Teachers' engagement with learners in inclusive foundation phase classrooms: A case study analysis

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ABSTRACT

Since 2001, South African teachers have been attempting to practise inclusive education in classrooms in ordinary, public schools. Previous research has shown the many challenges South African teachers face in our current educational environment. Strong arguments, however, have been made for more research to be done on actual teacher engagement with learners in our ordinary, public school classrooms, and the extent to which classroom practices are inclusive (Engelbrecht, Nel, Nel & Tlale, 2015, p. 3).

This study sought to do an in-depth critical analysis of three foundation phase teachers and their engagement with learners in their classrooms at an Eastern Cape school. The aim was to examine how inclusive education was being enacted by the teacher with learners in real classroom settings, with particular attention paid to ways in which learners experience barriers to learning. A micro-level analysis was conducted in a single unit case study and using a qualitative research approach in an interpretive paradigm. Questionnaires, observations, and semi-structured interviews were conducted in an attempt to gather in-depth data.

It was heartening to observe the extent to which inclusive education and practices were being enacted at the school and in the classrooms, and instructive in providing examples of what can work in the South African context. Key findings of this study include the generation of a framework for analysing inclusive classroom practice at the micro level. Criteria were identified as indicators of inclusive education of learners including those experiencing barriers to learning in the classroom. This study builds on and extends what has been developed at the macro and micro level of inclusive education in schools and in the classroom.

It found that a number of challenges remain for enabling the implementation of an inclusive education. At the macro level, these include the provision of clear directives for implementation of inclusive education by the appropriate authorities; the provision of well-structured professional teacher training and development programmes in inclusive classroom practices, as well as in barriers to learning and how to address them; and the provision of funding for school and classroom infrastructure and resources. At the micro level, these include the successful implementation by teachers of inclusive classroom practices and the provision of the necessary support for learners experiencing barriers to learning in their classrooms, including expert personnel, resources, and assistive devices.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my husband, Owen, and my children, Shannon and Kieran.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AD(H)D	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ASD	Autistic Spectrum Disorder
DBST	District Based Support Team
DoE	South Africa. Department of Education (up to 2010)
DBE	South Africa. Department of Basic Education (since 2010)
DHET	South Africa. Department of Higher Education and Training
FAS	Foetal Alcohol Syndrome
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IEP	Individual Education Programme
ILST	Institution Level Support Team
LoTL	Language of Teaching and Learning
NCESS	National Commission on Education Support Service
NCSNET	National Commission on Special Needs Education and Training
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PED	Provincial Education Department
SBST	School Based Support Team
SIAS	Screening, Identification, Assessment, and Support
SNA	Support Needs Assessment Form
UDL	Universal Design for Learning
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

CHAPTER ONE

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

This research study set out to investigate the engagement of an Eastern Cape, public, primary school with learners in inclusive foundation phase classrooms. It responded to the need to generate insights, in order to gain understanding of how inclusive education was being enacted by teachers with learners in a foundation phase classroom, including learners experiencing barriers to learning, and also the extent to which their practices in the classroom were inclusive.

In this chapter I provide a contextual background to the study, giving reasons why I chose to do this study. I outline the research goals and methodology, as well as the contribution I make to the field in terms of a framework. Finally, I outline the structure of the thesis.

1.2 Contextual background

As a practicing learning support teacher, teaching learners experiencing barriers to learning at both independent and ordinary schools in the Eastern Cape, I was interested in gaining insight into how teachers engage and interact with learners, including learners experiencing intrinsic and extrinsic barriers to learning, at the level of the foundation phase classroom. I was interested in the foundation phase, because the accessibility, support, and intervention of possible learners experiencing barriers to learning is important at these early stages of schooling when it is possible "to prevent the development of more extensive developmental problems in children" (Landsberg, Krüger & Nel, 2005, p. 87). The policy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS) (South Africa, Department of Education [DoE], 2014) states that its key focus is to provide early intervention services to learners.

Teachers in South Africa have been attempting to practice inclusive education in ordinary schools for over 17 years, ever since the introduction of an inclusive system and the issuing of the Education White Paper 6: Special Needs Education by the South African Department of Basic Education, in 2001. Numerous studies have been done on the policies of inclusion and

their implementation in South African schools (Shadaya, 2012; Geldenhuys & Wevers, 2013; McConnachie, 2013), as well as on teachers' attitudes and perceptions of inclusive education and the many challenges that they face in implementing inclusivity under our current education system (Siebalak, 2002; Swart, Engelbrecht, Eloff & Pettipher, 2002; Mohamed & Laher, 2012). Many issues raised in these studies mirror those in international literature. This is explored more fully in Chapter Two.

Strong arguments have been made, however, for more research on actual school and teacher engagement with learners, including learners experiencing barriers to learning, in our ordinary, public school classrooms, and on the extent to which classroom practices are inclusive (Walton, 2006, p. 181; Engelbrecht, Nel, Nel & Tlale, 2015, p. 3). We have little or no research data on teacher engagement with learners in the classroom and so do not fully understand the classroom practice in the field as teachers strive to implement the policy of inclusivity. For this reason, both the effects of policy, and the implications for policy review and improvement, are not clear.

Recommendations have been made for future research to "consider teaching and learning in real settings in order to take account of ways in which teachers do their work in respect to the wide variety of situations they face" (Davis, Florian & Ainscow, 2004, p. 37). Walton (2006, p. 181) recommends further research in inclusivity in state schools and the details of teaching and learning strategies being employed in the classroom. She states that "learning about the inclusive culture and practices at these schools is instructive as it provides examples of what can work in the South African context" (Walton, 2011, p. 244).

This research study, therefore, responded to the need to extend our understanding of how inclusive education is being enacted by teachers with learners, including learners experiencing barriers to learning, in a no-fees paying, public primary school at the level of the foundation phase classroom.

In this study, *inclusion* is seen as "developing inclusive community and education systems" where everyone is included "regardless of ability, gender, language or disability" (Landsberg et al., 2005, p. 4). *Inclusive education* is seen as "the provision of quality education for all children in an education and training system that respects and responds effectively to the diverse learning needs of every child" (Landsberg et al., 2005, p. 214). Finally, *inclusivity* is seen as the degree of inclusion and the practice of including everyone. These concepts are explored more fully in Chapter Two.

The South African term "barriers to learning" (explored more fully in chapter two) is used in this study wherever possible. Some literature sources do, however, speak of "special needs" and "disabilities". The latter terms are used in this study when necessitated by the context of the literature review. It is also noted that "children", "pupils", "students" and "youth" at school are commonly referred to as "learners" in South Africa and "educators" as "teachers". The terms "learners" and "teachers" are used in this study, except where the context of reviewed literature necessitates an alternative.

1.3 Research goal

The overall research goal was to describe in rich detail, with a view to understanding, how inclusive education was being enacted by the teacher with learners, including learners experiencing barriers to learning, in a no-fee paying, public primary school (hereafter known as Baobab School) at the level of the foundation phase classroom. The primary goal was to generate rich data on teacher engagement with learners in a school and classroom context, where teachers were striving to implement inclusive education.

Research questions and sub-goals were formulated to explore the various aspects of inclusivity of the learners in the school and foundation phase classrooms. These were as follows:

- Research question: What is the contextual background and characterisation of the school in terms of the educational inclusivity of its learners?
  Sub-goal: To generate rich data to investigate and understand the commitment of the school and principal to inclusive education
- Research question: What do the foundation phase teachers understand of inclusive education in the school and classroom?
  Sub-goal: To generate rich data to investigate and understand the commitment of the teachers to inclusive education
- Research question: What types of barriers to learning (intrinsic and extrinsic) have teachers identified as being experienced by learners in their classrooms?
  Sub-goal: To generate rich data to investigate and understand the class composition of learners with barriers to learning

- Primary question: How do teachers engage with their learners, including the learners they identified as experiencing barriers to learning, in ways that promote inclusivity and inclusive learning in the classroom?

  Primary goal: to generate rich data on teacher engagement with learners in a school and classroom context, where teachers are striving to implement inclusive education.

- Research question: What, if any, are the challenges experienced by the foundation phase teachers in the implementation of inclusive education in their classrooms?

