assist the teacher in further comprehending the effects of Inclusive Education on the teaching and learning environment. Additionally, triangulation—which is the process of examining the relationships between information gleaned from data gathered from several sources to better understand the study and enhance the reliability of the findings—was used to further improve validity and reliability (Hayashi et al., 2019).

3.6.4. Structure of the Interview

A two-way flow of ideas and information is possible during an interview (Pandey, P., & Pandey, M. M., 2021). According to P.V. Young, as cited by Pandey and Pandey (2021), it can be thought of as a methodical approach in which an individual joins the life of a stranger by developing a relationship with him/her, removing any social, cultural, and physical obstacles, and enabling an open exchange of ideas. They become emotionally connected to one another and are placed on the same level by the interview (Pandey & Pandey, 2021).

In this study, semi-structured interviews were utilised. According to Partridge, H., Edwards, S., and Thorpe, C as cited by Rahman, M. (2019), semi-structured interviews are a viable tool for discovering previously unknown qualitative patterns and concerns and exploring new areas of research interest in phenomenographic investigations. Insofar as possible, the questions were designed to pinpoint and elucidate the ramifications of Inclusive Education on the teaching and learning environment in the mainstream classroom. They were made with the responders' freedom and adaptability in mind when they answered. They refrained from acting in ways that would be expected of well-developed semi-structured interviews, such as being ambiguous, unclear, leading, upsetting, and laden (Rahman, 2019).

All the respondents were asked the same set of standard questions by the researcher at the outset (Ahlin, E. M., 2019). Open-ended questions that allowed respondents to elaborate on their answers in light of their original response came after these (Ahlin, E., 2019).

The researcher had fourteen years of classroom experience and a Master's Degree in Education, thus she was academically conversant with the practices being studied, making the semi-structured interview method appropriate for this study. This made it possible for the researcher to formulate broad queries for the responders. Considering this, the researcher's expertise in the field allowed her to predict that there would be a wide range of viewpoints regarding Inclusive Education, and that these viewpoints would improve comprehension of the data collected overall (Ahlin, 2019).

Semi-structured interviews are a suitable research strategy when the subject matter is somewhat known but not well. One must comprehend the respondent's point of view and have the chance to speak with someone who is knowledgeable about the subject (Ahlin, 2019). All three of these factors were relevant in this investigation, which further supports the choice of this approach for gathering data.

Thirty minutes to several hours can pass during a semi-structured interview (Whiting as cited by Ahlin, 2019). Since an interview was required following each observation, the researcher decided to limit the duration of the interviews to a brief thirty minutes to show respect for the respondents' time and maintain their interest in the study.

Below is a copy of the interview questions which were posed to the respondents:

Questions for Semi-Structured Interviews to be conducted after each observation

1. Explain the condition the learner in your class has.
2. Do you have any formal training to deal with this condition?

Explain your answer in 3 or more sentences.

3. Do you feel the inclusion of this learner in your class has any bearing on your mental state?

Explain your answer in 3 or more sentences.

4. Do you feel the inclusion of this learner in your class has any effect, positive or negative, on the other learners in the class's ability to learn?

Explain your answer in 3 or more sentences.

5. Does the inclusion of this learner in your class have any effect on the discipline structure of your classroom?

Explain your answer in 3 or more sentences.

6. Are there any further comments you would like to make about the effects of Inclusive Education on your classroom?

3.7 DATA ANALYSIS

To generate and describe the definition of themes within the data, a progressive process of classifying, comparing, grouping, and filtering groupings of text segments was used in Thematic Analysis (Fossey, E., Harvey, C., McDermott, F., & Davidson, L., 2002). The emphasis was on developing categories inductively from the data itself.

Thematic Analysis often entails a step-by-step process of categorising, contrasting, organising, and honing groupings of text passages in order to produce and subsequently make clear the definition of themes within the data. Inductive category development from the data itself is the main goal (Fossey, E., Harvey, C., McDermott, F., & Davidson, L., 2002). Its' foundations are in the more traditional field of content analysis, and it incorporates numerous concepts and metrics from a quantitative social scientific approach that stretches back to the early 20th century (Smith, 2000, cited by Humble, N., & Mozelius, 2022). It entails the finding of repeating patterns that are presented by researchers as overarching statements or themes, which are merging or central notions (Lochmiller, C., 2021). According to Padlets, cited by Humble and Mozelius (2022), Thematic Analysis is seen a suitable approach choice for studies that want to achieve a profound knowledge. Although scholars cannot agree on the best way to implement one of the most ambiguously defined analytical techniques in qualitative research (Tuckett, cited by Lochmiller, 2021), Braun and Clark cited by

Humble and Mozelius (2022), list six steps to process data through Thematic Analysis, namely:

1. Become familiar with the information.
2. Produce the first codes.
3. Look for themes.
4. Examine the themes.
5. List and describe the concluding themes.
6. Compose the found theme presentation and polish the narrative as a whole.

The procedure outlined above was used in this investigation, as explained below:

First, the researcher reviewed the field notes and interview responses numerous times to familiarise herself with the data (Kiger, M. E., & Varpio, L., 2020). The field notes were written out in prose on an MS Word document, and the interview questions and answers were typed onto another MS Word page. The data was then coded using coding, which is a method of going through the transcriptions line by line (Pieterse, 2020) and analysing and organising the data based on keywords (Lianto, 2019) to find trends (Fossey et al., 2002). Using brief names associated with each segment of the data, the data was categorised (Verweij as cited by Pieterse, 2020). Data was manually coded using Microsoft Word documents, and relevant and similar terms were colour-coded with a highlighter tool (Thompson, J., 2022). To make the transcription easier to grasp for future readers, the researcher decided to denaturalise it and enhance the grammar and syntax (Oliver et al., 2005, quoted by Thompson, J. 2022).

Two iterations of coding were conducted: the first linked the raw data to the researcher's interpretation of the data (Seidel & Kelle cited by Thompson, 2022); the second eliminated codes that appeared superfluous or combined codes that could be included under a single heading (Saldana, cited by Thompson, 2022). Pieterse (2020) categorised these into themes which are a set of codes that might depict a phenomenon (Thompson, 2022). To make sure that every element fitted inside its respective subject, the researcher went over every data extract under each heading.

After the data had been rearranged appropriately, the researcher defined each topic and provided a narrative explanation that highlighted its relevance to the study questions (Kiger, M. E., & Varpio, L., 2020). The labels contained noteworthy sentences that readers could quickly comprehend and retain while fully grasping the concept (Campbell et al., cited by Thompson, 2022). Following data analysis to determine the meaning of the data, a written report was produced (Fossey et al., 2002) with a heading indicating each topic (Guest et al., cited by Thompson, 2022). This depiction of the findings made sense of the data.

Reviewing the limitations associated with Thematic Analysis is crucial. Here is an outline of the issues raised by Lochmiller (2021) and an explanation will be given as to how this study solved them:

1. If the researcher uses Thematic Analysis without thorough coding and careful examination of causative categories, it may appear as though the researcher has skimmed on his/her investigative efforts. This was avoided by carefully getting to know the data before starting to code. Additionally, the researcher coded the data in multiple cycles to make sure that the coding was correct. Another step taken to combat this was to read the themes to ensure that each piece fitted under the theme in which it was listed.
2. Thematic Analysis heavily relies on carefully thought-out research questions. Because the research questions were well-crafted, the investigator was able to make sure the codes could address these issues.

3.8 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

Validity and reliability of research and its results are important fundamentals to provide indication of the quality of the research (Hayashi, P., Abib, G., & Hoppen, N., 2019). They are largely concerned with trustworthiness (Stiles as cited by Coleman, P. 2022), with validity being defined by Maxwell cited by Coleman (2022), as the credibility of a description, conclusion, explanation, interpretation or other account; while reliability is defined by Noble and Smith cited by Coleman (2022), as the application and suitability of the methods undertaken and the integrity of the inferences.

3.8.1. Reliability

Reliability is defined by Syed and Nelson as the consistency of a measure over several assessments, as cited by Elliot (2018). For one to achieve the same conclusion in many circumstances, the study will be kept dependable by including a variety of teachers, genders, cultural groups, and grade levels in the sample.

Consistency across a range of measurements is referred to as reliability (Pandey & Pandey, 2021). According to Golafshani as cited by Hayashi et al., (2019), the study evaluates the consistency of results over time and includes a specific imbedded idea of stability of the results found, meaning that they will be reproduced at a later period. According to Vu, T. T. N. (2021), who cited Hammersley, dependability is the consistency with which patterns are assigned to the same category by several researchers—or by the same researchers—at various times. Thus, a common feature of reliability is consistency.

According to Elliot (2018), Syed and Nelson define reliability as the degree to which scores from different instrument assessments or evaluations of the same event resemble one another, or as the consistency of a measure. In an effort to yield the same conclusion in many circumstances, this study was made dependable by utilising a variety of teachers, genders, cultural groups, and grades in the sample.

The use of semi-structured interviews can lead to low reliability because, although they can uncover pertinent research areas not covered in-depth by direct questioning, they can also limit the amount of data available on these lines of inquiry because not all participants are asked to participate (Ahlin, 2019). This was avoided by interviewing all the respondents and utilising the information from the first Semi-Structured Interview to guide the second and third interviews. This increased the quantity of responses on that specific issue and allayed dependability worries (Ahlin, 2019).

According to Gunawan cited by Hasan et al. (2021), methods for enhancing dependability include member verification, triangulation, thorough transcription, systematic planning, and coding. Triangulation involved using both interviews and observations for data collection (method triangulation) and conducting the study in

different classrooms with different teachers and learners (environmental triangulation). Triangulation, which includes consistent findings from different data sources or collection methods to better understand the research inferences, was carried out (Coleman, 2022). In an additional attempt to enhance reliability, the supervisor of the researcher examined the data coding (Coleman, 2022).

Future researchers may find results that are consistent with different attempts if clear, rich, and detailed descriptive data are made available. This affects the study's reliability by enabling future researchers to understand the study's context and transferability (Hayashi et al., 2019).

3.8.2. Validity

By using the coding method to reconcile the selected research question with the responses, validity will be guaranteed. In order to combat confirmatory bias, it will also offer the chance to look for contradictory evidence in the data (Linneberg & Korsgaard, 2019).

The reliability of the research is referred to as validity (Ahlin, 2019). When a measuring tool or gadget measures what it is supposed to measure, it is deemed legitimate (Ahlin, 2019). This refers to the degree of assurance that findings from an inquiry can be made (Kirk & Miller cited by Hayashi et al., 2019).

By classifying the data and comparing it to the selected study topic, the researcher was able to verify validity. In order to get over confirmatory bias, it also gave the chance to look for contradicting evidence in the data (Linneberg & Korsgaard, 2019). In an attempt to lower the possibility that such findings were merely disregarded in favour of a stronger case, the researcher additionally made every effort to disclose any contradicting data that would have called into question her conclusions (Coleman, 2022). This improved the study's validity.

High validity was attained through the use of semi-structured interviews since the researcher was able to obtain first-hand, in-depth explanations of the respondents'

insights (Ahlin, 2019). The respondents in these semi-structured interviews were given the opportunity to study the researcher's completed field notes and offer feedback or objections to these. Another term for this process is 'member checking', in which the researcher verifies that their understanding of the participants is accurate (Coleman, 2022). This increases validity even more.

Triangulation—the use of observation and interviews—made it feasible to compare and cross-check data, evaluating the consistency of information obtained from various sources at various points in time. Olson et al., cited by Hayashi et al. (2019), state that triangulation is one of the most popular techniques for assuring study validity. Triangulation of the environment was also achieved by distributing the study among many classes containing a variety of teachers and learners.

As per Dikko cited by Hayashi et al. (2019), maintaining genuine and uninterrupted communication with the primary informants is another factor that enhances the validity of research. Thus, the researcher decided to carry out the study at a school where she had previously worked in order to benefit from her familiarity with the quirks of this particular learning environment. In addition, the study was conducted over a 3-day period, extending the researcher's involvement because it is thought that the longer researchers work on a project, the more reliable the findings will be (Vu, 2021).

Multiple respondent interviews led to data saturation, which is the state in which all concepts are fully formed, and no new data is found (Hayashi et al., 2019). Validity and reliability are enhanced by this. It is crucial to remember that validity in qualitative research like this one cannot be viewed as the result of singular incidents; rather, it is a continuous process that requires attention from the outset of the study to its conclusion (Hayashi et al., 2019). Using the aforementioned techniques, the researcher set out to accomplish reliability and validity during the course of the investigation.

3.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Using ethics in research is the only method to get factual certainty and find solutions to issues. It is a study's most significant and essential component. An ethical standard needs to be upheld during the whole study effort. It clarifies and regulates researchers to make sure they adhere to a code of ethics when conducting research, and it

establishes standards for professional research (Hasan, N., Rana, R. U., Chowdhury, S., Dola, A. J., & Rony, M. K. K., 2021).

According to Hasan et al. (2021) ethical values are essential for safeguarding the participants' rights and dignity. To preserve goodness, lessen abuse, and preserve respondents' privacy, researchers must take ethical considerations into account (Abrar, M. & Sidik, E., 2019). Maintaining confidentiality is a crucial ethical consideration. When responses can only be connected to specific participants by the person gathering the data, the data is considered undisclosed (Ahlin, 2019). The following are some strategies for maintaining confidentiality that Ahlin (2019) mentions, and this is how it was accomplished in this study:

1. Get approval for your project. The researcher applied for and was granted ethical clearance to conduct the study from the Department of Education and CEDU Research at UNISA. The Education Department's clearance letter is in Annexure F, and the ethical approval certificate is located in Annexure G. All rules outlined in UNISA's CEDU Ethics Handbook were adhered to.

2. Give all participants informed consent paperwork outlining the purpose of the study and their involvement in it. The researcher gave consent and assent forms to each participant and advised them of their right to withdraw from the study at any time as well as to refuse to participate. You can find these letters of authorisation in Annexures C, D, and E.

3. Create a data protection strategy to ensure that personally identifiable information about respondents is maintained apart from the data replies. All information was saved anonymously and in accordance with UNISA's ethical norms.

Additionally, the research endeavoured to conform to the subsequent ethical principles:

- Knowledgeable Assent

Parental agreement was obtained before any learner was observed because this study will involve minors. This was accomplished by way of a parental consent form that explained to the parents the nature of the study and the extent to which their learner

would participate. This can be found in Annexure E. Every teacher who takes part will sign a consent form after receiving comparable information, found in Annexure D.

- Consent to participate voluntarily

No teacher or learner will be included in the study unless they voluntarily participate. Nobody will be forced to participate, and those who voluntarily provide their consent can withdraw from the study at any time and without explanation. This data will be provided in writing on a consent form that will be made available at the start of the study.

- Avoid harming somebody.

There will not be any stress, suffering, worry, lowering of self-esteem, or invasion of privacy for any of the participants.

- Propriety

The researcher and participants will maintain all observational records.

- Discretion

The research findings will not contain any participant names.

- Just evaluate pertinent elements

Only data which is relevant will be made evident.

3.10 CONCLUSION

This chapter concluded by explaining how the research methodology employed in this study adequately addressed the main research question and its three sub-questions. First, it provided a justification for the methodological choices made, demonstrating their appropriateness for the aims of the study. Second, it outlined how potential limitations were acknowledged and, where possible, circumvented in order to strengthen the reliability of the findings. Finally, chapter four proceeded to present the data analysis procedures undertaken in the study, followed by a detailed discussion of the results.