  Sub-goal: To investigate the implication of data for guiding inclusive education policy and practice

1.4 Research methodology

A qualitative research approach based in an interpretive paradigm, using the case study method, was chosen for this study, as discussed in detail in Chapter Three. The case study method, using questionnaires, non-participatory observations and semi-structured interviews, was valuable in gaining insights and answers to the research questions (section 3.4), and in providing a rich description. The selection of an ordinary, no-fee-paying, primary school in the Eastern Cape and the foundation phase teachers as research participants is discussed in sections 3.6 and 3.7. Finally, an explanation is given for the data collection and analysis (sections 3.10 and 3.11), as well as for the ethical issues and trustworthiness (sections 3.12 and 3.13).

The interpretive paradigm applied to this study, allowed me to gain insights into, and an understanding of, the foundation phase teachers and their engagement with learners in their classrooms, including learners experiencing barriers to learning, to promote inclusivity and inclusive learning at the school.

1.5 Contribution to the field

The study identified and extrapolated a number of lessons learned, which may be used to understand other school and classroom contexts when attempting to be more inclusive. In

addition, it contributed to the field of study by building on to the chosen theoretical framework, as I found it did not adequately address the micro level of an inclusive classroom. A framework on inclusive classroom and teacher practices was, therefore, developed.

1.6 Structure of the thesis

The thesis is structured as follows:

Chapter Two is a review of the literature and a discussion of the practice of inclusive education in schools and in the classroom in South Africa.

Chapter Three sets out the research methodology explaining the approach, framework and methods that were used. It discusses the selection of the research site and participants, the data collection and analysis, and ethical issues and trustworthiness.

Chapters Four, Five and Six present the data analysis and findings according to the research goals. Chapter Four presents an overview of the school, the findings of the questionnaires and teacher interviews, and the factors which emerged from these findings. Chapter Five presents the findings of the classroom observations, the factors which emerged from these findings, and a synthesis of the emergent factors of the questionnaires, interviews and observations. Chapter Six discusses the development of a framework of an inclusive classroom (Figure 6.1), and addresses the criteria of the inclusivity of the school and the foundation phase classrooms at the macro and micro levels.

Chapter Seven synthesises the results of the study, discusses the lessons learned and puts forward recommendations that have emerged from the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter begins by describing the different conceptions of inclusive education in international and South African literature pertaining to the school and classroom. It then discusses intrinsic and extrinsic barriers to learning, as well as various approaches that attempt to overcome these barriers so as to enable inclusivity. The discussion then focuses on policy implementation and the practice of inclusive education in the school and classroom, which is followed by teacher professional development on inclusive education. Finally, there is a discussion on the theoretical frameworks for gathering evidence of inclusive education in the school and classroom.

2.2 Inclusive Education Internationally and in South Africa

Over the past three decades, the development of inclusive education has been encouraged internationally by "advocating the inclusion of learners with diverse educational needs in the same classrooms" (Engelbrecht et al., 2015, p. 1). The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education (UNESCO, 1994, p. 6) supported the evolution of inclusive education by stating that "schools should accommodate all children, regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, linguistic, or other conditions". To accomplish this initiative, six specific goals were proposed in the Millennium Development Goals at the World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal (UNESCO, 2000), namely, provision and expansion of early childhood education; provision of free and compulsory education for all children of school-going age; provision of learning and life-skills programmes for adults; improvement of adult literacy; elimination of gender inequality in education; and improvement of all aspects of education in order to provide quality education for all. 189 countries, including South Africa, were signatories in the adoption of these Millennium Development Goals.

Extensive international research has been conducted in examining "school-level structures for effective inclusion, inclusive instructional practices, processes for school-wide transformation,

and challenges or barriers related to implementing an inclusive approach" (Lyons, Thompson & Timmons, 2016, p. 890). Lyons et al. (2016, p. 890) point out that "we know more than we ever have about how to teach and support diverse learners within general education classrooms and schools; nonetheless, implementation is lagging". This international concern with the actual implementation of inclusive education in the classroom and school appears to extend to South African schools as well.

South Africa adopted the policy of inclusive education over seventeen years ago in response to international developments and the need to address the inequalities in all South African schools. Strategies were outlined in the Education White Paper 6: Special Needs Education (South Africa. Department of Education [DoE], 2001) (henceforth referred to as White Paper 6) as to the transformation of the education system in South Africa to one of inclusivity. Compulsory education was brought about for all children in South Africa, alongside the elimination of segregated schooling practices (Donohue & Bornman, 2014). White Paper 6 outlined the policies for a single, undivided education system for all learners, including learners experiencing barriers to learning (South Africa. DoE, 2001). It also highlighted relevant principles integral to an inclusive education which focused on "acknowledging and respecting that all people can learn, and that all people learn differently and have different learning needs which are equally valued" (Landsberg et al., 2005, p. 18). Furthermore, it asserted that the education system needed to transform to accommodate all learners, including learners experiencing barriers to learning (Engelbrecht et al., 2015).

Guidelines were later published as to the development of inclusive schooling in South Africa for full-service/inclusive schools (South Africa. DoE, 2009). This document provided the "minimum standards with which a school must comply to be considered an inclusive or full-service school/institution" (South Africa. DoE, 2009, p. 5). Since then strategies have been adopted by the Department of Education to drive the implementation of inclusive education policies which included the National Strategy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS) (South Africa, DoE, 2008) and the Guidelines for Responding to Learner Diversity in the Classroom through Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (South Africa, DoE, 2011). These strategies aimed to extend the responsiveness of ordinary schools to learner diversity, including marginalised groups of learners such as those experiencing barriers to learning.

Research studies in South Africa on the implementation of inclusive education have found that despite the development of these implementation guidelines "the lack of clarity in the policy, as well as issues pertaining to the poor implementation of this policy" hinder inclusive practices at schools (Donohue & Bornman, 2014, p. 3). Swart, Engelbrecht, Eloff and Pettipher (2002, p. 177) argued that "change cannot proceed by way of legislation and policy alone, but needs to be carefully managed and understood in the everyday running of schools" and that if teachers are unable to provide the support necessary for an inclusive education, quality education for all learners will not be achieved.

The literature has generally agreed that the implementation of inclusive education in ordinary schools and classrooms throughout South Africa has faced many challenges (Swart et al., 2002; Landsberg, Krüger, & Nel, 2005: Engelbrecht & Green, 2007; Pienaar & Raymond, 2013). These challenges include:

- Socio-economic deprivation, such as poverty and underdevelopment
- The inadequate knowledge, skills, and training of teachers in inclusive education and its implementation, as well as in intrinsic and extrinsic barriers to learning
- The lack of teacher support in schools and classrooms
- Large class sizes
- An inflexible curriculum
- Inappropriate languages or language of teaching and learning, and communication
- Lack of funding
- Insufficient school and classroom infrastructure, resources, facilities, and assistive devices
- The negative attitudes and labelling of learners experiencing barriers to learning
- Lack of parental recognition and involvement

Many of these challenges were pertinent to my research and could directly have an impact on learners in the classroom, thereby creating extrinsic barriers to learning. Given the expectations demanded of our schools and teachers for the implementation of inclusivity in the classroom and the many challenges mentioned above that they face on a daily basis, Okeke, Van Wyk and Phasha assert that we need to "go into South African classrooms to discover what is really going on as far as making inclusive education happen" (2014, p 217). We need to observe what

the day-to-day enactments of inclusion in the classroom are (Engelbrecht, Nel, Nel & Tlale, 2015).

Walton stated that there are schools in South Africa that have started to introduce inclusive principles and practices and "the experiences of these schools and of learners who have been included despite the barriers to learning that they experience, offer valuable insights into ways in which inclusion can be implemented in South African schools" (2011, p. 241). I concur with these authors that little is known as to what is actually happening at the classroom level in terms of inclusive education.

2.3 Conceptions of an inclusive education, school, and classroom

Many notions of inclusive education have been advanced in different parts of the world. Landsberg et al. (2005, p. 4) state that despite the variations in its interpretation, there are some commonalities, and that in the wider sense "inclusion is about developing inclusive community and education systems", where every member of society is afforded an equal opportunity to access an equitable and quality education (Makoelle & van der Merwe, 2016).

At the World Conference on Special Needs Education 1994 in Salamanca, Spain, the emphasis moved to "developing inclusive education systems that accommodate all children, regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions" (UNESCO, 1994, p. 6) and that inclusive education systems, such as schools,

> …must recognize and respond to the diverse needs of their students, accommodating both different styles and rates of learning and ensuring quality education to all through appropriate curricula, organizational arrangements, teaching strategies, resource use and partnerships with their communities (UNESCO, 1994, p. 11).

According to Walton and Nel (2012), South Africa has its own understanding of inclusion and inclusive education in that it recognises both the international influences on inclusivity, as well as the unique historical and educational realities of this country which realises its constitutional values of equality, freedom from discrimination, and human dignity. Policy documents and legislation emerged reflecting these values culminating in the policy document on inclusive education, the Education White Paper 6: Special Needs Education: building an inclusive

education and training system in 2001 (South Africa. DoE, 2001). This document provides a framework for establishing an inclusive education and training system in South Africa (Landsberg et al., 2005).

White Paper 6 (South Africa. DoE, 2001) defines inclusive education as acknowledging that all children can learn and need support, and that learner diversity should be recognized and respected. The policy attempts to address the diverse needs of learners including those who experience barriers to learning (Dalton, Mckenzie, & Kahonde, 2012).

Brice and Miller (2000, p. 240) note that "inclusion is much more than placement, it must be a planned philosophy of instruction" in that inclusive education requires planning and preparation, appropriate communication, and pre-service and in-service teacher training on the strategies, methods and resources needed for the inclusion of all learners in the classroom, and the commitment of all school staff to support inclusive education. This involves a paradigm shift in acknowledging that the onus is on the school to be accessible to learners, not on learners to fulfil conditions before schools will accept them. It is up to schools to ensure that teaching, learning and assessment strategies take into consideration the different learning and cognitive styles of learners, as well as to provide whatever support is needed by learners for the achievement of success (Walton, 2006).

Importantly, Walton and Nel (2012, p. 6) also point out that inclusion is a process which is on-going, allowing for "schools and teachers to make changes in their thinking, their policies and practices", by embracing the process of increasing participation and decreasing exclusion at schools and in the classroom (Booth & Ainscow, 2002).

2.3.1 An inclusive school

UNESCO's Policy Guidelines on Inclusion in Education (2009, p 8) stress that "an 'inclusive' education system can only be created if ordinary schools become more inclusive – in other words, if they become better at educating all children in their communities". The South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 (South Africa, Government Gazette, 1996, p.6) (hereafter referred to as the Act) adopted these guidelines of inclusivity asserting that "A public school must admit learners and serve their educational requirements without unfairly discriminating in any way".

An inclusive school, therefore, has the responsibility to accommodate the diverse learning needs of its learners (Nel, Nel, & Hugo, 2013). This refers not only to disabilities, but to differences in age, gender, ethnicity, language, class, HIV, and other infectious diseases (DoE, 2001, p. 6). Landsberg et al. state that "inclusion is concerned with a school culture which welcomes and celebrates differences and recognizes individual needs" (2011, p. 19).

Engelbrecht and Green (2001) point out that inclusive education assumes that local ordinary schools and classrooms are generally the most appropriate environments for learners; this does not necessarily mean, however, that all learners experiencing barriers to learning, such as disabilities, have to be accommodated in ordinary classrooms all the time. What it means is "that the rights of these learners to belong in school and society must be recognized by planners and educators" (Engelbrecht et al., 2001, p. 4).

In striving to achieve inclusive schools in South Africa there needs to be "fundamental change in the organizational structures of schools and in the roles and responsibilities of administrators and teachers" (Engelbrecht, Oswald, & Forlin, 2006, p. 122). School administrators need to set the goals of inclusive education; help establish respect for individual differences; promote collaborative, cooperative and adaptive educational practices; empower their teachers by assisting them with the transition to more inclusive classroom practices by ensuring professional in-service training; and by developing community support networks in the existing school community, such as with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) (Loreman, 2007).

A symbiotic relationship would be needed between the governing body of schools and policy and law in South Africa, to ensure an inclusive education in schools. The support of school governing bodies and administrative leaders is a key element in creating inclusivity, because supportive policies and legislation are necessary for the promotion of inclusive education (Loreman, 2007).

2.3.2 An inclusive classroom

White Paper 6 states that classroom teachers are the main resource for achieving the goal of inclusive education and that they should be able to address the learning needs of all their learners, including those experiencing barriers to learning, in their classrooms (Engelbrecht et

al., 2015). Ultimately, it is at the level of the classroom that inclusive education is put into practice.

An inclusive classroom ensures "the participation of all learners within an effective learning environment" (Rose & Howley, 2007). Inclusive education in schools and in the classroom is not only about access to education by all learners, but also about the "belonging, nurturing and educating all students, regardless of their differences in ability, culture, gender, language, class and ethnicity" (Engelbrecht et al., 2015, p. 1). An inclusive classroom, therefore, is where "learners feel welcome and accepted, regardless of their circumstances or challenges" (Makoelle et al., 2016).

Foundation phase classrooms are particularly important because it is at this phase that the fundamentals and groundwork of learners' education and development are laid down, including intellectual, mental, emotional, physical, and social development (Makoelle et al., 2016). Most importantly the task for the classroom is to "provide learners with a safe space to develop tolerance and understanding of different races, languages, genders, personalities and abilities" (Makoelle et al., 2016, p. 89) at a young age. My research study entered at the level of the foundation, in order to acknowledge the importance of this phase.

Florian (2014, p. 289) points out that "inclusive pedagogy is an approach to teaching and learning that supports teachers to respond to individual differences between learners, but avoids the marginalization that can occur when some students are treated differently". Inclusive education importantly should, therefore, include those learners experiencing both intrinsic and extrinsic barriers to learning, where these learners "continue to be taught by the regular teacher in the regular classroom, but receive appropriate support" (Makoelle et al., 2016, p. 8).

All learners have specific individual learning needs and it is the responsibility of an inclusive school to recognise and accommodate this diversity, which would include the elimination of barriers to learning inherent in the system itself (Engelbrecht et al., 2001).

2.4 Barriers to learning

According to the Report by the National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training (NCSNET) and the National Committee on Education Support Services (NCESS)

(South Africa,1997) learners whose education requires additional planning and modifications in order to assist them to learn, are described as learners who are experiencing barriers to learning. Barriers to learning are defined as "those factors that lead to the inability of the education system to accommodate diversity" (Okeke, Van Wyk, & Phasha, 2014, p. 246) and so prevent learners from experiencing success in learning. In White Paper 6, these are stated as including both intrinsic and extrinsic barriers.

2.4.1 Intrinsic barriers to learning

Intrinsic barriers to learning are defined as those that are medical or are conditions found in the learner (Nel et al., 2013), such as "cognitive, learning and sensory impairments; health problems; and behavioural, psychosocial and emotional problems" (Pienaar & Raymond, 2013, p. 23). The list of intrinsic barriers to learning in the questionnaires and semi-structured interviews of my research study (refer to Appendix C), was derived from the following:

- Sensory impairments – visual or hearing disorders
- Physical impairments – motor disorders or disorders of various organs or systems
- Intellectual impairments
- Health impairments - chronic illness (including asthma, tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS, and other illnesses)
- Neurological and developmental impairments - Attention Deficit Disorder (AD(H)D), Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Foetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS), epilepsy, cerebral palsy
- Psycho-social disturbances - emotional and behavioural difficulties
- Learning difficulties – dyslexia, difficulties with language, spelling, reading, or numeracy

Teachers who encounter learners experiencing intrinsic barriers to learning in their classrooms need to know about the effects of impairment on learners' performances, what medical interventions and support they may need, and how best to accommodate them in the classroom.

2.4.2 Extrinsic barriers to learning

Extrinsic barriers to learning are defined as "factors within systems that are in the environment and outside or 'external' to the individual" (Landsberg et al., 2005, p. 17). These include factors in the school and education system, as well as in the broader social, economic, and political context (South Africa. DoE, 2008).