CHAPTER 4

DATA REPRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1. CHAPTER OVERVIEW

The results of the data collection were presented in this chapter. Data was collected using field notes which were taken during Passive Participatory Observations. This is where one sees the researcher collecting information about people and matters related to him/her in some situation by being present at the scene but not otherwise engaged with the people or their activities (Jorgensen, D. 2020). In this study the researcher observed the classrooms during the normal school day. This was followed by face-to-face, semi-structured interviews with these teachers after each observation, as these are appropriate research methods when there is, some, but not extensive knowledge about the topic and one needs to understand the viewpoint of the respondent (Ahlin, 2019). The analysis of the data followed each section of data representation. This data was analysed using Thematic Analysis as a deep understanding of the ramifications of Inclusive Education was sought for the study, and Thematic Analysis is considered an appropriate choice of method in attaining this, according to Padlets, cited by Humble and Mozelius (2022).

4.2. INTRODUCTION

This chapter presented the findings on the aims of the study and the research questions.

The study's aims were:

To investigate what ramifications Inclusive Education has on the teaching and learning environment in the mainstream classroom.

The research questions were as follows:

1. What are the ramifications of Inclusive Education on the teaching and learning environment in the mainstream classroom?

With sub questions:

1.1 How does Inclusive Education affect the mental health of mainstream teachers?

1.2 How does Inclusive Education affect the ability of the other learners to learn in the mainstream classroom?

1.3 How does Inclusive Education affect the discipline structure of the mainstream classroom?

4.3. BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS OF RESPONDENTS

A questionnaire was developed to ascertain the biographical details of the teachers who were observed and interviewed in this study. Their responses are displayed in table 4.1.

1.	Age:	<30	30-40	40-50	50-60	60+
N		2	2	1		
%		40	40	20		
2.	Gender:	Male	Female			
N			5			

%			100			
3.	Ethnicity:	B	W	C	I	other
N			5			
%			100			
4.	Highest academic/ professional qualification:	Teachers Diploma	Higher/further teachers' diploma	Bachelor's degree	Post graduate degree	other
N				4	1	
%				80	20	
5.	Years of teaching experience:	Less than 5 years	6-10 years	11-15 years	16-20 years	20 + years
N			3	1	1	
%			60	20	20	
6.	The grade you are currently teaching:	RR	R	1	2	3
N		1	1	1	1	1

%		20	20	20	20	20
7.	Years of experience in your current grade:	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	20+
N		2	2	1		
%		40	40	20		
8.	Status of your post:	Temporary	Permanent			
N			5			
%			100			
9.	Type of school at which you are teaching:	Public school	Private school	NPO		
N		5				
%		100				
10.	Language of teaching and learning:	English	Afrikaans	Other		
N		5				

%		100				
11. Your Province: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gauteng • KZN • EC • NW • Limpopo • WC • FS • NC • Mpumalanga 						
EC = n=5 % = 100						

Table 4.1

Teachers biographical and background details

From the responses, the researcher was able to ascertain that 2 of the teachers were under 30 years of age, 2 ranged between 30-40 years, and the fifth between 40-50 years. They were all female and had extensive years of teaching experience between them, with all of them having taught for over 6 years. One had more than 16 years' experience in the classroom with an excess of 11 years' experience in her current Grade. Two other teachers were relatively new to their grades, having taught less than 5 years in their current grade and the other two have served 6-10 years in their current grade. All the teachers were qualified, 4 of which had bachelor's degrees in education and 1, a postgraduate degree. They had permanent posts at a public school in the

Eastern Cape and taught in Grades RR through to Grade 3, using English as the medium of instruction Language of Learning and Teaching.

4.4. DATA COLLECTION

Data collection was done through Passive Participatory Observation during which the researcher undertook to make field notes during systematic examinations of the teaching and learning environment in mainstream classrooms implementing Inclusive Education. These detailed learners' general behaviour as well as the classroom environment and the teachers' mannerisms during these observations. This was to create a deeper/better understanding of the data collected. Triangulation of data collection, which includes consistent findings from different data sources or collection methods to better understand the research inferences, (Coleman, 2022), was undertaken through including the use of face-to-face semi-structured interviews of the teachers after each observation session.

4.4.1 Field Notes

The researcher took field notes of her observations while in the classroom, noting all the behaviours and interactions as they took place. These were transcribed later through Thematic Analysis to provide a better understanding of the data collected through the field notes and semi-structured interviews.

4.4.2 Interviews

Teachers were interviewed directly after the observation periods to ascertain their perceptions of the ramifications of Inclusive Education on the teaching and learning environment in the mainstream classroom. The questions posed to them can be found in Annexure B.

4.5. THE PROTECTION OF TEACHERS AND LEARNERS' IDENTITY

To protect the identity of both the teachers and learners, pseudonyms will be used and information which could lead to the identification of said participants, omitted, in the following passages detailing the findings of the study.

4.6. THEMES THAT EMERGED WITH REGARDS TO THE RAMIFICATIONS INCLUSIVE EDUCATION HAS ON THE TEACHING AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENT OF THE MAINSTREAM CLASSROOM

The themes that became apparent from the data showed there is a dependence on various factors, with regards to what ramifications Inclusive Education has on the teaching and learning environment of the mainstream classroom. As such, the number of diagnosed learners in one class; the type of lesson being taught; the individual teacher's personality, workload and experience; the type of diagnosis the learner has; the support rendered to the teacher and learner by the school; the parental involvement the learner is privy to; and the age of the learners in the class.

One will examine each of these dependencies regarding each research question, in the sections that follow.

4.6.1 The Number of Diagnosed Learners in the Class

4.6.1.1 The Effect that the Number of Diagnosed Learners in One Class Has on the Mental Health of the Teacher.

It became apparent that the number of diagnosed learners in one class had a significant impact on the mental health of the teacher, as, when asking if having these learners in their classes impacted their mental health, teachers with two or more learners in their classes all responded that it did have a negative effect, with Onelisa responding that:

“I do feel that the inclusion of Andrew and Barry has a bearing on my mental state as they are demanding in the classroom environment and are often disrupting me and their fellow peers, while requiring a lot of individual attention. They also distract the class from learning topics with their disorderly behaviours which makes it more difficult to teach effectively.”

and Twanda, with two diagnosed learners, stating that she believed:

“This to be true for me, as there are times when I don’t want to come to work in the morning, or when I think that if Chris and Damien are not going to be there, my day will be better.”

When observing a library lesson, it was noted that having both Andrew and Barry in the class was causing the teacher great distress as she stated that she felt that she was out of options and appeared exasperated while Barry was not listening and Andrew was moving around from place to place, not paying any attention to the lesson. At one point Andrew even went forward and pinched the teacher randomly, after which he began to roll around on the floor. Having two learners in one class, seemed to pose a greater challenge as it was difficult for the teacher to manage both of these learners.

Similarly, during a drama lesson, both learners refrained from keeping quiet and the teacher was constantly interrupted by Barry and a newly enrolled learner, who were rolling on the floor. With this new learner copying Barry and Andrew’s behaviour, the teacher began to struggle to control the lesson, and it became evident that the teacher was taking considerable emotional strain and was visibly relieved when the end of period was reached.

The observation of a swimming lesson involving Andrew, Barry and the newly enrolled learner further highlighted this matter, as both Barry and the new learner had to sit the lesson out due to lack of equipment. During this time the learners were observed to create an enormous quantity of strain for the supervising teacher, who had to prevent Barry from injuring the new learner, who he narrowly missed pushing into the pool.

The teacher was attempting to reprimand the new learner, while Barry was climbing the wall of the pool, constructing a situation where it was extremely challenging to safely contain both learners simultaneously.

It was noted that having Gerry, Harry and Fred in the same classroom, produced vast tension for the teacher, as, for example, when she was assisting Gerry in the classroom, Harry was in the bathroom for twenty minutes and not returning. It was challenging for her to try to attend to all three of the learners needs simultaneously, so she was often noted to focus on one and leave the other two to their own devices, which she did not take well to having to do.

In fact, the only teacher who did not cite any effect on her mental health, having diagnosed learners in her class, had only one learner in her class who was identified, namely Israel. When interviewed and posed with the question of whether Inclusive Education had any bearing on her mental health, she responded:

“As Israel is a happy learner most of the time and displays generally age-appropriate emotional reactions to situations, his inclusion in my class has neither a positive nor negative bearing on my mental state.”

This evidenced to be true as, it was noted that when Israel arrived at school for the day, he would not come inside but remained outside. It was clear that the teacher was unfazed by the number of times she attempted to get him to relent and she simply sent him on an enjoyed errand.

The data obtained from both the interviews and observations conducted indicated that the more diagnosed learners were placed in a class, the greater the effect on the mental health of the teacher.

4.6.1.2 The Effect that the Number of Diagnosed Learners in One Class Can Have on the Ability of the Rest of the Class to Learn.

It became apparent, during the interview process, that the number of diagnosed learners in the class had a definite effect on the impact on the other learners' ability to

learn, undisturbed, as teachers, who had more than one diagnosed learner in their class, all cited that it had a negative effect on the other learners in the class's ability to learn, with Onelisa revealing that:

“The inclusion of Andrew and Barry does have an effect on the other peers in my class and their ability to learn. These two learners can, at times, be distracting which detracts from the concentration span of the other learners in my class. They also require a lot of individual care which requires more of my attention to be focused on them rather than sharing my dedication evenly.”

and Twanda agreed, stating:

“Having Chris and Damien in my class definitely has a negative academic effect on the class because I have to continuously stop and reinforce the rules or explain things to these two learners.”

Fonda reiterated these thoughts, adding:

“It may require careful planning and support to ensure that the other learner's needs are also being met, without one learner's challenges overshadowing the learning of others, which becomes more challenging depending on how many learners you are accommodating.”

Again, it was noted that the only teacher who cited no issue with Inclusive Education on the learners in her classroom being able to learn undisturbed, was the teacher who accommodated one diagnosed learner in her class:

“The inclusion of Israel in the class has neither a positive nor a negative effect on the other learners. I feel that he does not affect their learning negatively or hamper them in any way over and above what any other learner in the class would.”

During the observation period, it was similarly observed that the more diagnosed learners accommodated in a class, the greater the disturbance to the other learners in the classroom. For example, when observing Andrew and Barry during an IT lesson, the learners were able to continue to work undisturbed while Barry was making senseless noises and movements, continuously falling off his chair and jumping around all over the classroom. At one point Barry was biting his partner each time the partner tried to assist him with their project. The partner was observed to continue to correct the mistakes that he had made regardless, entirely ignoring him. However, when Andrew also moved off to another partner and started wondering around, whispering in people’s ears, it was noted that the learners began to find it difficult to remain on task.

On another occasion, Barry and Andrew attended a library lesson. They were both running around, rolling on the floor, completely detached from the lesson. However, the other learners were oblivious to the disruption. The issues began when the newly enrolled learner began to think these behaviours were acceptable and was copying their actions. This brought the learners to the brink of their tolerance levels, and the class began to unravel.

However, it was noted that during Drama, Barry was falling on the floor, rolling around with the new learner joining him, copying his behaviour. While this was occurring, Andrew was break dancing. The other learners seemed accustomed to their idiosyncrasies as, when Barry was repetitively patting his rear, the class seemed oblivious and, during a verbal exercise, he continued to shout over the other learners, but they continued the game regardless. This ability to continue regardless of the learners’ antics, could be put down to the type of lesson, however, and not the number of diagnosed learners in the class, as we will examine in the relevant section.

In Ernest’s class, he is the only diagnosed learner. It was noted during observations that his peers were chiefly able to continue with their learning, uninterrupted. He was

frequently turning around and distracting his friends during creative writing time, when he was supposed to be working. He was wriggling in his desk, falling out of his chair and shouting out. He was continuously noted to be talking to his friends behind him and not writing. He was also observed to dance around the class, but all this was done quietly and it was not noted to distract the class with this behaviour.

It can be said that the data indicates that the more diagnosed learners are placed in a classroom, the greater the challenge for the rest of the class to learn effectively.

4.6.1.3 The Effect that the Number of Diagnosed Learners in One Class Has on the Discipline Structure of the Classroom.

Teachers who had more than one diagnosed learner in their class, responded that Inclusive Education influenced the discipline structure of their classrooms. Onelisa maintained that:

“The inclusion of Andrew and Barry does have an effect on the discipline structure in my classroom as they require me to be stricter. I feel I am easily pushed towards being frustrated at a quicker rate. I also feel that a firm discipline structure in the classroom keeps them more in line.”

Twanda seconded this, saying:

“I definitely think it does as I have raised my voice a lot more and been firm. I then find that the learners who are softer get upset when I’m moaning and being louder. I find I have to be a lot firmer and it’s a less happy environment because I have to constantly reinforce, moan and put the rules into place whereas if they weren’t there, they would have a much happier environment. I often don’t do fun activities because I know that they are going to disrupt the whole lesson so I just avoid the fun activities.”

Whereas the teachers with one diagnosed learner, were more positive with their regard to the effects of Inclusive Education on the discipline structure of their classrooms. Theresa felt that:

“While some strategies will be perceived by peers to be softer consequences to misbehaviour, we have found that, over time learners recognise that some learners need to be treated differently.”

While Fiona expressed that:

“The inclusion of Israel in my class has caused my discipline structure to purposely remain the same to ensure that he is exposed to the same consistent approach as given to the other learners. The same reward structure applies to him. He has the same consequences and expectations as his peers.”

These perspectives were proved to be accurate during the observation periods, where it was noted that the classes with more than one diagnosed learner in the classroom, had significant discipline issues, in comparison to the classes with one diagnosed learner.

On this theme, it was noted, during an IT lesson, that Andrew slapped a learner who was irritating him and the teacher moved the victim, leaving Andrew in his place. During this time, Barry was facing the back of the classroom, making mindless noises and movements constantly. The teacher had to correct him several times, but she did not follow through with any discipline measures. When he slapped his partner when he also started to be inane, the teacher showed no response. In both incidents, the teacher did not discipline either learner as she appeared overwhelmed by their antics as it was difficult to manage both learners simultaneously. She similarly ignored Andrew while he skipped around and Barry who was laughing when she asked for silence . When Barry was biting his partner who was trying to assist him with his project, she made no acknowledgement of his misbehaviour. Andrew continued to

dance and sing and Barry was lying on the ground pinching his partner, which soon progressed to squeezing and hitting. He was then observed to bang on the table while Andrew was lying on the floor, cycling his legs. This progressed to him lifting his friend's legs up and down. All through these antics, the teacher was not seen to discipline either learner, seemingly at a loss at how to manage the situation.

This pattern continued during the library lesson which saw Andrew and Barry rolling around, with Barry additionally lying on his stomach and swimming, shouting out and dancing while the teacher was reading a story. At one point, Andrew went up to the teacher and pinched her, yet still, they were left to their own devices.

The drama lesson saw a continuation of this lack of discipline with Andrew patting the learners' rears while Barry did not even join the class. When he did come to sit, he fell onto the floor and rolled around. The newly enrolled learner joined him, imitating his behaviour, spinning and rolling over the classroom floor. The teacher did, at one point, attempt to recall order and waited for silence, however Andrew and Barry refrained from being quiet. The teacher did not carry through with any discipline, and the other learners were left to try to get them to comply. The conclusion of the lesson saw the teacher end with a fun verbal game, during which Barry shouted over all the learners and Andrew started to screech. The teacher then concluded the lesson and the learners were instructed to line up, however, Barry jumped up and hit Andrew in the face. The teacher continued to take no disciplinary procedures, stating that she cannot control both of them.

While observing Israel, however, a different pattern emerged. As the only diagnosed learner in his class, Israel was easier to discipline. His teacher was seen to attempt to get him to toe the line frequently, although he would not always comply. When he was told to wash his hands, he had to be told a few times, but he did eventually relent. During the day, he completed a task and got up but did not push in his chair. The teacher instructed him to do so, and he complied. During lunch time he got his food and made to move back to class. His teacher stopped him and told him to come and sit with another friend, to which he conformed.

While observing Israel at swimming, he was noted to not be following instructions, and the teacher had to frequently ask him to comply. He would not relent. The teacher remained firm and continued to prompt him to conform. He would brood when

reprimanded, but the reprimand was followed through, regardless. When he was snatching toys from friends, the teacher treated him alike and would not permit him to grab. At one point he blew mucous out his nose and sucked it into his mouth, prompting the teacher to instruct him to go and blow his nose. He refused and instead washed the mucous off in the pool. The teacher insisted and followed through, however, resulting in Israel getting out, blowing his nose and then returning to the pool. At the end of the lesson, Israel could not haul himself out of the pool and attempted to use the stairs. The teacher contended he pulled himself out, to which he complied..

These observations and interviews alluded to the fact that the more diagnosed learners in a class, the greater the effect on the discipline system of the classroom.

4.6.2 The Type of Lesson Being Taught

4.6.2.1 The Effect That the Type of Lesson Being Taught Has on the Mental Health of the Teacher

It was apparent during the observation periods, that the type of lesson being taught had implications with regards to how the teachers' mental health would be affected by having diagnosed learners in their classes.

During the IT lesson observed with Barry and Andrew, the learners were working with expensive equipment and were learning new concepts. Both of these factors meant that the teacher was required to be available to all the learners as many had questions and she needed to ensure the equipment was being used correctly. However, Barry needed to be corrected several times and kept laughing while she asked for quiet. It was very difficult to concentrate in the classroom with Barry's disruptions, resulting in the teacher to be visibly struggling to maintain her composure.

Conversely, during a listening test, Andrew was found unable to follow basic instructions and when he got pain in his legs, he would make loud noises. The teacher was able to appear calm and unanimated throughout this scenario as the other learners were contained at their desks doing a quiet activity, which they were familiar with.

It is interesting to revisit Twanda's interview at this point, where, when asked if having diagnosed learners in her class has an effect on her discipline system, she was noted to respond by saying:

"I often don't do fun activities because I know that they are going to disrupt the whole lesson, so I just avoid the fun activities."

This underlines the key findings that the effect of Inclusive Education on teachers' mental health varies dependent on the activity taking place.

This was reiterated while observing Andrew and Barry during their drama lesson. Andrew was rubbing his teacher's legs and arms, but he was quiet and remained seated. Although he stood in the teachers' space and constantly touched her, she was able to continue teaching, undisturbed. Being a drama lesson, she mentioned that she did not feel the pressure to have too much structure and discipline, therefore his behaviour was not troubling to her.

Similarly, while enjoying morning playtime, Damien was noted to be kicking the toys. The teacher reprimanded him, and he acknowledged the reprimand, but he continued to throw the toys regardless. The teacher moved away, shaking her head and commented that this was an ongoing struggle, but she appeared nonchalant as no other learners were being affected and it was a relaxed play time.

Conversely, at the swimming pool which requires safety to be of primary concern, Barry had to be instructed to sit by the supervising teacher several times, yet he continued to wonder around. He had to be told numerous times to leave the swimming pool pipe by the teacher. However, he left his feet on it and kept repeating that he was not touching the pipe because his fingers were not on it. Once he tired from this, he began running around adjacent to the pool, nearly pushing his friend in, head first. He continued ignoring the teacher's instructions to be seated, instead climbing the wall and lying on the top, after which sticking his fingers into the small gaps in the bricks around the pool. When he was seated, he would shout out instead of sitting quietly. Upon a conversation with the supervising teacher at the end of the lesson, it was found that Barry was very taxing on his mental health and that he had begun to cope by

ignoring him and zoning out, as years of dealing with his antics around the pool had become exhausting.

Similarly, observing Israel at the swimming pool brought further insight as to how the mental health of teachers can be affected when carrying out a lesson requiring safety protocols to be adhered to, while accommodating diagnosed learners. He was continually ignoring the teacher and assistant, going off to the other end of the pool by himself. Each time the assistant would fetch him to re-join the group, he would go straight back to the corner by himself. As it was a breach of safety to leave him on his own, the assistant had to supervise him exclusively, leaving the teacher to teach the rest of the class unaided, thus, creating additional strain.

As mentioned by Twanda, fun activities appeared to increase learner misbehaviour, having a negative effect on the teacher's mental health. While observing Harry during his drama lesson, he was put in pairs, and each learner was given an octopus soft toy. Harry proceeded to twist his. The teacher had to tell him several times to face his friend, but Harry continued to pull his octopus apart and was not following instructions to have a conversation with his partner. Harry and his friend were, instead, fighting with the octopuses. The teacher was unable to get Harry to stop damaging his octopus and he continued to throw it around while his partner was unable to participate in the lesson. This was creating obvious irritation on the part of the teacher.

These observations made it apparent/evident that the type of lesson being carried out had a marked consequence on how the teacher's mental health was affected by Inclusive Education.

4.6.2.2 The Effect That the Type of Lesson Being Taught Has on the Ability of the Rest of the Class to Learn.

During lessons which required a high degree of concentration and structure, learners' ability to learn, uninterrupted by these learners, became more compromised.

Observing drama, a more relaxed lesson that does not require much structure and concentration, showed Barry falling onto the floor upon entering the classroom.

Andrew was break dancing and Barry repetitively patting his rear. However, the class seemed oblivious and even continued their game when Barry was shouting over them.

When seated in a circle at morning time, Chris was fiddling with his friend's mouth during the greeting song. He then began to pull on his friend's hair and constantly interfered with him. Ultimately neither one was paying attention. When the teacher moved onto a discussion of the topic for the week, Chris was sucking on his hand and not participating. He continued to distract his friend and this distraction spread to two learners on either side of him. His immediate neighbour tried to move away, and he squashed his friend sitting alongside of him as a result. Due to the nature of the lesson being that the learners had to sit in close proximity to each other, Chris created this distracting environment for his peers. This distraction continued when the learners were taken to meet a new member of staff and Chris and Damien were very interruptive with the learners around them, as they were in close proximity. It was noted that during art, when each learner had their own space, Chris and Damien worked quietly with no interruptions, but when they returned to the mat, Chris was hitting his friend on his abdomen.

Ernest was frequently turning around and distracting his friends during creative writing time, when he was supposed to be working. He was wriggling in his desk, falling out of his chair and shouting out. He was continuously noted to be talking to his friends behind him and not writing. He was very distracting to these learners and his teacher unremittingly had to remind him to turn around and face the front. As this was a lesson which required focus and structure, Ernest's behaviour was problematic for the learners who were trying to focus and learn around him.

The data made it evident that during more relaxed, unstructured lessons, it was easier for learners to continue uninterrupted by their diagnosed peers, but lessons which required learners to be in close proximity with each other and had a high degree of structure, requiring concentration, proved more problematic in this regard.

4.6.2.3 The Effect That the Type of Lesson Being Taught Has on the Discipline System of the Classroom.

It was noted during observations that the type of lesson being taught had a direct correlation on the discipline system of the classroom including a diagnosed learner. Teachers who were delivering structured lessons with precise desired outcomes and those who were involved in lessons which required learners' safety to be paramount, such as swimming, were more inclined to attempt to discipline the ill behaviours of the diagnosed learners.

During IT, while Andrew was dancing and Barry continued to clown around for the entire lesson, the teacher did not move to discipline either learner as this was an unstructured lesson, without a set outcome. At drama, Andrew and Barry did not listen to the instruction for line up and this concluded with Barry jumping around and hitting Andrew in the face. Once again, the teacher did not discipline either learner, being an unstructured space. Whereas, during swimming, Barry was told to sit by the supervising teacher numerous times when he was wandering around. He was reprimanded several times as he performed his antics, in an effort to keep him safe. Additionally, when Ernest was talking to his friends during creative writing time, as the lesson was structured with expected outcomes, his teacher corrected him. When this teacher was teaching a Mathematics activity, Ernest shouted out the answer. She told him to remove a reward off his star chart, as is the regular discipline system for the class. Ernest complied with this, although visibly upset.

Observing Harry told a similar story. During a formal small group session, Harry refused to return to class, and the teacher persisted, calling his class teacher to come and remove him from the class. However, during drama, when he continued twist his octopus and throw it around, the teacher requested for him to stop, but she did not carry through on her instructions and allowed him to continue this behaviour throughout the lesson.

Israel was observed during his swimming lesson to be made to comply with not snatching toys from his friends, to exit the pool to blow his nose correctly and to pull himself out of the pool, not using the stairs, as per usual protocol. These actions serve to keep the learners safe, and it was noted that in these instances, the diagnosed learners are disciplined in the same manner as their peers. However, when Israel did not want to join his peers at the table for creative work, he was permitted to remain on

the mat building a puzzle of his choice. Indicating that lessons deemed less important, brought more freedom from discipline for these learners.

These findings all served to indicate that the type of lesson being taught, had a direct impact on the discipline structure of the inclusive classroom.

4.6.3 The Individual Teachers' Personality, Experience and Workload

4.6.3.1 The Effect That the Individual Teacher's Personality, Experience and Workload Can Have on the Mental Health of the Teacher.

It was noted, during the interview process, that those teachers who had additional workload, less experience and training or had a personality that inclined them towards stress, described Inclusive Education as having a bearing on their mental health.

Onelisa, who stated that:

"I do feel that the inclusion of Andrew and Barry has a bearing on my mental health..."

also mentioned that:

"I do not have any training which could assist me to deal with the conditions Andrew and Barry have been diagnosed with."

Additionally, it was noted that Onelisa has 6-10 years of teaching experience, making her only moderately experienced in the field.

Likewise, Twanda reiterated that she, too, believed Inclusive Education had a bearing on her mental health:

"I believe this to be true for me..."

and, like Onelisa:

"I do have formal training for some learning disorders, but not for what Chris and Damien have, no."

Twanda went on to add:

"If I could purely be teaching in the day and not have to worry about other admin that pops up, it would be a lot easier, but having to take time out to stop and answer an email or send messages or whatever the case is, doing school admin does affect my concentration purely on being on the learners in the class."

This was a theme reiterated by Fonda:

"I'm not going to lie. With my added admin burdens, it's a lot. I'm really struggling."

Fonda was also noted to have only 6-10 years' experience in the teaching field with no formal training to accommodate the diagnosed learners in her class:

"I have a regular teaching degree which typically includes modules on addressing learners with barriers to learning, but I do not have specific training for these conditions."

She also stated that:

"Working with a learner who faces challenges, whether physical, emotional or academic, requires patience, empathy and a proactive approach to ensuring they feel supported. This can sometimes be emotionally draining."

Theresa maintained to have training to assist her with working with Ernest:

“I have a teaching degree which included coursework addressing learners with barriers to learning focusing on Inclusive Education, identifying diverse learning needs and implementing strategies for support and intervention.”

However, it was noted by the researcher, that when she was asked what the diagnosed condition of Ernest was, she was neither able to pronounce the diagnosis, nor explain to the researcher what the diagnosis of this learner was. This led to the researcher to assume that Theresa, in fact, did not have any formal qualifications which were applicable to dealing with Ernest’s diagnosis. She also indicated that she only had a moderate level of experience in the teaching field, with 6-10 years served.

This lack of experience and training, led her to state that:

“Learning barriers can affect the learner’s academic performance, behaviour, social relationships and mood. I acknowledge the level of attention required by the learner can be taxing to the educator, particularly in the first term of the year, while trying to establish effective support. I maintain that the collaboration between home and school is imperative and directly impacts the establishment of effective learning for these learners.”

Fiona provided a valuable juxtapose for this argument, as with 16-20 years of teaching experience, she indicated that:

“As Israel is a happy learner most of the time and displays generally age-appropriate emotional reactions to situations, his inclusion in my class has neither a positive or negative bearing on my mental state.”

Further adding:

“It can bring a sense of fulfilment to see growth and improvement in these learners.”

Besides the notable difference in experience that Fiona carried, it is also noted that she benefits from a personal assistant in her class, relieving her of overbearing administration duties and a full time facilitator who:

“is trained to assist Israel.”

Which is helpful because:

“I have not received training regarding Israel’s specific disorders.”

It was observed during Barry’s swimming lesson that the supervising teacher appeared exhausted. He mentioned that his personality does not allow him to tolerate such behaviour and that he found these learners to be taxing on his mental health. He furthered that he had begun to cope by ignoring them and zoning out.

Of further interest was Ernest’s teacher. Ernest was noted to be very brash in his communication with her, speaking to her as if he was her equal, using colloquial language. The teacher was not encouraging this; it was apparent that he appeared to think it was acceptable. The teacher appeared not vexed by him. However, as the day progressed, the researcher began to notice peculiarities with this teacher. For example, while the learners continued a colouring activity, the teacher appeared bored in her demeanour. She was placid, unengaged and preoccupied. In fact, the teacher appeared to be exhibiting signs of burn out. The learners were left to chiefly take care of themselves. When she was actively teaching during and Mathematics problem-solving activity, Ernest shouted out the answer. The teacher told him to remove a reward from his star chart, but she appeared very unengaged with the learners and for

extended periods of the school day, no active learning was taking place. She was very uninterested in what she was doing in the classroom. She appeared emotionless and expressionless. The learners seemed very bored, while the teacher appeared equally bored. It is possible that this teacher is suffering from burn out, which would indicate what the long term effects of dealing with these learners, has had on her mental health.

While observing lunch time in Gerry's classroom, he was met with challenges as he was unable to open his containers due to his disability, however, his teacher was happy to assist him. It appeared that her personality type was to be of service as she was noted to be very willing, throughout the day, to assist others. This was an indication that the teacher's personality had a role to play in how their mental health would be affected by the extra work load posed on them to accommodate learners with special needs. She was noted to be more patient in her demeanour, which allowed her to remain less affected by stress. This was noted when Gerry was not following her instruction to pack away and he continued to work on his book cover. She calmly counted to three, and he then complied.

These observations and interview responses all supported that avenue of thought that the teacher's personality, experience, training and workload, are all contributing factors when considering the affects that Inclusive Education has on their mental health.

4.6.3.2 The effect that the individual teacher's personality, experience and workload can have on the ability of the rest of the class to learn.

Teachers who had a calm nature and disciplined with minimal intervention, created classrooms of learners who were able to continue with their learning uninterrupted by their diagnosed peers. Less workload and more experience and training, helped to achieve this more relaxed nature in the teachers, as they were more confident in their abilities.

This was most notably reflected in Israel's case, where he is assisted by a full-time facilitator, trained in his diagnosis. Israel was the only learner observed, who did not disturb the learning of any of his peers throughout the observation period. His teacher was calm and relaxed throughout the day and the rest of his peers worked

uninterrupted, despite his antics. It should be noted that Israel's teacher has close to 20 years of teaching experience, access to a full-time personal assistant, lessening her administrative duties and a trained facilitator for Israel. Therefore, Israel's class were benefitting from training, experience and a lessened workload.

These observations support the notion that the individual teacher's personality, experience, training and workload will have a bearing on the rest of the learner's ability to learn, uninterrupted, in the inclusive classroom.