Extrinsic barriers include socio-economic barriers, such as inadequate numbers of schools; poverty and underdevelopment, such as the inability of families to meet the basic needs of their children; a lack of access to basic services, such as adequate transport and access to clinics; factors that place learners at risk, such as the emotional and social well-being of learners resulting from violence, crime, and HIV/AIDS; an inflexible and inaccessible curriculum; overcrowded classrooms and learning environments; language and communication barriers, when the medium of instruction is not the home language of the learner; inaccessible and unsafe built environments; inappropriate and inadequate provision of support services in schools; lack of human resource development strategies; inadequate professional training of teachers, as well as teaching styles that do not meet the needs of all learners; the absence of ongoing in-service training programmes; attitudinal barriers; lack of enabling and protective legislation and policy; and the non-recognition and non-involvement of parents (Prinsloo, 2001; Pienaar & Raymond, 2013).

An inclusive education system needs to recognise both the intrinsic and extrinsic barriers to learning that may be experienced by learners and that these learners require the necessary support to meet their differing learning needs in the school and classroom and from the community at large.

The list of extrinsic barriers to learning in the research study questionnaires was derived from the extrinsic barriers referred to above (refer to Appendix C).

2.4.3 Overcoming barriers to learning

In attempting to overcome these barriers to learning, Prinsloo (2001) points out that there needs to be collaboration among the various stakeholders in the inclusive education of these learners

at schools and in the classroom. Teacher training in pre- and in-service programmes is important to facilitate, focus on the diverse needs of the learners in their classrooms, to identify their problems and to give support to all their learners so that they can learn and develop optimally. In order to take these barriers to learning into consideration, schools and teachers need to "develop strategies on a daily basis to provide quality educational opportunities for every learner in their classrooms" (Engelbrecht et al., 2015, p. 3).

The government developed the National Strategy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS) (South Africa, DoE, 2008) to assist learners experiencing barriers to learning. The strategy was established to determine the levels of support that these learners need.

The government also established two types of support teams to help teachers work with and to support learners experiencing barriers to learning. These were district based support teams (DBST) and school based support teams (SBST) or institutional level support teams (ILST).

White Paper 6 (South Africa. DoE, 2001, p. 47) stated that the DBST's function was: "to evaluate and through supporting teaching, build the capacity of schools, early childhood and adult basic education and training centres, colleges and further and higher education institutions to recognise and address severe learning difficulties and to accommodate a range of learning needs". The DBST, therefore, should train and mentor the SBST (ILST) and teachers at the schools, as well as supply assistive devices and adapted learning support material for learners (Engelbrecht, Nel, Smit & van Deventer, 2016).

The SBST's (ILST's) function was "to put in place properly co-ordinated learner and educator support services that will support the learning and teaching process by identifying and addressing learner, educator and institutional needs" (South Africa. DoE, 2001, p.49). One of the key responsibilities of the SBST, therefore, would be to identify, assess, and support learners experiencing barriers to learning, to coordinate their individual support plans, and to guide their teacher in implementing differentiated teaching practices for the learner (Engelbrecht et al., 2016).

The parents or caregivers of the learners experiencing barriers to learning, in collaboration with their teachers and the SBST, are required to fill out the Support Needs Assessment Forms (SNAs), as part of the SIAS strategy, to send to the DBST, so as to access from the Department the necessary support for learners in terms of medical care, specialist personnel and assistive devices and resources.

The whole school community is responsible for meeting the diverse educational and psychological needs of learners, and all the role players need to work together to identify the mutually defined barriers and needs of the learners, as well as how to address them. These role players include the parents of the learners, the teachers, school staff, SBST, DBST, education support professionals and community members (Engelbrecht at al., 2001).

2.5 The implementation of inclusive education in South Africa

The Department of Education policy documents recommended a framework and strategies for the gradual implementation of an inclusive education system in South Africa over a period of 20 years (South Africa. Department of Education [DoE], 2001, 2005a, 2005b, 2005c). The policies were designed to bring about an integrated education system for all learners, including those experiencing barriers to learning (Donohue et al., 2014).

Despite these policies, extensive research has found that the implementation of inclusive education has not been as effective as had been hoped but were "hampered by a lack of structured cohesiveness in terms of preparedness of role players at different levels of the education system, the non-functioning or unavailability of support structures as a result of inappropriate training, and the reluctance of role players to embrace inclusive education within the different layers of the ecological system" (Geldenhuys & Wevers, 2013, p.14).

Further complications have included negative school cultures, funding constraints affecting the availability of resources, overcrowded classrooms, the teachers' lack of skills and knowledge of how to design and present curriculums that could meet the diverse needs of the learners in their classrooms, the lack of early identification of learners experiencing barriers to learning and their consequent neglect, and limited collaboration and cooperation among all the role players in the inclusive education of learners (Dalton et al., 2012; Geldenhuys et al., 2013; Donohue et al., 2014; & Engelbrecht, Nel, Smit & van Deventer, 2016).

Donohue and Bornman (2014) point out that unless real initiative and deliberate action are taken by the appropriate authorities to clarify the inclusive policy, giving directives and taking responsibility for and control of the implementation of inclusive education, the policy will remain purely symbolic.

2.6 The practice of inclusive education in the school and classroom

Walton depicts diagrammatically (see Figure 2.1 below) how inclusive education should work in practice in the school and classroom, underpinned by an inclusive culture and inclusive policies and legislation (2006, p. 45). It focuses on a systems approach whereby systems in society, such as the family, school, classroom, community and government, interact with each other to provide a supportive environment for the learner (Nel et al., 2013).

School and system-wide restructuring and improvement towards greater effectiveness through	Meeting diverse needs in the general classroom by providing appropriate support through
Increasing participation and reducing exclusion (particularly of those who experience barriers to learning) from curricula, classrooms, culture and school communities	
Training of teachers in requisite knowledge, skills, values and attitudes	
Developing collaborative team relationships among staff, with parents and other stakeholders (such as the community, psychologists, speech therapists, occupational therapists, etc.)	
Understanding that inclusion is both a process and an outcome	

Underpinned by ......

An inclusive culture that values diversity and welcomes all learners as contributing members of the school community	Inclusive policy and legislation that initiates and entrenches inclusive practice

Figure 2.1: Making inclusive education work [Source: Walton (2006: 41)]

Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory is used to model the interactions which occur at the school and classroom level, which "constitutes a pattern of activities, roles and interpersonal relations experienced between individuals and the systems in which they actively participate, such as the family or the school or the peer group" (Landsberg et al., 2011, p. 10).

He developed a framework to explain influences on a child's life, whether direct or indirect, by looking at the various levels in the environment and systemic influences on a child's development; he divided these into five subsystems, namely the microsystem, the mesosystem, the exosystem, the macrosystem and the chronosystem (Geldenhuys and Wevers, 2013). In the context of the development of learners in schools (Geldenhuys et al., 2013):

The *microsystem* consists of the learner's immediate environment or systemic influence, such as family relationships and close friendships.

The *mesosystem* is made up of interrelations between the learner and two or more settings in which he or she actively participates, such as the home, school, and peer group.

The *exosystem* is made up of one or more settings that do not actively involve the learner as a participant, but do affect what happens in the settings containing the learner, such as the school policies that provide for the needs of learners who experience barriers to learning.

The *macrosystem* consists of the larger cultural world around the learner, such as historical events, government policies, cultural customs and beliefs, and the economy.

The *chronosystem* is made up of any changes that occur in any of the systems listed above over a period of time.

Nel et al. (2013) stress the importance for schools and teachers to understand these complex influences, interactions, and interrelationships between the learner and all the other systems to do with the learner, as they can influence the learner's behaviour and academic progress at school.

Geldenhuys and Wevers (2013) did research on aspects of the ecology that influence the implementation of inclusive education in mainstream primary schools in the Eastern Cape in South Africa, using Bronfenbrenner's ecological framework. They concluded that inclusive education has not been implemented effectively in most mainstream primary schools in the Eastern Cape, and illustrate and summarize this in their table shown below (Table 2.1).