4.6.3.3 The Effect That the Individual Teacher's Personality, Experience and Workload Can Have on the Discipline Structure of the Classroom.

Twanda, who expressed several times that her workload was too great:

"If I could purely be teaching in the day and not have to worry about other admin that pops up..."

"...I wish for a smaller class and maybe an assistant..."

She also indicated that Inclusive Education did have an effect on the discipline structure of her classroom:

"I definitely think it does as I have raised my voice a lot more and been more firm. I then find that the learners who are softer get upset when I'm moaning and being louder. I find I have to be a lot firmer and it's a less happy environment because I have to constantly reinforce, moan and put the rules into place whereas if they weren't there, they would have a much happier environment. I often don't do fun activities because I know that they are going to disrupt the whole lesson so I just avoid the fun activities."

Whereas Fiona, who has been mentioned to have a reduced workload due to extra support, stated that her discipline structure remains the same:

“The inclusion of Israel in my class has caused my discipline structure to purposely remain the same to ensure that he is exposed to the same consistent approach as given to the other learners. The same reward structure applies to him. He has the same consequences and expectations as his peers.”

When observing Andrew skipping when he was told to sit and Barry laughing when the teacher asked for silence , it was noted that they were not disciplined the same as their peers for transgressions. In fact, they were not disciplined at all. Barry was seen to bite, squeeze, hit and pinch his partner during the observed IT lesson, but he was never reprimanded or disciplined in any manner, as would any other learner have been. This teacher has limited years of teaching experience and no training:

“I do not have any training which could assist me to deal with the conditions Andrew and Barry have been diagnosed with.”

Matters did not improve during library, as Andrew and Barry continued to roll around on the floor throughout the lesson, Andrew walked up to the teacher and pinched her, and Barry pushed a learner over on his way to the door during line up time. Neither learner was disciplined in any manner, at any time.

The supervising teacher at the swimming pool had no training or experience with diagnosed learners and he mentioned that his personality does not tolerate such learners well. During this time Barry was seen to climb walls, run in dangerous areas, shout out and be generally unruly. Although the teacher did attempt to verbally reprimand him, there were no repercussions or follow through, and Barry was chiefly left to continue with his misbehaviour.

A similar pattern was noted with Damien. Damien would dominate the toys and kick them. The teacher would reprimand him, but he would continue to throw and kick them. No follow through occurred. When he was called to the art table, he continued to sit on the mat. He was left. Again, this was a teacher who has no training:

“I do have formal training for some learning disorders but not for what Chris and Damien have, no.”

She also has an overburdened administrative role:

“...having to stop and answer and email or send messages or whatever the case, doing school admin does affect my concentration purely on being on the learners in the class.”

Gerry and Harry were also noted to not be disciplined in an equivalent manner to their peers. When attending the support teacher’s lesson, Gerry did not follow her instruction to pack away and continued to work, later he was not handing in his cover despite being instructed many times by his teacher to do so. When the teacher told the learners to clean the floor, Harry simply sat on his chair and stared. It should be mentioned that their teacher also expressed concerns over a burdening workload:

“I’m not going to lie. With my added admin burdens, it’s a lot. I’m really struggling.”

This is in addition to having no training:

“I only have a regular teaching degree.”

Conversely, Ernest’s teacher was seen to discipline him much the same as the other learners in the class. While he was frequently turning around distracting his friends, he was corrected by her. When he failed to thank her for a reward, she prompted him to do so. During a Mathematics activity, he shouted out. His teacher instructed him to remove a reward off his star chart, which he did. Ernest’s teacher did not have any formal training or experience, but she was noted to have an assistant in the class, lessening her administrative duties. It has also been mentioned that she had peculiarities in her demeanour. She was extremely detached from the class. It is possible that her personality type is very relaxed, or she could be exhibiting signs of burn out.

Similarly, Israel was not following instructions during swimming and the teacher had to frequently ask for him to comply. The teacher was firm and continued to prompt him to conform. When the toys were brought out, he was snatching them, nevertheless, the teacher treated him alike and would not permit him to grab. He blew mucous out his nose and sucked it into his mouth, prompting the teacher to instruct him to go and blow his nose. He refused and instead washed the mucous off in the pool. The teacher insisted and followed through, resulting in Israel getting out, blowing his nose and then returning to the pool. At the end of the lesson, Israel could not haul himself out of the pool and attempted to use the stairs. The teacher contended he pulled himself out, to which he complied.

With Israel and Ernest's teachers benefitting from assistance with administration in the classroom, both of their teachers have a lessened workload. Israel's teacher has close to 20 years of teaching experience and his facilitator is trained in his diagnosis. This indicates that the teacher's personality, experience and workload can be determining factors as to how the discipline structure in the classroom is affected by Inclusive Education.

4.6.4 The Learner's Diagnoses

In order to discuss the findings of the effects of the learner's diagnoses on the various aspects of the classroom, the diagnoses will be described first.

Andrew has autism. People with autism are incapable of recognising, interpreting, or comprehending the mental states of others. They struggle with executive functioning, have intense, consuming hobbies, sleep disorders and sensory sensitivity. Early childhood is marked by difficulties with sleep, learning and behaviour (Lipkin et al., 2020). It is also marked by deficits in social interaction, executive functioning, sensory-perceptual abilities, and behaviour, including emotional or agitated states, aggressive behaviour, or physical complaints (Fernandez-Prieto, M., Moreira, C., Cruz, S., Campos, V. Marinez-Regueiro, R., Taboada, M., & Sampaio, A., 2021).

Barry has a low IQ. Learners with intellectual disabilities struggle with a variety of areas, including motor, social, and communicative skills as well as autonomously

handling everyday life tasks. According to Leonard S., Msall M., Bower C., Tremont M. (2021).

Chris and Damien have both been diagnosed with Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). Three traits characterise Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity condition, a neurological condition affecting development: impulsivity, hyperactivity and deficit in attention. According to Sayal (as cited by Ward, R., Kovschoff, H., & Kreppner, J., 2021), inability to focus, lack of self-control, impulsive behaviours and excessive activity are characteristic (Kaplan, B. as cited by Salari, N., Ghasemi, H., Abdoli, N., Rahmani, A., Shiri, M., Hashemian, A. & Mohammadi, M., 2023).

Ernest has a weak vestibular proprioceptive system, dysfunctional motor sensory system, innate neural capacity and ADHD (which has been described above); Fred struggles with obesity and a hearing deficit; while Gerry was born with a club foot and hand coupled with anxiety. Learners with anxiety disorders frequently have restricted/repetitive behavioural patterns and social communication difficulties (Van Steensel, Bogels & Perrin as cited by Baribeau, D., Vigod, S., Pullenayegum, E., Kerns, C., Mirenda, P., Smith, I. & Szarmari, P., 2021).

Harry carries a diagnosis of Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) which can be seen as ADHD but without the hyperactive behaviours associated with ADHD and Israel – Trisomy NP, hypertonia, epilepsy and central apnoea. These learners have mild-to-moderate intellectual disabilities; some can communicate and handle daily living activities, while others are not able to do so. Williams, K., Jacoby, P., Whitehouse, A., Kim, R., Epstein, A., Murphy, N., and Downs, J., cited Leonard, S. et al. and according to Williams et al. (2021). They are susceptible to poor health and challenges with daily tasks like walking and communicating.

4.6.4.1 The Effect That the Learner's Diagnosis Can Have on the Mental Health of the Teacher.

The more severe the disorder and the more inclined the disorder was to disrupt the class and cause unruly behaviour, the greater the effect on the mental health of the teacher, although it was put by Fonda, that all disorders create challenges for the teacher's mental health:

“Working with a learner who faces challenges, whether physical, emotional or academic, requires patience, empathy and a proactive approach to ensuring they feel supported. This can sometimes be emotionally demanding.”

As Gerry is unable to open containers with his disorder, his teacher must facilitate him throughout the day to retrieve any items he may require. This creates additional workload for her. Harry struggles with his emotions and, when he did not win the game during his small group time, he put his head down and cried, refusing to return to class. His teacher had to be called to remove him from the class, again, creating additional strain.

Israel cannot respond to social cues and this finds him performing actions such as blowing mucous onto his face and sucking it into his mouth. He is aware of the mucous but does not understand how to correctly respond. In both instances that this occurred, his teacher had to pause the class and deal with the situation, which took up to five minutes each time. He also has very weak gross motor skills which makes it difficult for him to pull himself out of the pool and perform other such tasks. The teacher is then expected to spend extra time facilitating him with such matters.

Having both Andrew and Barry with impulsivity challenges in a class together, has been very taxing on their teacher’s mental health, as these learners are extremely disruptive, creating enormous pressure on the teacher to manage the classroom environment to keep it conducive to learning. Although, it must be mentioned, that Andrew is more manageable due to his medication.

Chris and Damien are impulsive, hyperactive and inattentive in class. This creates challenges for their teacher to control them and protect their peers from being victims of an impulsive action. Although Ernest is also diagnosed ADHD, he is on medication, and as such does not pose as much of a challenge for his teacher.

Fred’s obesity requires his teacher to ensure that he can be accommodated in all classrooms and all activities. This requires extra logistical planning and management. He simultaneously has a hearing impairment, thus, creating further logistical challenges for his teacher to ensure he is accommodated at all times.

It is apparent from these observations, that all diagnoses require extra work and support on behalf of the teacher, although some more than others. When coupled with an already challenging administration load, absence of support and lack of training, this creates a heavy burden on the teacher, affecting their mental health.

4.6.4.2 The Effect That the Learner's Diagnosis Can Have on the Ability of the Rest of the Class to Learn.

Diagnoses that involve impulsivity and behavioural issues, such as ADHD and Autism, can be expected to have a negative effect on the ability of the rest of the class to learn. While other diagnoses such as obesity, club foot and hand and hearing impairments, do little in the way of disrupting learners around them.

Theresa, teaching a learner with ADHD, felt that:

"It needs to be said that we are mandated to ensure that all learners are safe at school, and should behaviour be considered harmful towards his peers, intervention has to be immediate."

With Fonda agreeing:

"There can also be challenges. If additional attention is required for the learner with special needs, it could potentially take focus away from the rest of the class at times. It may require careful planning and support to ensure that the other learner's needs are also being met, without one learner's challenges overshadowing the learning of others."

Israel's teacher stated that:

“The inclusion of Israel in the class has neither a positive nor negative effect on the other learners. I feel that he does not affect their learning negatively or hamper them in any way over and above what any other learn in the class would.”

It is noted that Israel’s diagnoses do not carry any symptoms of ADHD typical behaviours.

Chris, who is diagnosed ADHD, was observed to be interfering with his friend throughout the morning ring activity, creating distraction to the rest of the group. This continued when they went to meet the new member of staff. Damien, also ADHD, could not contain his impulsivity and kicked all the learners in the line on his way into the classroom in the morning.

During drama, Harry, ADD diagnosed, could not pay any attention to the lesson at hand and spent the session destroying his octopus and distracting his friend from being able to participate in the lesson.

Contrary, when the teacher was not assisting Gerry, he simply sat and did not work. Although he was not cooperating, he was not disturbing any of his peers during this time. Similarly, it was noted that Fred struggled to move around the class and was challenged in trying to sit comfortably on the mat for group work. This posed a challenge for his teacher, but it was not disturbing for his peers.

It was obvious from these observations and interview responses, that the diagnoses of the individual learner, impacted greatly on how much of a challenge they would pose to their peers’ ability to learn uninterrupted by them. With Theresa feeling that:

“If the learners support needs are believed to no longer be low intensive but are now moderate to high, support needs consideration and must be made regarding the best interests of the learner. Teaching qualifications emphasise the principles of Inclusive Education which aims to create learning environments where all learners, including those with diverse needs, can participate and learn.

4.6.4.3 The Effect That the Learner's Diagnosis Can Have on the Discipline Structure of the Classroom.

While Barry was noted to be the most disruptive learner observed, it was also noted that he was never disciplined. His diagnosis could be a contributing factor to this. According to Leonard S., Msall M., Bower C., Tremont M. (2021), learners with low IQ, such as Barry, cannot process discipline strategies as per their peers. Learners with intellectual disabilities struggle with a variety of areas, including motor, social, and communicative skills as well as autonomously handling everyday life tasks. This makes it challenging to discipline Barry, as per his peers, as he unable to comprehend what is required of him socially. Barry was observed to pinch, hit, bite and squeeze peers, but he was never corrected. Barry had been attending this school for six years and his teachers were familiar with his patterns of behaviour and similarly, that there was little they could do that would deter him. He would also sit when everyone else stood, stood when they sat, clapped after his peers had stopped, and when he asked for help to tie his shoelace, he licked his friends head who was helping him.

The learners diagnosed ADHD where similarly noted to not be disciplined. According to Sayal (as cited by Ward, R., Kovschoff, H., & Kreppner, J., 2021), inability to focus, lack of self-control, impulsive behaviours and excessive activity (Kaplan, B. as cited by Salari, N., Ghasemi, H., Abdoli, N., Rahmani, A., Shiri, M., Hashemian, A. & Mohammadi, M., 2023) are characteristics of ADHD. These patterns of behaviour make it trying for teachers to discipline the learners in the same manner as they would their peers.

Gerry's anxiety makes it difficult to know how best to discipline him without affecting his esteem, resulting in his teacher refraining from correcting him and Andrew's autism sees him battling social norms, making usual discipline strategies obsolete. He was seen slapping a boy who was irritating him during an IT lesson. The teacher's response was to move the victim away as she was aware, from experience with Andrew, that there was little she could do to dissuade him.

Chris and Damien were often playing roughly with the toys. Their teacher would reprimand them, and both would respond that they would stop, but they continued

regardless, their impulsivity and hyperactivity driving their defiance. Harry's ADD saw him rarely paying attention in class. During drama he continued to pull on his octopus and not pay any attention to the teacher. He was left, undisciplined, as his condition makes it difficult for him to pay attention and this is not necessarily misbehaviour per se.

It became apparent that each learner was unique, as per their diagnosis and as such, it was impossible to have a one size fits all attitude when it came to discipline. The discipline structure of the classroom was definitely impacted by Inclusive Education, and each diagnosis was seen to warrant a different style of discipline.

4.6.5 Support Rendered by the School

4.6.5.1 The Effect that the Support Rendered by the School Can Have on the Mental Health of the Teacher.

Teachers who were offered support by the school, reported lower levels of mental health issues. This was further consolidated during the observation periods, as those who had assistance provided in the classroom, appeared more relaxed throughout the day.

Theresa, who had an assistant in the class provided by the school, had a positive outlook to Inclusive Education, stating:

“At our school, we believe in an education of the whole learner, encouraging development through perseverance.”

While Fiona, who is assisted by a full-time personal assistant and a facilitator, said that she felt that Inclusive Education had no bearing on her mental health:

“His inclusion in my class had neither a positive nor negative bearing on my mental state.”

Fonda also added substance to this argument, saying:

“I also have an extra teacher in my grade that is able to assist and offer advice and support when I am struggling. I am furthermore fortunate enough to be able to do language and Mathematics rotations twice a week, affording me to teach in ability groups.”

However, Twanda, with no assistance provided to her, felt differently, stating:

“I feel that if I had more support and could have a safe space to release what I’m truly feeling; it would be a lot easier to cope with these learners.”

Adding:

“I am not against having these learners in my class but I wish for a smaller class and maybe a learnership or an aid that’s more permanent and not just on the odd occasion.”

She also mentioned the need for less administrative duties, to reduce the strain:

“If I could purely be teaching in the day and not have to worry about other admin that pops up, it would be a lot easier.”

Onelisa underlined the need for support in order to assist the diagnosed learners:

“With the correct support and guidance from the correct professionals, these learners can hopefully get to where they need to be.”

She was also noted to say:

“Learners with inclusive educational needs are demanding of their teacher and require a lot of additional support.”

With Theresa expressing that:

“The toll on both class teacher and classroom peers can be heavy in the establishment of the learning support needs of learners with learning barriers.”

While Fonda agreed that extra support is needed from the school:

“Inclusive Education requires flexibility, ongoing professional development and collaboration amongst teachers, support staff and parents to meet the needs of all learners. Having learners with special needs is very taxing when you have excessive administration to take care of on top of these needs. I’m not going to lie. With my added admin burdens, it’s a lot. I’m really struggling.”

During observations, there were numerous times when it became apparent that the teacher and class could have benefitted greatly from a support person in the classroom. One such time was when Gerry did not want to speak out loud when it was his turn to converse during drama. The teacher asked if he wanted to come and whisper in her ear, he responded affirmatively, went over, but despite much encouragement, still did not communicate. She queried if he would like to come and

tell her later and he nodded favourably and went back to his place. However, due to time constraints, the teacher did not come back to him later.

During a second incident, while having a lesson with the support teacher, Harry did not win the game and put his head down and cried, refusing to return to class. The support teacher spent five minutes trying to get him to go back to class while the others waited to be instructed. When it became apparent that he would not conform, she had to relent and call his teacher to come and remove him from the class, leaving the other learners unattended.

Before Israel's facilitator arrives, he is left in the care of his teacher. When he first arrived at school, he would not come inside, and his teacher had to stay outside supervising him. This left the learners inside, unattended. However, when his facilitator arrived, his teacher was left to be able to continue with her usual school day. She was noted to sit with Israel during an educational game, but when she needed to move on, to assist the other learners in the class, she had the benefit of being able to call his facilitator over, who continued to assist him. When returning to his class, after swimming, Israel pulled down his costume while he was still outside. The facilitator was notified by the teacher and she was quick to respond. He unrelentingly went back outside, undressed and the facilitator had to continuously remind him to go back indoors to change. The teacher was able to assist the other boys, uninterrupted by this.

While observing Gerry, Fred and Harry in their class during a six-bricks activity, Fred appeared very confused and did not seem to understand how to execute the task; Gerry was not able to follow simple instructions and Harry had no inkling and was replicating his partner. While in rotational groups, Harry was merely copying his partner's work. He did not seem to comprehend what he was doing himself. Likewise, Gerry was duplicating his friend's work. During the Mathematics activity, Harry did not appear to realise the teacher was giving instructions. These learners would have benefitted from an assistant to keep them on the correct trajectory, which would, in turn, have alleviated stress from their teacher trying to assist them, while teaching the rest of the class. Similarly, when Fred went to the bathroom, he was gone for an extended period of time. His teacher was unable to check on him due to the fact that she had class of learners she was responsible for. When he returned, ill, she was

fortunate to locate a support teacher in proximity that was able to accompany him to the office, as this would have caused her difficulty trying to manage her class and this learner. Gerry was observed to be unable to execute the task, while on the mat doing group work. He indicated that he would prefer to work alone with her. Although she agreed to this and sent him back to his desk, she was unable to follow this through due to time constraints.

It goes without saying that time pressure and not being able to complete all the tasks set for the day, creates enormous stress for teachers, affecting their mental health. When provided with additional support from the school, the teacher is able to continue with her lesson plans, achieving her outcome and goals set for the day.

4.6.5.2 The Effect That the Support Rendered by the School Can Have on the Ability of the Rest of the Class to Learn.

When observing classrooms who had assistants and facilitators provided by the school, it was noted that the rest of the class was not as interrupted by the diagnosed learners and were able to continue their work with greater ease than those who had no support offered.

Onelisa reinforced this finding by stating:

“They require a lot of individual care which requires more of my attention to be focused on them rather than sharing my dedication evenly.”

As did Twanda:

“I have to continuously stop and reinforce the rules to these two learners.”

Whereas Fiona, who has a full time assistant and facilitator was noted to respond that:

“I feel that he does not affect their learning negatively or hamper them in any way over and above what any other learner in the class would. This is primarily as he has a full-time facilitator to assist him.”

Barry and Andrew; Chris and Damien, were observed to have no assistant in their classes. These learners spent the day interrupting every lesson and their peers would become distracted by them by the culmination of each period.

While it is important to address the ability of the rest of the class to learn, one should also explore that ability of the diagnosed learner to learn, when offered support by the school. This is imperative, as when learners are engaged and learning, they are not inclined to be interruptive to the rest of their peers. This was observed in the swimming pool, where Israel would not follow instructions. The teacher's assistant needed to assist him exclusively. Had she not had an assistant, it would not have been possible for Israel to have participated in the lesson. In comparison, when Barry was not able to participate in the swimming lesson, his behaviour became very disruptive as he was not constructively occupied.

Additionally, when Harry was attending a support teacher's lesson, where there was one teacher and 6 learners, he was found to be cooperative, able to stay on track and answer correctly to questions, in this milieu. Similarly, during outside play time, Israel went to the staff room with the facilitator to complete academic work. He remained seated, engaging easily and was able to execute the task generally acceptably. He engaged well with his facilitator in this environment, showing a happy and relaxed demeanour.

It was clear that the more support offered by the school, by way of facilitators and assistants, the less opportunities arose for disruption by these learners, as they were able to be engaged in meaningful tasks, lessening the opportunities for idle mischief.

4.6.5.3 The Effect That the Support Rendered by the School Can Have on the Discipline Structure of the Classroom.

During the interview process, only one teacher voiced that her discipline system had remained the same, namely Fiona:

"The inclusion of Israel in my class has caused my discipline structure to purposely remain the same to ensure that he is exposed to the same consistent

approach as given to the other learners. The same reward structure applies to him. He has the same consequences and expectations as his peers.”

She, however followed this by saying:

“If he does not respond in the same period as would be expected of another learner, then the facilitator steps in.”

The other teachers all cited that their discipline structure and systems had been altered to accommodate their diagnosed learners, with Onelisa pointing out that:

“The inclusion of Andrew and Barry does have an effect on the discipline structure in my classroom as they require me to be stricter.”

While Twanda recognised that:

“I definitely think it does as I have raised my voice a lot more and been more firm.”

With Fonda adding:

“Some strategies I use may be perceived by peers to be softer consequences to misbehaviour.”

It is interesting to note that Fiona, with the greatest support offered, was the only teacher to indicate that her discipline structure was able to remain unchanged. She also cited that she hands over the discipline of Israel to his facilitator, when needs be.

This was evident during the observation periods, where Harry was observed to go undisciplined throughout the drama lesson which saw him being given an octopus soft toy and he proceeded to pull on it and throw it around the entire period. Similarly, when the learners were asked for quiet, Harry was allowed to continue with interfering with his friend, despite the rest of the learners being enforced to remain silent. During IT, Barry was allowed to pinch, hit, squeeze and lick his partner, with no repercussions. Andrew was observed pinching his teacher during library and was not rebuked in any manner. Chris and Damien would be asked to conform, but when they did not, no follow through occurred and they were chiefly left to their own devices. During drama, the learners were instructed to sit on the ground, Barry chose to sit on a box and this was left unnoticed by the teacher.

Conversely, when it was lunch time, Israel moved his belongings away and scurried over to the other side of the bench, when joined by a class peer. He remained there and refused to eat, before getting his lunch and moving back towards the classroom. The teacher stopped him and instructed him to come and sit with the others. He conformed and began to eat. Similarly, when he tried to use the stairs during swimming, he was made to comply and haul himself out the side, as per all his peers. He was also noted to have to get out the pool and blow his nose, as per usual rules, when he wanted to blow his mucous into the water. Similarly, Ernest was also seen to be disciplined as per his peers. When he was shouting out in class, his teacher insisted he remove a sticker off his chart and followed this through. His teacher was also noted to have an assistant in her class, offering her extra support.

It was noted, throughout the observation periods and further clarified by the teachers during the interview process, that the more support from the school the teachers were offered, the more inclined they were to uphold their discipline structure in their classrooms.

4.6.6 Parental Involvement

To facilitate deeper understanding in the following section, it stands to reason to disclose the parental involvement of these learners. It was revealed that Andrew, Ernest, Gerry and Israel are all privy to high levels of parental involvement. Their parents have engaged with the school since their enrolment, they have employed the knowledge, skills and diagnostic ability of professionals and followed advice given from all stake holders. Andrew benefitted from a facilitator, employed by his parents in their private capacity, for four years and has recently been approved, by professionals, to no longer require this service. He is medicated for his ADHD, a comorbidity of his Autism. Israel has a full-time facilitator, also employed by his parents, in their private capacity, who has been assisting him for the past two years. He is on multiple medications to address his various diagnoses. Ernest attends regular counselling sessions and is on medication for his ADHD to help him cope in the mainstream classroom. Gerry attends speech and occupational therapy regularly, being taken to these therapy sessions during break times and after school, so as not to miss out on educational time, by his mother. He is also medicated for his anxiety.

Conversely, Barry, Chris, Damien, Fred and Harry have limited parental involvement. These learners have been diagnosed under pressure from the school, and little follow up has occurred. The parents seldom attend meetings with the teachers and refuse any advice given by professionals.

4.6.6.1 The Effect That Parental Involvement in the Learner's Progress Can Have on the Mental Health of the Teacher.

It is noteworthy that the teachers who expressed that they had mental health issues brought on by accommodating these learners in their classrooms, were those who were accommodating learners who received little parental support and involvement, with Onelisa stating that:

“I do feel that the inclusion of Barry has a bearing on my mental health. He requires a lot of individual attention. He distracts from the class with disorderly behaviours.”

and Twanda agreeing:

“I believe this is true for me, as there are times when I don’t want to come to work in the morning, or when I think that if Chris and Damien are not going to be there, my day will be better.”

While Theresa, who does educate a learner who has parental involvement, summing:

“I maintain that the collaboration between home and school is imperative and directly impacts the establishment of effective learning for these learners.”

Israel, Gerry, Ernest and Andrew’s teachers were noted to be positive, stating:

“It can bring a sense of fulfilment to see growth and improvement in these learners.”

“As he is a happy learner, his inclusion in my class has neither a positive nor negative bearing on my mental state.”

“At our school we believe in an education of the whole learner, encouraging development through perseverance.”

While discussing parental involvement, Gerry’s teacher was eager to reveal that he receives physiotherapy during break and attends speech subsequently to the school day presently. This is an alternative to during class time, which is usual for learners whose parents are not available to take them to such therapies in their own time. This ordinarily results in learners who are behind in work missed while they were at therapy,

and creating an additional workload for teachers to assist them to catch up. It was felt he was missing too much educational time when he attended these sessions during the school day. She attributed this change in appointment, to positive parental involvement, as his mother was happy to attend to his needs in this manner. The teacher additionally mentioned that this change has resulted in his parents receiving improved feedback from the therapists with regards to his progress, as the parents have contact time with these therapists when fetching and taking him to his sessions. This has allowed his parents to carry out on the advice given on ways to assist him further at home, which is creating further improvement in his development and his ability to cope in the classroom.

Israel's parents have provided a full-time facilitator to assist him at school. This allows the teacher to continue with teaching the rest of her class without any extra workload or disruptions. An example of this from the observation periods, was when he pulled down his costume and continued to walk outside, undressed, numerous times. His facilitator was left to deal with this, while the teacher was free to manage the rest of the class. This prevented his antics from creating any stress for the teacher.

Andrew, who had been educated mainstream at this school for the past five years, no longer had a facilitator, which he had had since his enrolment, as it was deemed no longer necessary for him, due to his improvement. He was found to be friendly and forward going. He appeared happy throughout the observation period, juxtaposed to this was Barry, with limited parental involvement. Barry was bored, unengaged and seemed to be completely oblivious of the daily lessons taking place before him. This was evident when, during the researcher's observation period, Andrew wandered over and enquired as to what she was writing and then further inquired if it was of him. He seemed aware of what was happening. His teacher expressed this to be a phenomenal improvement from where he was when he was enrolled at the school. At that time, he was completely withdrawn into himself, could not engage verbally and was seemingly unaware of his surroundings. With the support of his parents in obtaining a facilitator, he had made this improvement. Barry, who has not benefitted from any such support, seemed unmindful of the day's events. Andrew was also noted to take part in swimming, which was a reported improvement from his complete reluctance during earlier school years; whereas Barry had to sit out as he did not have his equipment at school. This created an opportunity for him to misbehave,

necessitating the supervising teacher to become very irate at having to continually manage him.

In order to have good mental health, one would need to see, as according to Fonda:

“Growth and improvement in these learners”

As, as she succinctly put it:

“this brings a sense of fulfilment.”

In Barry’s case there has been no improvement, due to his lack of parental involvement in obtaining the assistance that he requires , as, according to Onelisa:

“With the correct support and guidance from the correct professionals, these learners can hopefully get to where they need to be.”

Therefore, one can deduce that his teachers have not had a sense of fulfilment necessary for good mental health.

With parental involvement, comes the correct professional input, which, at times, can mean medication. These four learners were all reported to be medicated. These treatments have been deemed medically necessary, by the relevant professionals, for the learners to be able to best achieve their potential. This also means, for the teacher, that their symptoms are better managed, resulting in a more peaceful classroom, leading to better mental health of the teacher.

4.6.6.2 The Effect That Parental Involvement in the Learner’s Progress Can Have on the Ability of the Rest of the Class to Learn.

Disorders, such as ADHD, according to Sayal (as cited by Ward, R., Kovschoff, H., & Kreppner, J., 2021), bring about an inability to focus, a lack of self-control, impulsive behaviours and excessive activity (Kaplan, B. as cited by Salari, N., Ghasemi, H.,

Abdoli, N., Rahmani, A., Shiri, M., Hashemian, A. & Mohammadi, M., 2023). This makes it very challenging for other learners in the class to continue to learn uninterrupted.

Chris and Damien are both diagnosed with ADHD. Their teacher expressed that:

“Having Chris and Damien in my class definitely has a negative academic effect on the class because I have to continuously stop and reinforce the rules or explain things to these two learners.”

It should be noted that both learners have limited parental involvement and, as such, have not been placed on any medication to help alleviate their symptoms. This has led to them having a detrimental effect on the rest of their peers' ability to learn as they continuously disrupt the class.

This was observed during morning ring when Chris continued to fiddle with his friend's mouth and head, pulling on his hair. These disturbances spread to two learners on either side of them, resulting in six learners not paying any attention to the lesson. When lining up, Damien was witnessed kicking all the learners in the line on his way to his position.

Andrew and Ernest, however, are on medication for their ADHD due to their positive parental involvement in their development. Andrew was noted, during a listening test to be going about his work, although he was looking around. When he got pain in his legs, he made loud noises, but he was quick to get control of himself when guided by the teacher to do so. The other learners in the class remained undisturbed by this minor interjection. Similarly, during IT, he was exhibiting strange mannerisms with his eyes but he was not disruptive. As the lesson progressed, Andrew skipped when he was told to sit. He did, however, finish his task first, having worked well with his team. When he began to wonder around, he was no longer involved in the lesson but he was also not disruptive to the other learners.

Ernest was noted to be frequently turning around and wriggling in his desk. His teacher unremittingly had to remind him to sit still and face the front, but his behaviour never grew to the point of being distracting to the others, during this time.