Table 2.1: The aspects that influence the implementation of inclusive education in schools consolidated within Bronfenbrenner's ecological model [Source: Geldenhys & Wevers (2013:1)]

	MARCROSYSTEM			
C H R O N O S Y S T E M * L A C K	**CONSTITUTION OF SOUTH AFRICA** *Prohibits discrimination to any person on any grounds *Not applied to learners who experience barriers to learning in schools	**SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS ACT** *Prohibits discrimination to any learner on any grounds *Promotes equitable and quality education for all learners *Not implemented in schools regarding learners who experience barriers to learning	**EDUCATION WHITE PAPER 6** *Framework for IE *Not embrace by educators *In conflict with curriculum and assessment	**CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT POLICIES** *Rigid curriculum and assessment *No provision for learners with barriers to learning *In conflict with Education White Paper 6
	EXOSYSTEM			
OF P R E P A R A T I O N	**SMT** *Lack commitment towards management of learners who experience barriers to learning *Ineffective communication and collaboration	**ILST** *Dysfunctional *Non-implementation of SIAS strategy *No training *Lack of knowledge *No effective support to educators and learners	**SGB** *No policies *Non-mobilisation of parents *No adaptation to building structures *Non-provision of assistive devices	**DBST** *Dysfunctional *Fragmented operation *No guidance to schools *No support to schools *Non-provision of specialised support services
	MESOSYSTEM: LACK OF EFFECTIVE COLLABORATION BETWEEN MICROSYSTEMS			
FOR	MICROSYSTEM			
C H A N G E S OVER TIME	**HOME** *Non-supportive *Unsympathetic *Negative life style *Absence of parents * Denial of parents *Low literacy levels	**PEERS** *Discrimination *Rejection *Labelling *Stereotyping	**SCHOOL** *Inappropriate building structures *Lack of resources and support *Outdated approach to barriers to learning *Inappropriately trained educators *Large class sizes *Time constraints *No differentiated teaching	

The findings of Geldenhuys and Wevers reveal that "the implementation of inclusive education is not only hampered by aspects within the school environment, but also aspects across the entire ecological system of education" (2013, p. 1). They state that there was a lack of structured cohesiveness and preparedness in inclusive education among all the role players in different layers of the ecological system, as well as inappropriate training and unavailable or non-functioning support structures. Importantly they note the lack of early identification of learners experiencing barriers to learning, with inadequate assessments of the learners and inadequate individual support plans, as well as little collaboration between the microsystems, all of which lead to the neglect of these learners.

My research focuses more directly on the mesosystem of learners in the classroom and their interrelations with their teachers and their school in the Eastern Cape; I also did address other systems and how they affect learners, in that they are all interlinked.

2.6.1 The inclusive practice in the classroom

According to Prinsloo, teachers in the classroom have two main objectives to fulfil with their learners namely "meeting the needs of all learners, and actualizing the full potential of all learners" (2001, p. 344). Teachers in inclusive education classrooms prefer teaching and learning strategies that are learner-centred and participatory, taking into consideration the individual learner's prior knowledge and then catering for learners experiencing barriers to learning (Okeke et al., 2014). Inclusive education should be concerned with the identification and minimisation of barriers to learning of learners in the classroom (Ntombela, 2011).

Beattie, Jordan and Algozzine (2006) name four important factors, which they contend are necessary for inclusion in order to succeed in schools and classrooms, namely positive attitudes, parents, professional development of teachers, and collaboration.

Teachers require pre-service and ongoing, supportive in-service professional training in inclusive education and the identification and minimisation of barriers to learning, to emotionally facilitate them and help develop their confidence, competence and a positive attitude (Swart et al., 2002). Teachers need to understand what barriers to learning are, how to address them, and to be trained in hands-on strategies to promote inclusion in the classroom (Walton, Nel, Hugo & Muller, 2009).

Parents need to be willing to devote time, resources, and sacrifices to ensure their children receive the education to which they are entitled (Donohue et al., 2014). It is generally acknowledged that the involvement of parents in their children's school and education has a positive effect on the success of their children at the school (Engelbrecht et al., 2007). Pienaar et al. (2013, p. 28) reiterate that "parental involvement can enhance academic performance, reduce discipline problems and the drop-out rate, promote well-being of learners and address barriers to learning".

Teacher's attitudes would be more positive if, along with training, they received appropriate professional support for learners experiencing barriers to learning, such as support from professional personnel, special equipment and educational resources, accommodations and teacher aids in the classroom to assist with learners with disabilities (Donohue et al., 2014). The importance of the collaboration among all stakeholders, such as teachers, parents, SBST (ILST), education support professionals and community members, to improve learner

achievement also should not be underestimated. Brice and Miller (2000, p. 240) state that "successful inclusion requires formal and informal communication for teams to meet and discuss the progress of students in the inclusive environment" and that it is necessary to find "time for teachers and paraprofessionals to meet, discuss, plan and modify instruction" for learners. All members of the collaborative partnership are of equal importance and "are expected to continuously contribute their expertise in a collegial, trusting manner towards a shared goal" (Engelbrecht & Green, 2001, p.34).

Okeke et al. (2014) state that there are two aims of an inclusive education classroom, firstly to ensure easy physical access for all learners around the school and classroom environment, and secondly to:

> … gear every method, every means of instruction, and every learning strategy towards ensuring that every learner, regardless of disability, socio-economic status, linguistic and cultural background, and regardless of competence in the language of learning and teaching, is able to acquire as much knowledge as possible, and to experience educational success, friendship, and a genuine sense of belonging to the learning community (Okeke et al., 2014, p. 219).

2.6.2. Features of an inclusive education school and classroom

In keeping with these two main aims for teachers, Okeke et al. (2014, p. 219) and Westwood (2007, p 5) note that some important features of an inclusive education school and classroom are strong leadership on the part of the school principal, the development of a whole-school policy supportive of inclusion and a supportive learning culture, in which learners feel comfortable, appreciated and safe.

Numerous studies have indicated the importance of the teacher's positive attitude for successful inclusion (Swart, Englebrecht, Eloff & Pettipher, 2002) in helping to create a supportive learning environment. Okeke et al. (2014, p 219) and Westwood (2007, p 5) mention that it is necessary for teachers to have a shared sense of responsibility with other teachers, support staff and members of the community, with commitment on the part of all staff to work collaboratively and to share expertise. There needs to be the regular assistance of paraprofessionals and effective links with outside agencies and services. The ongoing training

and professional development of staff is important, as well as the provision of adequate resourcing in terms of materials and personnel. A responsive curriculum is needed, in which the curriculum is adaptable and responsive to the different learning needs that learners have in an inclusive classroom environment. Finally, there needs to be close liaison with parents and, where possible, direct parental involvement in a child's educational programme.

The research study sought to describe and understand how the school, principal and teachers had embraced inclusivity, by taking into consideration all the above-mentioned features.

2.6.3 Skills to support teachers in the inclusive classroom

Beattie et al. in America (2006, p. 24) discuss the important skills that help teachers support inclusion in their classrooms. These include: the organisation of classrooms and physical space to support diverse learning styles; the planning, organising, and presenting of lessons that encourage diverse learning styles; managing behaviour and motivation to keep learners actively engaged; teaching reading relentlessly, to support learning in other content areas; teaching cognitive strategies to support diverse learning styles and typical learning problems; providing accommodations and modifications to encourage all learners to learn; monitoring progress frequently with appropriate assessments and grading practices; and providing family-friendly educational experiences.

I was interested in observing whether any of the above-mentioned skills were being applied in the classroom by the teachers in the research study to help promote inclusivity in the classroom.

2.6.4 Teaching and learning strategies in the inclusive classroom

Davis et al. (2004) and Okeke et al. (2014) address some teaching and learning strategies for learners in the inclusive classroom, including learners experiencing barriers to learning. The strategies include the early identification and intervention of barriers to learning, collaborative co-teaching, scaffolding where varying degrees of structure are provided to match the learner's needs, differentiated instruction, cooperative learning, positive reinforcement, and peer-oriented interventions, such as the "buddy" system.

The early identification and intervention of learners experiencing barriers to learning helps ensure that interventions for the learners start as early as possible to attempt to prevent the development of more extensive problems in these learners (Landsberg et al., 2005). An Individual Education Programme (IEP) can be formulated for the learners in which interventions can be planned and implemented that enable individual learners to succeed.

Collaborative cooperative teaching has "two or more education role-players enter a collaborative relationship as co-equal partners", bringing their own knowledge and experience to the partnership to support learners experiencing barriers to learning (Pienaar et al., 2013, p. 225). This could include the teacher and specialist personnel, such as a psychologist or learning support teacher, or it could include a teacher aid.