In addition to medication, learners with involved parents additionally provided a facilitator for their learner, should it have been deemed necessary. In Israel's case, this resulted in him being supervised at all times by the facilitator, resulting in limited opportunity for him to become a distraction for the rest of the class. The provision of a facilitator also results in the teacher being able to focus on disciplining the rest of the class, as put by Onelisa:

"They also require a lot of individual care which requires more of my attention to be focused on them rather than sharing my dedication evenly."

It is not apparent that Barry is learning anything during the school day. Every lesson observed saw him rolling around the floor, hurting peers and distracting the class. Barry's teacher reported difficulty in getting his parents to attend any meeting with the school and their reluctance to secure any professional assistance for Barry. Barry was noted to be the most disruptive learner observed during the observation period. He was also noted to have the least amount of parental support, as according to his teacher. This is indicative that the higher the parental involvement in the learner's development, the lower the disruption levels caused by this learner, in the classroom.

4.6.6.3 The Effect That Parental Involvement in the Learner's Progress Can Have on the Discipline Structure of the Classroom.

Israel's parents were reported to be the most involved parents of these nine learners. His teacher was also noted to be the only one who stated that her discipline structure remained the same, despite his enrolment:

"The inclusion of Israel in my class has caused my discipline structure to purposely remain the same...."

She credited this to having a facilitator for him:

“If he does not respond in the same time period as would be expected of another learner, then the facilitator steps in.”

It must be noted that the facilitator is employed in a private capacity by Israel's parents. Their intense interest in their learner's development, resulted in them securing such a person. This indicates that the higher the parental involvement in the learner's progress, the greater the ability of the teacher to maintain her usual discipline structure.

When observing Andrew and Barry, it was noted that when Andrew transgressed by slapping a peer, he was made to apologise, however when Barry did the same, it was not addressed at all. One is reminded that Andrew benefitted from many years of a facilitator, which has resulted in an improvement in his ability to understand social norms, making it possible to discipline him, whereas Barry, having no buy-in from his parents, has not received such support, and as a result, has become ungovernable, as he does not understand social etiquette.

When Ernest did not say thank you for his prize, his teacher insisted that he did. He was also made to remove a sticker off his chart when shouting out. This is indicative that his teacher upholds the same discipline principles for Ernest as his peers. This can be attributed to the fact that Ernest, due to his parents buy-in, is on medication which allows him to be more manageable and, therefore, able to tolerate discipline.

Israel was noted, several times, to be held accountable for his actions and expected to conform, as per his peers. The support rendered by his parents meant that he was medicated, making him easier to manage, and had a facilitator who would ensure that the discipline was carried out, as per desired. One such example was when he wanted to use the stairs at the pool, he was insisted to pull himself out. This was made possible by having an assistant to facilitate him.

Due to this great parental support, Israel's teacher was able to articulate that:

“Having Israel enrolled in my class has been a positive experience for the learners as they have had the opportunity to watch, within their age-appropriate level of understanding, that everyone is different, learns differently and does

things differently. But similarly, there are expectations, rewards and consequences for all learners in this context.”

4.6.7 The Age of the Learners

4.6.7.1 The Effect That the Age of the Learners in the Class Can Have on the Mental Health of the Teacher.

It was noted that the older learners had a greater tolerance level to disruption than their younger counterparts, creating an environment less conducive to stress for their teachers. It was distinguished that Barry's peers, in Grade 3, were able to continue with their work, unaffected by his antics, for much longer periods than Chris's classmates in Grade RR. This can be seen in a comparison of an observation of Barry during an IT lesson and Chris during morning ring. Barry's behaviour continued to escalate as he was squeezing his partner, banging on the table and hitting his partner. His partner was trying to correct errors on the device, while Barry attempted to distract him by all means possible, falling off his chair and rolling around. Barry then lay down under the table and shimmered around on his abdomen. His partner was having a hard time participating in the lesson, however, no one else was disrupted at this time. His antics continued, and by the end of the lesson, Barry was out of control and the other learners only now struggled to concentrate and were asking him to keep quiet. Chris, on the other hand, did not participate during the morning greeting song. He sat in the circle, but he did not join the others. He was fiddling with his friend's mouth and head, while pulling on his hair, sucking on his fingers and looking around all over the class with his fingers in his ears. He was standing on his head and fiddling constantly with his friend. During the topic discussion, he spent his time doing a downward dog action. The class became distracted from the onset, with the distraction spreading rapidly around the circle. This meant that Chris's teacher became highly alert to his antics from the beginnings of the lesson, becoming aware of the need to prevent him from distracting the others, creating a precursor for stress.

However, in the more formal grades, it was imperative for their teachers' to be able to deliver academic tasks without disruption, making it essential for them to manage and

control these learners, leading to greater stress levels when the learners did become disruptive.

Therefore, the age of the learners was a contributing factor when considering the effects of Inclusive Education on the mental health of teachers, with the very young learners creating anxiety due to their ability to distract the class very easily and the older learners creating pressure, due to the need to get academic concepts through to them in an environment conducive to learning.

4.6.7.2 The Effect That the Age of the Learners in the Class Can Have on the Ability of the Rest of the Class to Learn.

As mentioned in the previous section, it became apparent that age was a contributing factor when considering how distracted the learners would become by the diagnosed learners. It was also noted, by the teachers interviewed, that the age of the learners in the class also determined how much of a learning experience having these learners included in the class would be for their peers:

Onelisa, Grade 3, relayed that:

“There are a few learners who are more mature in my class, who understand the needs of these learner’s and try to be more considerate of them, and this is positive to perceive.”

Twanda, Grade RR, said that:

“My learners are quick to be distracted, due to their immaturity.”

But elaborated to say:

“However, on an emotional and caring level, I feel that their inclusion is a benefit because the learners have learned to deal and have patience for other learner’s

and other diverse scenarios of dissimilar learners of different abilities and strengths.”

Theresa, Grade 2 teacher, expressed that:

“I feel that as long as the barrier is such that the learner is able to cope in a mainstream system, his inclusion is more positive than negative. Foundation phase learners can be empathic and caring towards peers who require support, and this fosters gentle teaching and learning.”

While, Fonda, Grade 1 felt:

“The presence of a learner with unique needs can foster empathy, teamwork and a great sense of community among the learners.”

While performing a listening test, Andrew in Grade 3, was not interrupting the class and going about his work, although he was looking around, lying over in his chair and did not seem to be listening. When he got pain in his legs, he made loud noises, but he was quick to get back on track when he was calmly told to keep control of himself by the teacher. He remarked out loud as he was marking. However, the other boys did not appear to be disturbed.

Barry, in Grade 3's, behaviour continued to deteriorate in IT while he was squeezing and hitting his partner who was trying to fix errors on the device. Barry attempted to distract him by all means possible, falling off his chair, banging on a table and rolling around. Barry then moved to laying down under the table and shimmered around on his abdomen. His partner was having a hard time participating in the lesson, however, no one else was disrupted at this time. It was only towards the end of the lesson, that the disruption proved too much for his peers and they began to ask for quiet. When Barry moved over to drama, he was noted to continue to be disruptive, and this was negatively affecting the newly enrolled learner and his friend. The other learners seemed accustomed to his idiosyncrasies however, as, when Barry was repetitively patting his rear, the class seemed oblivious and during a verbal exercise, he continued

to shout over the other learners, but they continued the game, regardless. During library, although Barry was falling off his chair while his partner was trying to control him, his partner was accepting of his behaviour, and the other learners appeared to be relatively used to his behaviour. He was doing everything incorrectly and his partner was trying to assist him, but he bit him when he did this, after which he shouted and threatened that he would bite him again. The partner, however, continued to repair the mistakes that he had made and entirely disregarded him, despite being bitten. It was apparent that Barry was not learning anything during the lesson when he presented his project, which was nonsensical. The learners sniggered, but it was short lived, and Barry seemed oblivious to it. When his shoelace became undone, he secured a friend to tie it as he was unable. However, while the friend was assisting him, he was rubbing and licking his friend's head. The friend made no reaction.

During news time, Chris was noted to have a peculiar intonation and mouth movement when speaking, making him hard to understand. However, it was observed that the learners did attempt to listen, remaining silent and attending. During break time, his friends returned to play with him, and he started playing but continued to dominate and pull toys away. These friends appeared acquainted with this behaviour and they did not get dismayed. At art, he was unable to put on his own apron, resulting in his friend trying to assist him.

When the learners received octopuses during the drama lesson, Gerry preferred the colour of his friends. This friend kindly swapped with him, reflecting great empathy. The friends were instructed to have a conversation with each other, and as Gerry was not audible, his friend compassionately leaned over and placed his ear close to his mouth to hear what he was saying.

These observations served to enforce what the teachers relayed during the interview process - that the older learners were less easily distracted than their younger counterparts, but, from a positive point of view, the learners were noted to respond with compassion to these learners' idiosyncrasies, showing that having these learners in their classrooms was teaching them patience and encouraging an understanding for others and their differences.

4.6.7.3 The Effect the Age of the Learners in the Class Can Have on the Discipline Structure of the Classroom.

During the interview process the teachers felt that the older the learners were, the easier it was to have a differentiated discipline system for them, as they were able to understand better. Theresa and Fonda detailed it as such:

“If barriers to learning are identified and diagnosed, the teacher can pay careful attention to the recommendations made by a psychologist. While some strategies will be perceived by peers to be softer consequences to misbehaviour, we have found that, over time, learners recognise that some learners need to be treated differently. This realisation is easier for older learners to understand particularly those who have had a history and shared experiences with learners with learning barriers in previous years.”

It was noted that Barry in Grade 3, was never disciplined for his behaviour. His peers accepted this and continued with their work. The only learner who took the opportunity to join in his antics, was a newly enrolled learner who was partaking his first day at the school. This was thought-provoking as it was indicative that Barry’s peers have come to understand, with their shared history with Barry, that he is different and needs to be treated differently, but that it did not mean that his behaviour was acceptable. The new learner, with no past history or experience with Barry, undoubtedly assumed that his behaviour was permitted because it was tolerated, resulting in him replicating him.

Chris did not participate during the morning greeting song. He sat in the circle, but he did not join the others. He was fiddling with his friend’s mouth and head, while pulling on his hair. Sucking on his fingers and looking around all over the class with his fingers in his ears. He was standing on his head and fiddling constantly with his friend. During the topic discussion, he spent his time doing a downward dog action. Damien proceeded to kick and hit all the boys in line when he lined up to go out for break. When outside he was playing roughly with the cars and not sharing. He dominated the toys and responded that he would stop, when reprimanded, but he continued to throw the toys around. The other learners in this class, Grade RR, incessantly moaned to their teacher about this and were unable to ignore these learners’ behaviour. They

expected similar discipline as they would receive if they carried out the same behaviour. As they observed this not to be the case, some learners joined in and performed in the same manner.

These two observations, indicate that it is easier to have a differentiated discipline system for older learners than it is for their younger peers. Older learners can understand that the learner may not be able to help himself and that it is not necessarily a discipline issue, whereas younger, less experienced learners, feel that everyone should be treated the same and that behaviour not disciplined, is behaviour which is acceptable and will often begin to mimic such antics as a result.

4.7 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the results of the data were presented in a systematic manner. First, the data were transcribed and analysed using Thematic Analysis to ensure a logical and descriptive narrative of the findings. Second, each theme that emerged was presented individually, thereby providing specific insight into the ramifications of Inclusive Education on the teaching and learning environment within mainstream classrooms. Finally, the subsequent chapter explored the relationship between these findings and the research questions, situating the results within the broader aims of the study.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 CHAPTER OVERVIEW

This chapter included conclusions that can be drawn from the data analysis in the previous chapter and how these findings should affect the implementation of Inclusive Education in practice. The limitations and delimitations of this study were discussed with further reference to future research which could be conducted with regards to the findings in this study.

5.2 INTRODUCTION

This study's main research question was as follows:

1. What are the ramifications of Inclusive Education on the teaching and learning environment in the mainstream classroom?

With sub questions:

- 1.1 How does Inclusive Education affect the mental health of mainstream teachers?
- 1.2 How does Inclusive Education affect the ability of the other learners to learn in the mainstream classroom?
- 1.3 How does Inclusive Education affect the discipline structure of the mainstream classroom?

In order to answer these questions, one must bear in mind that several factors were found to influence each of these aspects, when examining the ramifications of Inclusive Education. Namely, the number of diagnosed learners in a class, the type of lesson being delivered, the learners individual diagnosis, the support offered by the

school and parents of the learner, the age of the learner and the individual teachers personality, experience and workload.

5.3 CONCLUSIONS ON RESEARCH SUB QUESTION 1: HOW DOES INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AFFECT THE MENTAL HEALTH OF MAINSTREAM TEACHERS?

It was found that the number of learners who had a diagnosed learning disorder in the classroom, had a profound difference as to how affected the teacher's mental health was. It was noted that teachers who taught only one learner in their class, expressed and showed very little strain on their mental health. The more diagnosed learners enrolled, the greater the strain was on the teacher.

The type of lesson being delivered also played a role, with lessons that were more relaxed and less structured, being less stressful than those that required a high degree of focus and concentration. Additionally, lessons which had a high fun factor, provoked elevated levels of disruption in the diagnosed learners, making them very stressful for the teacher to contain. Situations which required learners to be in close proximity to each other, provided additional stress for the teacher as the learners were seen to hurt each other and distract each other in these circumstances.

The learner's individual diagnosis played a part in the teacher's mental health in that those diagnoses which carried symptoms of hyperactivity, posed a greater strain on the teacher as she struggled to contain these learners in the classroom.

The amount of support offered by the parents of the diagnosed learner, lent greatly to how the teacher's mental health was affected by this learner. Teachers who were offered high levels of support through meetings attended by the parents, facilitators provided by the parents, parents who sought professional support for their learners, parents who followed advice given by these professionals, had a lesser impact on their mental health than those who accommodated parents who refused any accountability for their learner and did not seek professional support which may aid the teacher in the classroom.

Teachers who felt supported by the school and were assisted by an assistant in the class in order to lessen their administrative burdens, reported lower levels of stress than their counterparts. In this manner, the support offered by the school was a contributing factor when considering how the teachers' mental health was affected by Inclusive Education.

The age of the learners in the class, had an influence on how the teacher's mental health was affected. Older learners proved to be taxing in that the teacher found it more challenging to relay complicated, more in depth academic concepts to them, and younger learners were more distracted by their diagnosed peers, creating an element of tension for their teacher to contain them.

The individual teacher's personality, experience and workload played a significant role in determining the affect Inclusive Education would have on their mental health. Teachers who were trained to deal with Inclusive Education and how to assist their individual learner, experienced less stress than those who did not understand the learner's diagnoses. Teachers with more experience were able to remain calmer in the classroom, than their less experienced peers. Teachers who perceived their workload to be greater than their co-workers, experienced higher levels of stress dealing with Inclusive Education. It was also noted that teachers who were more relaxed by nature, were slower to be provoked by learners' misdemeanours, creating a more relaxed state of mind, than those who were easily riled up.

5.4 CONCLUSIONS OF RESEARCH SUB QUESTION 2: HOW DOES INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AFFECT THE ABILITY OF THE OTHER LEARNERS TO LEARN IN THE MAINSTREAM CLASSROOM?

The number of diagnosed learners in a classroom, directly correlated with the amount of distractions to the other learners that were experienced. The more diagnosed learners in the class, the greater the disruption levels that were experienced as they appeared to feed off each other's idiosyncrasies. Classes with only one diagnosed learner in attendance, were able to continue with their work undisturbed by this learner.

The type of diagnoses contributed greatly as to how disrupted the learners became by the identified learners. Learners who displayed symptoms of ADHD or had low IQ, were of a greater challenge in distraction than those with physical disorders, such as club foot and clinical obesity.

The type of lesson being taught had a contributing factor when it came to distractibility. Learners were able to continue with their lessons with greater ease when they were in a more relaxed environment. When they were able to sit in their own spaces, away from each other, this was also positive in lessening distraction levels. Lessons which required the learners to learn new concepts or sit near each other, proved to be of the greatest challenge when it came to not being distracted.

Parents who were offering high degrees of support to their diagnosed learner, proved valuable in the other learners' abilities to continue their lessons uninterrupted. This can be attributed to these learners being correctly medicated, making them easier to manage in the classroom. Some of these learners, when deemed necessary, were also provided with a facilitator, who assisted in lessening the impact their charge had on the rest of the class.

Learners who were accommodated in a class with high levels of support from the school, benefitted from extra personnel in the classroom, who assisted them to continue to work, uninterrupted, either by offering them small group activities, removing the perpetrator from their vicinity or assisting them when their teacher was otherwise occupied with the diagnosed learner. Those who did not have this support, were often left waiting for their teacher to assist them, to deliver the lesson, or to get the class back under control when disruption had occurred.

The age of the learners in the class proved to be significant when observing their ability to continue working, undistracted. Older learners were able to endure for greater lengths of time and had greater tolerance levels to disruption, than their younger counterparts, who would become distracted very easily.

The learner's ability to continue to learn, undistracted, was greatly influenced by the teacher of the class. Teachers who were experienced, confident and trained in their abilities, were able to control the diagnosed learners with less effort, allowing the class

to continue with minimal disruption. Teachers who were more easily provoked, did not have training or experience, tended to struggle to control the classroom and there would be greater lengths of time where the learners would have to pause for the situation to be brought back under control.

5.5 CONCLUSIONS OF RESEARCH SUB QUESTION 3: HOW DOES INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AFFECT THE DISCIPLINE STRUCTURE OF THE MAINSTREAM CLASSROOM?

The fewer diagnosed learners in a class, the easier it was for the teacher to continue with her usual discipline strategies and uphold the discipline structure of her classroom. The more diagnosed learners accommodated, the more challenging this became.

The lesson being presented, influenced the teacher's ability to uphold her usual discipline structure. It was noted that during more formal, structured activities and activities which required safety protocols to be followed, teachers were more inclined to uphold discipline principles and follow through with their usual discipline structure. In lessons which were more relaxed and informal, teachers were found to be more lenient and shied away from disciplining transgressors.

The diagnoses of the learners attributed to the way in which the discipline structure was upheld. Each learner required different considerations when dealing with their specific diagnosis. Certain diagnoses made it difficult, if not impossible, to discipline the learner, whereas other learners were able to understand typical discipline strategies and these teachers were more inclined to uphold their usual discipline structure in their classroom.

Parental involvement meant that the teachers were generally able to continue with usual discipline procedures in their classrooms as these learners were usually medicated to control any serious behavioural issues, making the learners easier to manage in the classroom and more inclined to conform to discipline. Additionally, these learners were provided with a facilitator, employed by their parents, when necessary, and these facilitators were responsible for containing the learner,

preventing disruption occurring in the classroom, allowing the teacher to continue with usual discipline procedures.

Support from the school typically came in the form of assistants to relieve workload. These assistants were also available to provide extra support for the learners in the class, creating an environment which was more conducive to the teacher being able to continue with her traditional discipline structure. Classrooms which lacked this support, saw teachers unable to cope with managing the learners' misbehaviours and often simply ignoring them and seemingly zoning out.

The age of the learners was important when considering the use of a discipline structure in the classroom. Older learners were noted to be more empathetic of differences and were noted to support a differentiated discipline system. These classes saw transgressors being left, undisciplined, and peers who did not concern themselves with this. Younger learners struggled with this concept and when the teachers employed a less strict stance on misbehaviour being conducted by a diagnosed learner, their peers would often complain, or at times, they would even join in or mimic the behaviour. It appeared that they presumed this behaviour to be acceptable, as it was not addressed.

5.6 CONCLUSIONS ON THE MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION: WHAT ARE THE RAMIFICATIONS OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION ON THE TEACHING AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENT OF THE MAINSTREAM CLASSROOM?

It can be concluded that Inclusive Education has significant ramifications for the teaching and learning environment of the mainstream classroom. While much research highlights the positive aspects of inclusion - such as fostering kindness, community spirit and an appreciation of differences among peers (Booth & Ainscow, as cited in Woodcock et al., 2022; Forlin et al., 2019) - the literature also points to notable challenges. Studies emphasise that teachers often face increased stress, particularly when they lack adequate training, experience, or school-based support and when they must manage learners with severe and multiple disabilities who require active participation in classroom activities (Horn et al., 2019). The Department of Education further underscores that no learner has the right to disrupt others' learning or cause

harm, reinforcing the importance of maintaining discipline and safeguarding the classroom environment (Reyneke, 2019). Research also suggests that intellectual capacity, learning difficulties, and external social contexts can contribute to disciplinary problems (Paramita et al., 2020), while low achievement and poor self-esteem are risk factors for disruptive behaviour (Kaplan, as cited in Kessels & Heyder, 2022). In addition, certain conditions such as Attention Deficit Disorder and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder are strongly associated with maladaptive behaviours (Mafumbate & Mkhatjwa, 2020). Learners who experience oppression, undervaluation, or rejection may also engage in challenging behaviours as a means of seeking attention and approval (Nunan, 2018). Taken together, these findings highlight that while Inclusive Education promotes equity and social inclusion, it can also negatively impact teacher mental health, classroom discipline and uninterrupted learning when adequate support structures are not in place

5.7 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRACTICE

5.7.1 Preventing Mental Health Issues for the Teacher in the Inclusive Education Classroom

In order to limit mental health issues for the teacher who accommodates diagnosed learners in their class, several factors must be deliberated. Firstly, the age of the learners in the classroom must be considered. It is preferable to implement Inclusive Education in the younger Pre-Primary grades as these teachers are not tasked with relaying complicated academic work to their learners. Additionally, in the older grades which had experienced Inclusive Education for prior years of learning, it was noted that these learners were able to accommodate peers with learning disabilities, with more grace.

It must also be considered to not over burden the teacher by placing more than one diagnosed learner in a class. Teachers who are charged with more than one diagnosed learner take greater strain on their mental health than those with fewer. Diagnosed learners affect teachers' mental health more when accommodated in a formal lesson. It could be considered to remove them to a smaller, support class during these lessons, to facilitate the teacher in delivering the lesson to the other learners in the class, with limited distractions.

Teachers require experience and training to feel confident in their ability to manage these learners. It is recommended to only place diagnosed learners with teachers who have been adequately trained in dealing with their disorder and teachers who have many years of experience in education. Additionally, the individual teacher's personality should be taken into consideration prior to placing a diagnosed learner in a class. Teachers who do not have the aptitude to deal with these learners, should be permitted to decline their enrolment in their classrooms without judgement.

Learners with diagnoses that include ADHD and Low IQ, need to be carefully considered when deciding on placement in a class, as these learners are shown to be the most taxing on the teacher's mental health. This is where support from the school and parents needs to be measured as these learners ought only to be accommodated in classrooms which have the benefits of provision from the school, in the form of assistants, who can support with managing these learners, thereby benefitting the teachers' mental health. Additionally, backing from the parents would see necessary medication being available for the learner and additional support, in the form of a facilitator, when necessary. This would greatly reduce the teachers' mental burden.

When these factors are taken into consideration collectively, the teacher's mental health burden can be greatly reduced in the inclusive classroom.

5.7.2 Limiting Distractions in an Inclusive Education Classroom

To limit distractions in an Inclusive Education, several factors must be taken into account. Firstly, the age of the learners in the classroom. It has been noted, in this study, that younger learners are more inclined to be distracted by diagnosed learners, as they have a shorter attention span and lessened ability to remain focused.

Furthermore, it is essential to note that the fewer diagnosed learners in a class, the less distractions will occur. It is recommended, therefore, that only one diagnosed learner be placed in a class at any one time. Lessons which require a high degree of concentration and formality, are more likely to be disrupted than informal classes. It can be recommended, with this in mind, that diagnosed learners be placed in smaller,

focal groups during these lessons, to limit distractions to the rest of the peers in the classroom.

Teachers who have training to manage their particular diagnosed, enrolled learner, are better equipped to deal with the distractions posed on the class by this learner. With this in mind, it can be recommended that teachers receive training in their learner's diagnoses. Additionally, these learners should only be placed with teachers who are experienced educators, as these teachers are typically superior in addressing disciplinary issues in the classroom. Teachers should, furthermore, be given the opportunity to decline having these learners enrolled in their classrooms, as if they do not have the correct aptitude to deal with them, they lack competency in controlling the classroom environment to maintain conditions necessary for teaching and learning.

Learners with diagnoses typical of misbehaviour difficulties, such as ADHD and Low IQ, must be offered additional support by the school and parents, as these learners are renowned to cause disruption in the classroom. Support from the school in the form of an assistant to help manage the learner and prevent disruption, and support rendered from the parents, in the form of correct medication and facilitation, when necessary, will reduce disruption in the classroom.

Once more, when considered as a collective, these factors will work together to reduce the disruption in the classroom and have a positive effect on the additional peers in the class's ability to learn.

5.7.3 Maintaining a Discipline Structure in an Inclusive Education Classroom

To maintain a discipline structure in an Inclusive Education classroom, the following factors must be considered:

Firstly, the support from the school and parents, as the greater backing offered from these two interties, the greater the ability of the teacher to defend the typical discipline structure of her classroom. Classrooms which have been provided with additional support from the school in the form of an assistant, see the teacher capable of employing usual discipline measures, as the assistant is able to offer provision in

upholding it. Where parents are offering support by way of necessary medication, learners are seen to be further obliging to follow the status quo and able to indulge the discipline structure of the classroom. Facilitators provided by the parents, offer additional support in that they are on hand to remove a learner who is transgressing, allowing the teacher to continue to uphold her discipline structure for the remainder of the peers.

The type of diagnosis has a profound effect on the discipline structure of the classroom, and this goes hand in hand with support offered by the school and parents. Learners with disorders which carry symptoms of discipline concerns such as ADHD and Low IQ, are only able to conform with the support of a facilitator, assistant or necessary medication. Therefore, it is recommended that, when considering upholding the discipline system in a classroom, these such learners are offered necessary support from their parents and the school.

In order to sustain the typical discipline system in the classroom, only one learner should be admitted to a class at any single time. More than this, creates enormous challenges as each diagnosed learner is dissimilar and it can turn out to be unmanageable to create a system which will work effectively with an excessive number of diverse dynamics.

The age of the learners also bares consideration as younger learners are less able to accept a differentiated discipline system. It can be recommended that younger learners receive considerable support by their teacher to acquire the means to do so. These benefits will be seen in the older grades, who will readily accept the differences in their diagnosed peers' ability to conform to the usual rules of the class. This can be facilitated by training teachers in Inclusive Education practices and placing these learners with teachers who have many years' experience, with the correct aptitude in dealing with these challenges.

When delivering formal lessons, those which require high levels of safety, the use of expensive equipment, or lessons which have a high degree of fun and close proximity to others, it should be considered to move diagnosed learners to a smaller, more contained environment, in order for the teacher to maintain the necessary command of

the remainder of the peers in the class, resulting in them undertaking the lesson successfully, without the disruption of these learners’.

When considered in unison, these factors will contribute to an environment conducive to upholding a successful discipline system for all learners.

5.7.4 Addressing the Ramifications of Inclusive Education on the Teaching and Learning Environment of the Mainstream Classroom

It must be noted that, while there are several factors that come into play when considering Inclusive Education and the ramifications that can be seen with this practice on the teaching and learning environment of the mainstream classroom, these factors must be considered together and not in isolation, as one supports the other and to uphold one, will require one to uphold them all.

It is clear that in order to reduce the negative effects of Inclusive Education on the teaching and learning environment of the mainstream classroom it is imperative that only one diagnosed learner be placed in a class at a time; that these learners receive support from their parents and school in the form of assistants in the classroom, medication if necessary, additional therapy as needed and facilitators, should it be deemed essential. Additionally, learners who have diagnoses which result in symptoms of misbehaviour such as ADHD, ODD and Low IQ, must be offered supplementary support imperatively, as these learners generate the maximum trials in the mainstream classroom.

Teachers need to be appropriately trained in methods which will equip them to support these learners in the classroom and additionally, need to be offered the chance of declining the learner’s enrolment, should they feel incompetent to manage them.

Inclusive Education needs to be implemented from a young age, in the Pre-primary grades, as this delivers learners who show greater capacity in tolerating diagnosed learners in advanced grades, in comparison to learners who are introduced to dissimilar peers at a later stage.

Teachers should, furthermore, have access to alternative educational facilities for diagnosed learners during the school day, which will allow these learners to profit from small group instruction, while their peers benefit from being able to focus on more challenging tasks, which don't run the risk of being upended by the diagnosed learners' antics.

5.8 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Limitations:

This study was limited by the following factor:

- Purposive sampling, a non-probability form of sampling was employed as the researcher approached a school with learners with learning disorders enrolled to maximise the representativeness of learners with learning disorders through the intentional selection of this group (Kubiak, A. P., & Kawalec, P., 2022). Snowball sampling followed, with the teachers at the chosen school, recruiting more interested parties (Mawhinney, L., & Rinke, C. R. (2019). It is important to note that, as these are non-probability forms of sampling, the outcomes can only be generalised to the population from which the sample will be drawn (Andrade, 2021).

5.9 DIRECTION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

As this study was limited by only being conducted in one school, future research could be conducted at other schools to ascertain as to whether the same results are applicable in these schools. Additionally, only Foundation Phase learners were included in this research. Future research could include learners in other phases to assess what the ramifications of Inclusive Education are in other phases. It was also noted during this study that learners who lacked support from their parents, proved to have the most significant impact on the teaching and learning environment. Thus, future studies could investigate the cause of this parental reluctance to support their learners.

5.10 CONTRIBUTION TO THE FIELD OF STUDY

This thesis contributed to the field of education, with a particular focus on Inclusive Education, by critically examining the ramifications of inclusive practices on the teaching and learning environment within mainstream classrooms. While previous scholarship has established the philosophical and policy underpinnings of inclusion, less attention has been paid to the practical and day-to-day implications for both teachers and learners in mainstream settings. By exploring this dimension, the research addressed a significant gap in the literature.

From a theoretical standpoint, the study advanced understanding of how Inclusive Education can reshape traditional notions of teaching and learning. It highlighted the ways in which inclusive principles intersect with existing pedagogical frameworks, challenging the view of mainstream classrooms as uniform spaces and instead presented them as diverse, dynamic environments requiring flexible, differentiated approaches.

In terms of methodology, the thesis contributed by employing a qualitative case study, which enabled a rich, contextualised understanding of inclusive practices. This methodological approach not only generated insights specific to the contexts studied but also provided a framework for investigating inclusion in other mainstream settings, thus offering a replicable model for future research.

The empirical contribution lay in documenting the lived realities of teachers and learners as they navigated Inclusive Education. The findings illuminated how inclusion affects classroom dynamics, teacher workload, curriculum delivery and learner engagement. They also revealed tensions between policy expectations and practical classroom realities, contributing nuanced evidence to ongoing debates about the effectiveness and sustainability of Inclusive Education.