Nel, Nel, and Hugo (2013) explain that scaffolding is the process whereby the teacher starts with modelling knowledge structures and strategies, then he or she assist the learners by making sure they understand and internalise that knowledge. The teacher then gradually decreases the amount of help given.

Differentiated instruction is "a way of teaching and learning that allows teachers to accommodate the needs of learners with differing abilities in the same class", whereby "teachers structure their teaching so that it fits the diverse interests, abilities and experiences of learners in the class" (Pienaar et al., 2013, p. 140). The teacher uses different teaching and learning strategies on many levels, with varied content, processes, and resources to accommodate all the learners in the classroom. There should be ongoing assessment and feedback to the learners.

Cooperative learning involves learners working together in pairs or groups in problem-solving and other educational activities to facilitate learning, while at the same time building social relationship skills, such as listening skills, decision-making skills, and respecting individual differences (Pienaar et al., 2013). Examples of cooperative learning are peer tutoring and "buddy" systems, whereby learners tutor or assist each other.

Accommodations and modifications to instructional materials and assessment measures are specific techniques that provide teachers with the means of meeting the unique needs of learners experiencing barriers to learning (Beattie et al., 2006). Walton (2006) states that accommodations could include reading the task to the learner and allowing an oral response, or allowing additional time to complete the work or reducing the length of the task.

Concessions can also be given to learners who experience barriers to learning, such as not being penalised for handwriting and spelling mistakes. Modifications can be made to the conceptual difficulty of a task or scaffolding can be introduced to support the individual needs of the learner. Other modifications would also include the use of assistive devices such as computers, Dictaphones, video recordings, and Braille. Assessment accommodations and modifications would also need to be considered when including learners experiencing barriers to learning. The Curriculum Adaptation Guidelines of the Revised National Curriculum Statement (South Africa. Department of Education [DoE], 2005e) provides guidelines for South African teachers to adapt their teaching, learning, and assessment of their lesson plans.

I was interested in observing if any of the above-mentioned inclusive teaching and learning practices, strategies, features, skills and techniques were being used in the three foundation phase classrooms. To assist in my observations of the classrooms, I made structured field notes based on the above inclusive teaching and learning criteria in order specifically to look for and record such details (refer to Appendix D).

2.7 Teacher professional development

In-service professional teacher training should be regarded as essential for the successful implementation of inclusive education. Teachers need practical training in inclusive teaching strategies and skills to be used in the classroom, as well as in the barriers to learning that may be experienced by the learners and how to address them (Ntombela, 2011; Walton, 2006).

One-off training sessions in teacher development programmes presented by the DBST and Department of Education have been shown to be ineffectual, along with the cascade method of a few professionals and teachers being trained in knowledge and skills and in turn training their colleagues (Ntombele, 2011, McConnachie, 2013). Schwille and Dembele (2007) point out that research has shown that unless teacher development programmes are designed to ensure that teachers have many opportunities to learn and practice in their own classrooms in collaboration with others, the implementation of such programmes will be ineffective. Donohue and Bornman (2014) suggest that training programmes can be supplemented with support teams that can enter the classrooms and provide teachers with hands-on training and practical skills.

Research has been done on developing models to train, motivate and empower teachers to implement inclusive education effectively and successfully in the classroom (Prinsloo, 2001). These include "a model for teachers to assist learners with behaviour problems in the classroom, developed by FH Weeks; an At-Risk Disk as an instrument to enable teachers to identify the nature and extent of the learning difficulties of learners with intellectual disability and specific learning disability in a step-by-step process, developed under the leadership of AC Bouwer; and a manual to train teachers to assist mildly intellectually disabled learners in the foundation phase, developed by MF Sethosa" (Prinsloo, 2001, p. 346).

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is another model "for designing all aspects of the learning environment to address the wide-ranging variation of student needs that exist in an inclusive educational system" (Dalton, Mckenzie & Kahonde, 2012, p. 3). This model provides guidelines for teachers to employ multiple means of representation when teaching, using multisensory approaches, multiple means of learner expression and actions, and multiple ways to engage and motivate learners (Dalton et al., 2012).

Training teachers to implement these models will result in extending their skills, knowledge of and self-confidence in inclusive education and barriers to learning. They, however, will need adequate opportunities to engage with these innovative models and in order to apply them in their classrooms in collaboration with their colleagues. It is important that schools, teachers and educational planners take cognisance of the value of these models and ensure that they are eventually put into use in all schools in the country.

The Departments of Basic Education and Higher Education and Training (South Africa. Department of Basic Education [DBE], 2011) developed the Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development, 2011-2025, (hereafter referred to as the Plan) of which "the primary outcome of the Plan is to improve the quality of teacher education and development in order to improve the quality of teachers and teaching" (South Africa. DBE, 2011, p. 1). It acknowledged the failure of the system to achieve substantial improvement in the quality of teaching and learning in schools and that "the ultimate responsibility for recruiting, preparing, inducting, developing and utilising human resources in public education lies with the public authority, and must be operationalised and coordinated through its structures, and in particular the two national education departments (the Department of Basic Education, or DBE, and the Department of Higher Education and Training, or DHET) and the nine Provincial Education Departments (PEDs)" (South Africa. DBE, 2011, p. 1). They also

stated that the stakeholders in education, especially teachers themselves, are essential contributors to the structure of the Plan for its implementation (South Africa. DBE, 2011).

The Plan identified four main requirements: the enhanced collaboration amongst all role-players; a coordinated national system for teacher education and development; adequate time to enable quality teacher education and development; and sufficient funding for quality teacher education and development (South Africa. DBE, 2011).

The Plan indicated how these essential requirements needed to be addressed by adopting a 15-year timeframe and recognised the need for short-term, medium-term and long-term goals to ensure quality teacher education and development.

I was interested to see if the teachers in my research study had been trained and were using any of the models and plans that had been developed in South Africa or internationally.

2.8 Gathering evidence of inclusive education in the school and classroom

Guidelines for full-service/inclusive schools was published in 2009 (South Africa. Department of Education [DoE], 2009) outlining the criteria and qualities of an inclusive school. It was pointed out, however, by Walton and Nel (2012, p. 3) that the guidelines "fail to provide a clear statement of how much compliance with the guidelines counts as inclusion". They proceeded to address the challenge of determining the criteria to assess schools as to their inclusivity in their "inclusion web", stating that "the inclusion web offers an approach to assess inclusive school efforts" (Walton et al., 2012, p. 1) (See Figure 2.2 below). As I wanted to enter a school to establish the extent of its inclusivity, a chose to use Walton and Nel's spider's web framework to help assess its inclusive efforts.

Figure 2.2: An inclusive school conceived as a spider's web [Source: Walton & Nel (2012:10)]
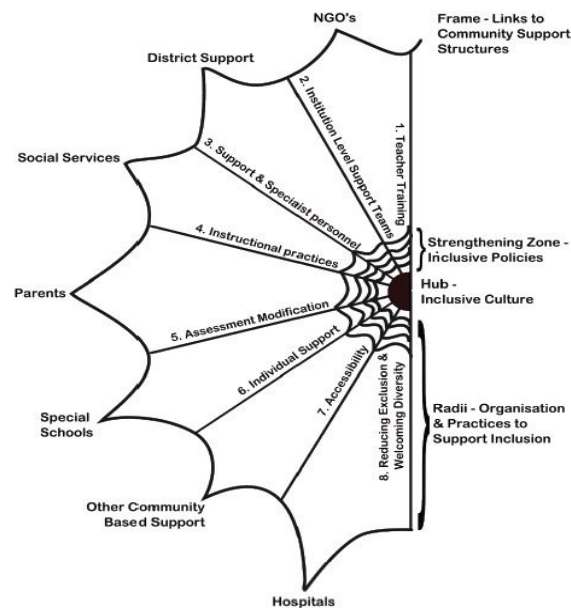
Walton and Nel explain that the spider web analogy reflects the non-symmetrical and uneven potential for schools to be inclusive, and that the building of a web "reflects the need for a purposeful endeavor to develop inclusivity" by schools (2012, p. 11). The hub of the web is the school's inclusive culture, the inclusive policies are its strengthening zone, the radii are the organisation practices to support inclusion and the frame is the school's links to community support structures.

Walton and Nel selected eight aspects under the organisation practices at schools to support inclusion. These include teacher training entailing the effective pre-service and in-service training of teachers in the attitudes, knowledge and skills required for inclusive education. The ILST (SBST) of the school includes teachers, parents and community members. The tasks of the ILST include: "co-ordinating support; identifying needs and barriers to learning; gathering resources from within and outside the institution; and monitoring and evaluating progress" (Walton & Nel, 2012, p. 13). The support and specialist personnel include therapists and teacher assistants who support the teachers; and the instructional practices include inclusive teaching strategies used by the teachers, such as accommodating different learning styles, differentiated teaching and learning, and co-operative learning strategies. Assessment modification includes reading to learners during assessments, allowing oral instead of written responses during assessments, and reduced or alternative tasks during assessments, as well as

extra time, spelling, and handwriting concessions. Individual support is in the form of extra lessons and assistive devices such as hearing aids, digital, computer, and Braille translators. Accessibility includes how accessible the school's infrastructure is to learners with disabilities and finally, reducing exclusion and welcoming diversity includes forms of exclusion from schools, such as on a financial basis or through admission tests.

The frame of the web is found where the school has links to community support structures, such as NGOs, government departments, health and social welfare, and the parents of the learners. These support structures potentially should provide information, services, resources, and practical assistance to teachers and learners at the school.

The web of inclusivity addresses more of the macrosystem and exosystem of Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems framework, and includes the school, its culture, policies, and accessibility, the community support structures, the DBST and ILST (SBST), teacher training and specialist personnel. Three of the radii, namely instructional practices, assessment modification, and individual support, address the microsystem or mesosystem of Bronfenbrenner's framework.

I classified the factors in Walton's and Nel's inclusion web and the factors that emerged from my research into macro and micro levels. The micro level refers specifically to the teachers and their engagement with learners in their classrooms. The macro level refers to all the other factors associated with and possibly affecting the learners, such as the school and its culture and policies, the SBST, the DBST, and community support structures.

Walton's and Nel's inclusion web provided me with a lens and heuristic to help the assessment of Baobab School's inclusive efforts, by focusing attention on its inclusive culture, policies, accessibility, the ILST (SBST), teacher training, and links to community support structures. However, when going into the classroom at the micro level, to identify the teaching and learning practices of the foundation phase teachers in their classrooms and their engagement with the learners, including learners experiencing barriers to learning, I found that the spider's web criteria were too limited.

As analysis deepened through the process of my research, I found that Walton's and Nel's inclusion web spoke more to the macro level, and that I needed to develop my own more detailed criteria at the micro level based on literature and my research, on the inclusive teaching and learning practices, strategies, features, skills, and techniques that address the inclusive education of learners in the classroom. Walton and Nel's inclusion web only had the three

criteria at the micro level. I felt that Walton and Nel's theoretical framework of an inclusive school spider's web did not adequately address an inclusive classroom and that another additional framework, in the form of a spider's web, needed to be developed at the classroom level. This will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Six: Discussion of Findings.

2.9 Conclusion

In this chapter I reviewed international and national literature on inclusive education, schools and classrooms and the challenges that are faced by the various stakeholders in the implementation of inclusive education in South Africa. I identified literature on intrinsic and extrinsic barriers to learning experienced by learners and how to overcome these barriers so as to enable an inclusive education. I then reviewed literature on what schools and teachers could do to enable an inclusive education classroom by using inclusive practices, strategies, features, skills, models and plans in their classrooms. Finally, I reviewed literature through a framework to use as a heuristic to assist in establishing the inclusivity of schools and classrooms. The next chapter describes the methodology of research used in this study.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The aim of this research was to describe, with a view to understanding, the engagement of an Eastern Cape, public, primary school with learners, including learners experiencing barriers to learning, in an inclusive foundation phase classroom. To inform the research I selected the case study method with which I investigated one specific South African no-fees paying, public, primary school in the Eastern Cape and three foundation phase teachers in their inclusive classrooms at the school, to attempt to understand and analyse my main research question and sub-questions derived from my research goal.

This chapter describes and justifies the research methodology used in this study. It begins by explaining the orientation of the research, which was shaped by the research goal and questions. It explains why the case study method was used, the choice of the research site and participants, and the data collection methods. Finally, an explanation is given for the data collection and analysis, as well as for the ethical issues and trustworthiness.

3.2 Research Orientation

My research focused on one specific public, primary school in the Eastern Cape and in particular the foundation phase at the school, taking into consideration the importance of the early childhood development phase of the learners and early intervention of learners experiencing barriers to learning in this phase. Landsberg et al. stress that "the aim of early intervention is to see that intervention with children and families starts as early as possible to prevent the development of more extensive developmental problems in children" (2005, p. 87).

I chose to do a qualitative study with an interpretive paradigm, using the case study method, whereby I observed the interaction of three teachers, one in each of the three foundation phase English medium Grades 1, 2, and 3. A qualitative research approach in an interpretive paradigm was selected to provide "in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information",

striving to "describe, analyse and interpret a particular phenomenon" (de Vos, Strydom, Fouché & Delport, 2011, p. 321).

As the research focused on the three foundation phase teachers in their classrooms, it allowed for comparisons between them and to observe the progression of the learners through the three grades. This is characteristic of the interpretive paradigm that maintains that "all human beings are engaged in the process of making sense of their worlds and continuously interpret, create, give meaning, define, justify and rationalise daily actions" (Babbie & Mouton, 2001, p. 28). De Vos (2011) points out that in this paradigm, observation and field research is often used, techniques where many hours and days are spent in direct contact with participants. Conversations, audio and video recordings, and transcripts may be studied in detail "in order to gain a sense of subtle non-verbal communication or to understand the interaction in its real context" (Neuman, 2003, p. 76).

3.3 Research Goal

The research goal was to describe in rich detail, with a view to understanding, how inclusive education was being enacted by the teacher with learners, including learners experiencing barriers to learning, in a no-fee paying, public primary school at the level of the foundation phase classroom.

3.4 Research Questions

I spent some time reflecting on and formulating my research questions (Flick, 2006), especially when deciding on the method of collecting data and the ethical implications of doing so when observing learners in the classroom. Therefore, I formulated my research questions to focus specifically on the teachers and their interaction with the learners in each of their classrooms.

The main research question guiding this case study was as follows:

How does an Eastern Cape public, primary school and the foundation phase teachers in this school, engage with learners, including those who experience barriers to learning, to promote inclusivity in the foundation phase classroom?

Sub-questions that were formulated to explore the various aspects of inclusivity of learners, including learners experiencing barriers to learning, in the classroom were:

- What is the contextual background and characterisation of the school in terms of the educational inclusivity of its learners?
- What do the foundation phase teachers' understand of inclusive education in the school and classroom?
- What types of barriers to learning (intrinsic and extrinsic), have teachers identified as being experienced by learners in their classrooms?
- How do teachers engage with their learners, including learners they have identified as experiencing barriers to learning, in ways that promote inclusivity and inclusive learning in the classroom?
- What, if any, are the challenges teachers experience in the implementation of inclusive education in the classroom?

Even though I had formulated my main question and the sub-questions, I ensured that I remained "open to new and perhaps surprising results" (Flick, 2006, p. 106).

3.5 Case Study Method

The case study method was chosen as being best suited to providing thick description, rich interpretation and in-depth understanding of the phenomena being observed in a bounded unit, which in this case was the classroom (Merriam, 2001; Hamilton and Corbett-Whittier, 2013).

I chose to do a single case study analysis of an Eastern Cape school as representative of other no-fee paying schools in the province, and because lessons learned from this case are assumed to be informative about the experiences of the average person or institution. (Yin, 2009).

The units of analysis (Yin, 2009) were the foundation phase teachers and their engagement with the learners in their classrooms. Multiple methods of data collection, such as questionnaires, interviews and observations, were used to explore and describe the units of analysis, to provide multiple sources of information rich in context (de Vos et al., 2011, p. 321).

3.6 Research Site

I decided to focus on the narrow unit of study of one school due to the complexity of my study topic and the depth of data that I needed to collect from the classroom (Yin, 2011, p.92). Patton (2002, p. 244) says that "sample size depends on what you want to know, the purpose of the inquiry, what's at stake, what will be useful, what will have credibility, and what can be done with available time and resources".