Finally, the research had a practical contribution for educational practitioners and policymakers. By identifying both the benefits and challenges of Inclusive Education in mainstream classrooms, the thesis provided concrete recommendations for teacher

training, resource allocation and classroom management strategies. These insights can inform professional development programs and policy reforms aimed at fostering more equitable and effective learning environments.

Taken together, these contributions demonstrated that Inclusive Education, while promoting equity and access, also necessitates a reimagining of classroom structures and teaching practices. This thesis therefore advanced both scholarship and practice by deepening understanding of the complexities of inclusion and offered pathways for its more effective implementation in mainstream education.

5.11 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study demonstrates that Inclusive Education has significant ramifications for the teaching and learning environment within mainstream classrooms. First, it identifies that these ramifications are multifaceted, with no single factor operating in isolation; rather, the interplay between teacher preparedness, classroom resources, curriculum demands and learner diversity must be considered collectively in order to mitigate negative effects. Second, the research highlights the inadequacy of current teacher training in equipping teachers with the skills necessary to effectively implement inclusive practices, thereby underscoring the urgent need for more comprehensive professional development. Third, it draws attention to the aspirations and values of teachers themselves, who consistently seek to foster positive learning environments but require greater institutional support to realise the intentions of inclusive policy in practice. Finally, by capturing the voices of teachers and their expressed commitment to supporting all learners—exemplified in the sentiment that ‘one manages to get a soft spot in your heart for them, as they are only little humans’—the study provides evidence of both the challenges and the potential inherent in Inclusive Education. Taken together, these findings reinforce the necessity of knowledge, training, and systemic support in creating inclusive learning environments that are not only conducive to teaching and learning but also formative in developing future adults who can participate productively in society.

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Annexure A
Respondents Biographical Details

1.	Age:	<30	30-40	40-50	50-60	60+
N						
%						
2.	Gender:	Male	Female			
N						
%						
3.	Ethnicity:	B	W	C	I	other
N						
%						
4.	Highest academic/ professional qualification:	Teachers Diploma	Higher/ further teachers diploma	Bachelor's degree	Post graduate degree	other
N						
%						
5.	Years of teaching experience:	Less than 5 years	6-10 years	11-15 years	16-20 years	20 + years
N						
%						
6.	The grade you	RR	R	1	2	3

	are currently teaching:					
N						
%						
7.	Years of experience in your current grade:	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	20+
N						
%						
8.	Status of your post:	Temporary	Permanent			
N						
%						
9.	Type of school at which you are teaching:	Public school	Private school	other		
N						
%						
10.	Language of teaching and learning:	English	Afrikaans	Other		
N						
%						
11. Your Province:						

- Gauteng
- KZN
- EC
- NW
- Limpopo
- WC
- FS
- NC
- Mpumalanga

Annexure B

Interview Questions

Questions for Semi-structured interviews to be conducted after each Observation period

1.Explain the disability the child in your class has.

2.Do you have any formal training to deal with this condition?

Explain your answer in 3 or more sentences:

3.Do you feel the inclusion of this learner in your class has any bearing on your mental state?

Explain your answer in 3 or more sentences:

4.Do you feel the inclusion of this learner in your class has any effect, positive or negative, on the other learners in the class's ability to learn?

Explain your answer in 3 or more sentences:

5.Does the inclusion of this learner in your class have any effect on the discipline structure of your classroom?

Explain your answer in 3 or more sentences

6.Are there any further comments you would like to make about the effects of Inclusive Education on your classroom?

Annexure C

Consent letter to Principal



Request for permission to conduct research at Selborne Primary School.

The ramifications of Inclusive Education on the teaching and learning environment in the mainstream classroom.

5 October 2024

Mr Riaan Bisschoff

Head Master

Email: bisschoffr@selborneprimary.co.za

Dear Mr Bisschoff

I, Liesel Mortimer am doing research under the supervision of Prof PJH Heeralal, a professor in the Department of Psychology of Education towards a PhD at the University of South Africa. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled “The ramifications of Inclusive Education on the teaching and learning environment in the mainstream classroom.” The aim of this study will be to investigate what, if any, effect Inclusive Education has on the teaching and learning environment in the mainstream classroom.

Your school has been selected because I am seeking a school which may have learners enrolled with diagnosed learning disorders. The study will entail observations conducted by myself in the classroom environment where the educators will teach as per usual and conclude with interviews between myself and the educators.

The benefits of this study are that policy makers and other stakeholders will have a deeper understanding of the effects that Inclusive Education has on the teaching and learning environment of the mainstream classroom.

There are no potential risks involved.

There will be no reimbursement or any incentives for participation in the research.

The feedback procedure will entail a meeting at the end of the study with the educators who participated, where the data collected will be shared with them.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Liesel Mortimer

PhD student

Annexure D

Consent letter for teacher participants



My name is Liesel Mortimer am doing research under the supervision of Prof PJH Heeralal, a professor in the Department of Education towards a PhD at the University of South Africa. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled The Ramifications of Inclusive Education on the Teaching and Learning Environment in the Mainstream Classroom.

What is the purpose of this study?

This study is expected to collect important information about whether Inclusive Education has any effect on the teaching and learning environment of the mainstream classroom.

Why am I being invited to participate?

You are invited because I am seeking a school which may have learners enrolled who have learning disabilities and educators who are enthusiastic to learn how having these learners in their class effects the teaching and learning environment.

I obtained your contact details from Mr Riaan Bisschoff. I am expecting to involve 5 educators and 130 learners in this study.

What is the nature of my participation in this study?

The study will entail a day of observations conducted by myself in the classroom environment where you will teach as per usual with this learner in your class. The day will be concluded with 30-minute interview between myself and you where we will discuss the findings of the observations and your perspectives of the effects of having this learner in your class. The expected duration of the study should be 1 week.

Can I withdraw from this study even after having agreed to participate?

Participating in this study is voluntary and you are under no obligation to consent to participation. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a written consent form. You are free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason.

What are the potential benefits of taking part in this study?

The benefits of this study are that you will be enlightened as to how your classroom environment is affected by Inclusive Education, if at all.

Are there any negative consequences for me if I participate in the research project?

There are no potential risks involved.

Will the information that I convey to the researcher and my identity be kept confidential?

You have the right to insist that your name will not be recorded anywhere and that no one, apart from the researcher and identified members of the research team, will know about your involvement in this research or your name will not be recorded anywhere and no one will be able to connect you to the answers you give. Your answers will be given a code number or a pseudonym and you will be referred to in this way in the data, any publications, or other research reporting methods such as conference proceedings.

Your anonymous data may be used for other purposes such as a research report which may be submitted for publication, but individual participants will not be identifiable in such a report.

How will the researcher protect the security of the data?

Hard copies of your answers will be stored by the researcher for a period of five years in a locked cupboard at the researcher's home for future research or academic purposes; electronic information will be stored on a password-protected computer. Future use of the stored data will be subject to further Research Ethics Review and approval if applicable. Information that requires to be destroyed will be done so by

being shredded if hard copy and permanently deleted from the hard drive of the computer through the use of a relevant software programme.

Will I receive payment of any incentives for participating in this study?

There will be no reimbursement or any incentives for participation in the research.

Has this study received ethics approval?

This study has received written approval from the Research Ethics Review Committee of the CEDU REC, Unisa. A copy of the approval letter can be obtained from the researcher if you so wish.

How will I be informed of the findings/results of the research?

If you would like to be informed of the final research findings, please contact Liesel Mortimer at 083 570 1923 lieslmortimer@gmail.com .These findings are accessible for 12 months.

Should you require any further information or want to contact the researcher about any aspects of this study, please contact Liesel Mortimer, lieslmortimer@gmail.com, 083 570 1923.

Should you have concerns about the way in which the research has been conducted, you may contact Prof PJ Heeralal, 012 429 23 18, Heerapj@unisa.ac.za

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet and for participating in this study.

Thank you

Yours sincerely

Mrs Liesel Mortimer

PhD Student

Consent to participate in this study (return slip)

I, _____ (participant name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read and understood the study as explained in the information sheet.

I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty.

I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified.

I agree to the recording of the interviews and observations.

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Participant name and surname (please print)

Participant Signature

Date

Researchers name and surname (please print)

Mrs Liesel Mortimer

Researcher's signature

Date

Annexure E
Permission letter for parents



Dear Parent

Your learner is invited to participate in a study entitled The Ramifications of Inclusive Education on the Teaching and Learning Environment in the Mainstream Classroom.

I am undertaking this study as part of my doctoral research at the University of South Africa. The purpose of this study is to investigate what the ramifications of Inclusive Education are on the teaching and learning environment of the mainstream classroom and the possible benefits of the study are greater insight of this phenomenon. I am asking permission to include your learner in this study because he/she is in attendance in a class where I wish to observe. I expect to have 75 other learners participating in the study.

If you allow your learner to participate, I shall request him/her to:

Attend class as per usual and behave in his/her usual manner. I will be making observations of the general teaching and learning environment.

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and can be identified with your learner will remain confidential and will only be disclosed with your permission. His/her actions will not be linked to his/her name or your name or the school name in any written or verbal report based on this study. Such a report will be used for research purposes only.

There are no foreseeable risks to your learner participating in this study. Your learner will receive no direct benefit from participating in the study; however, the possible benefits to education are educators who will be more familiar with the ramifications of Inclusive Education. Neither your learner nor you will receive any type of payment for participating in this study.

Your learner's participation in this study is voluntary. Your learner may decline to participate or withdraw from participation at any time. Withdrawal or refusal to participate will not affect him/her in any way.

Similarly, you can agree to allow your learner to be in the study now and change your mind later without any penalty.

The study will take place during regular classroom activities with the prior approval of the school and your learner's teacher. However, if you do not want your learner to participate, an alternative activity will be available where your learner will be engaged educationally with a teaching assistant during the observational period.

In addition to your permission, your learner must agree to participate in the study and you and your learner will also be asked to sign the assent form which accompanies this letter. If your learner does not wish to participate in this study, he or she will not be included and there will be no penalty. The information gathered from the study and your learner's participation in the study will be stored securely on a password-locked computer in my locked classroom for 5 years after the study. Thereafter, records will be erased.

The benefits of this study are that policy makers in education will be better informed, going forward, as to what the ramifications of Inclusive Education are on the mainstream classroom.

There are no potential risks involved.

There will be no reimbursement or any incentives for participation in the research.

If you have questions about this study please ask me or my study supervisor, Prof PJH Heeralal, Department of Education, University of South Africa. My contact number is 083 570 1923 and my email is lieslmortimer@gmail.com. The email of my supervisor is Heerapj@unisa.ac.za. Permission for the study has already been given by the Department of Education, the Principal of the school and the Ethics Committee of the College of Education, UNISA.

You are making a decision about allowing your learner to participate in this study. Your signature below indicates that you have read the information provided above and have

decided to allow him or her to participate in the study. You may keep a copy of this letter.

Name of learner:

Sincerely

Parent/guardian's name (print)

Parent/guardians signature

Date

Researchers name (print)

Researchers signature

Date

Annexure F
Consent letter for learner

Dear Learner

Date: 1 March 2025



My name is Mrs Mortimer and I would like to ask you if I can come and watch you learn in your classroom. I am trying to learn more about the effects of Inclusive Education in the mainstream classroom.

If you say YES to do this, I will come and watch you when you are with your teacher doing activities in the classroom.

I will also ask your parents if you can take part. If you do not want to take part, it will also be fine with me. Remember, you can say yes or no and no one will be upset if you don't want to take part or even if you change your mind later and want to stop. You can ask any questions that you have now. If you have a question later that you didn't think of now, ask me next time I visit your school.

Please speak to your parents about taking part before you sign this letter. Signing your name at the bottom means that you agree to be in this study. A copy of this letter will be given to your parents.

Regards

Mrs Mortimer



Your name: _____

Please tick the below boxes to show whether or not you would like to take part.

Yes, I will take part

No, I do not want to take part

Name of the researcher: _____ Mrs Mortimer _____

Date: _____

Witness: _____

- f. Prior approval from the principal and the affected teacher/s must be obtained in writing if research at a school within a classroom are part and partial of the research.
- g. You must present a copy of the written approval letter of the Eastern Cape Department of Education (ECDoE) to the Cluster and District Directors before any research is undertaken at any institutions within that particular district.
- h. It is your responsibility to make all the arrangements concerning your research.
- i. Should you wish to extend the period of research after approval has been granted, an application to do this must be directed to Chief Director: Corporate Strategy Management prior to expiry date.
- j. You are responsible for presenting the Department with a copy of your final paper/report/dissertation/thesis free of charge in hard copy and electronic format. This must be accompanied by a separate synopsis (maximum 2 – 3 typed pages) of the most important findings and recommendations if it does not already contain a synopsis;
- k. You will be responsible for presenting the findings to the Departmental Research Committee and/or Senior Management of the Department when and/or where necessary.
- l. You are requested to inform in writing your presentation on your finding to the Chief Director: Corporate Strategy Management upon completion of your research.
- m. You must comply with all the requirements as completed in the Terms and Conditions to conduct Research in the ECDoE document duly completed by you.
- n. You must submit a signed copy of your commitment form and comply with your ethical undertaking.

- a. You are required to submit on a six-monthly (bi-annual) basis, from the date of permission of the research, concise reports to the Chief Director: Corporate Strategy Management.
2. The Department reserves a right to withdraw the application for research should there be non-compliance to the approval letter and contract signed as indicated in the Terms and Conditions to conduct Research in the ECDoE and/or legal requirements to do so.
3. The Department will publish the completed Research on its website.
4. The Department wishes you well in your undertaking. You can contact the Mrs. Fundiswa Pakade on the numbers indicated in the letterhead or email fundiswa.pakade@ecdoe.gov.za should you need any assistance.



05/02/2025 T. MASOEU DATE 2

**CHIEF DIRECTOR: CORPORATE STRATEGY MANAGEMENT
FOR ACTING HEAD OF DEPARTMENT: EDUCATION**

**Annexure H
Ethical Approval Clearance Certificate**



UNISA COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Date: 15 November 2024

Ref: 2024/11/15/000000343/06/RB

Name: **Liesel Joy Mortimer**

Student No.: 48241644

Decision: Ethics Approval form

Dear **Liesel Joy Mortimer**

Researcher(s): Name: Liesel Joy Mortimer

E-mail address: 48241644@mylife.unisa.ac.za

Telephone: 0835701923

Supervisor: Name: Dr Olivier and Prof Heersal

E-mail address: olivih@unisa.ac.za and Heersaj@unisa.ac.za

Telephone: 082 727 5622 and 083 797 1029

Title of research: *The Ramifications of Inclusive Education on the Teaching and Learning Environment in the Mainstream Classroom.*

Qualification: PhD

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 **2024/11/15** to **2029/11/15**.

*The **low risk level** application was reviewed by the Ethics Review Committee on **15 November 2024** 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.
2. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.



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3. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee.
4. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.
5. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing.
6. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.
7. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data requires additional ethics clearance.
8. The study's risk level is Category 2- Low risk: Human participants are involved and there is foreseeable risk of inconvenience. Non-vulnerable adult participants and non-sensitive information is involved.
9. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date **2029/11/15**. Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

Note:

*The reference number **2024/11/15/00000343/06/RB** should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.*

Kind regards,



Prof RB Monyal
Acting Head: CEDU Research
monyarb@unisa.ac.za



Prof Mpine Makoe
Executive Dean: CEDU
gakisme@unisa.ac.za