A purposeful sample of the research site was selected in the form of an ordinary, no-fee paying primary school in the Eastern Cape (henceforth referred to as Baobab School [pseudonym]). Maxwell (1996, p. 70) points out that one of the goals of purposeful sampling is to achieve representativeness or typicality of settings, individuals, or activities that have been selected. The school is in one way representative of schools in the Eastern Cape, as it is a no fee-paying, public primary school, catering for learners from lower socio-economic backgrounds, and is, therefore, economically representative. It was also selected as a best practice study, as a functional school involved in a number of voluntary initiatives to support the school and the learners; and in this way, it is not necessarily representative of other no fee-paying schools. It was felt that the school would provide rich information as to inclusive practices in the classroom, because as Yin (2011, p. 88) informs us "the goal or purpose for selecting the specific study units is to have those that will yield the most relevant and plentiful data, given your topic of study".

In addition, the school was selected for a number of other contributing reasons. Firstly, there is an existing relationship of trust with both the researcher and the university. The researcher has a connection with the school via management of a voluntary literacy programme at the Grades R and 1 levels on site for learners from the school and neighbouring schools. In addition, the school, its principal, and its teachers have had previous successful interactions

with the university. Secondly, the school principal, at an informal meeting, had been receptive to research being undertaken at Baobab School.

3.7 Selection of Research Participants

I chose to study the foundation phase (Grades 1, 2 and 3) classrooms at the school, due to the importance of this phase in ensuring learners receive a good foundational level of education. I decided to enter the three English medium foundation phase classrooms, so as not to require an interpreter or translator, as I am not proficient in the other two teaching and learning languages at the school of Afrikaans and isiXhosa. Observing the English medium classrooms would provide me with the rich data I would require for my research, especially among learners not learning in their home language. Pienaar and Raymond (2013, p. 155) point out that here in South Africa "many children bring to school a home language that differs from the school's language of learning and teaching" and so "teachers should be aware that this usually leads to learning problems and underachievement in these learners" (Landsberg et al., 2005, p. 37).

3.7.1 Overview of the Research Participants

The questionnaire posed questions pertaining to the teachers and their teaching background, the size of their classes, the home language breakdown of their learners and the number of learners they perceived to be experiencing barriers to learning in their respective classes. This is summarised in the table below.

Table 3:1   Overview of Research Participants

Research Participants				
1.	Grade	Grade: 1	2	3
2.	Number of learners in the class	36	36	36

3.	Main language of teaching and learning in the class (LoTL)	English	English	English
4..	Home language	Xhosa: 18	26	28
		Afrikaans: 15	10	8
		English: 1	-	-
		Other: 2	-	-
5.	Number of learners in the class experiencing barriers to learning	3	4	7

The Grade 1 teacher, Mrs Coetzee (pseudonym), had 20 years teaching experience, and DE III and HDE IV qualifications in education. She had the maximum intake of learners per class allowed at Baobab School of 36 learners. The main language of teaching and learning (LoTL) was English, of which 18 learners had isiXhosa as their home language, 15 had Afrikaans, one learner had English and two learners had another language. Mrs Coetzee had identified three learners as experiencing barriers to learning in her class.

The Grade 2 teacher, Ms Miya (pseudonym), had 3 years teaching experience, and held a Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE). The main LoTL was in English and her class was made up of 36 learners. The home language of 26 of the learners was isiXhosa and the other 10 was Afrikaans. Ms Miya had identified four learners as experiencing barriers to learning in her class.

The Grade 3 teacher, Mrs Snyman (pseudonym), had 36 years teaching experience and the LoTL in her class was English. She had an HDE in the Foundation Phase. There were 36 learners in her class of which 28 had isiXhosa as their home language and the remaining eight had Afrikaans as their home language. Mrs Snyman had identified seven learners as having barriers to learning in her class.

3.8 Access

Flick (2006, p. 113) stresses that gaining access to the field under study is more crucial in qualitative research than in quantitative research because the contact the researcher seeks is either closer or more intense than it would be in a quantitative study. I was mindful of the sensitivity needed when entering the classroom with the teacher and her learners, which is a close and bounded environment. The process of gaining access was, therefore, carefully planned and sensitively undertaken.

Initially I had to receive permission and clearance from the University's Research Proposal and Ethics Board, as well as the Eastern Cape Department of Education. A crucial element that was stressed in the proposal, to gain clearance, was that my research would focus specifically on the teacher in her classroom and her interaction with the learners. The protection of the learners was a most important concern of the Board.

Once in receipt of the clearance, I arranged an appointment with the principal formally to ask for permission to conduct my research at his school (see Appendix A: Formal Letter of Permission to the Principal). This was a significant meeting because the principal was the gatekeeper to my carrying out the research; Yin points out that a researcher's main access "appropriately comes from an official of the institution or the leader of the network" (2011, p. 115). The principal facilitated the first meeting with all the foundation phase teachers at the school whose language of teaching and learning in the classroom was English.

During the first meeting, I was aware of the need to be sensitive about gaining access to the classroom while being seen as a "professional stranger" (Agar, 1980) in my capacity as a Learning Support teacher. I did not want to appear intimidating to the teachers. I needed to win over the teachers, particularly those I did not know personally, in order to have my research benefit from their insights (Flick, 2006, p. 121); also I wanted to ensure the relevance of "disclosure, transparency, and negotiation of mutual aims, expectations and interest" (Flick, 2006, p. 120). It took a couple of meetings to explain my research project to six of the foundation phase teachers, before I received consent from two teachers (Grades 1 and 2) to enter their classrooms to observe them. It took a while longer to gain the trust of the final teacher (Grade 3) and only after I had been at the school for a few more weeks.

The Grades 1 and 2 teachers agreed to have their interviews voice recorded and the Grade 2 teacher agreed to have her class lessons video recorded for the week of observations. I received written consent for these recordings (refer to Appendix B). It was necessary to respect the wishes of the Grade 3 teacher that no recordings of any kind to be taken of her and her classroom.

3.9 Research Process

The research was done in four phases:

First phase: Critical review of the questionnaire.

Second phase: With the informed consent of the teachers of Grades 1, 2 and 3, they were initially asked to complete a questionnaire. The teachers were then interviewed on a one-to-one basis to generate a deep understanding of the teacher and her class. Finally, the teachers were observed in their respective classrooms for one morning each, to see first-hand the interactions of the teacher with her learners in the classroom.

Third phase: The Grade 2 teacher volunteered to have a full week of further observations in her classroom to provide more in-depth observations.

Fourth phase: Follow-up interviews with the Grade 1, 2 and 3 teachers.

3.9.1 Questionnaire

The choice of questions on the questionnaire were informed by literature, and included questions concerning the intrinsic and extrinsic barriers to learning, inclusive schools and classrooms, inclusive strategies used in the classroom, support agencies and difficulties faced in the practice of inclusive education in the classroom (refer to Appendix C).

A critical review of the questionnaire was conducted with the principal from a similar, representative school to fine-tune the questions to be asked of the consenting teachers at the selected school, and this acted as a "dress rehearsal of the main investigation" (De Vos, 2011,

p. 237). The principal had 16 years of teaching experience in ordinary and private schools and 19 years of experience in a special needs school as a teacher, head of department and principal, as well as having completed her Masters in Education researching Inclusive Education policy implementation (McConnachie, 2013, p.i). I felt this equipped her to be a knowledgeable and discerning individual to review my questionnaire and to help me ascertain whether or not the relevant data could be obtained from the teachers through the questions (Royse, 1995, p. 172).

The types of questions and their wording were carefully considered to extract the desired information from the teachers, as well as to ensure the questions were clear and unambiguous. The questionnaire that was reviewed was then distributed to the three foundation phase teachers to be completed.

The questionnaire included questions pertaining to:

- The academic qualifications of the teacher (educational and professional qualifications)
- The number of years spent in the teaching profession (experience)
- The class grade taught (grades 1, 2, or 3)
- The language of instruction taught in the classroom (English/Afrikaans/isiXhosa)
- The number of learners in the classroom (size of class)
- The home language of the learners
- The number of learners experiencing barriers to learning in the classroom as perceived by the teacher
- The types of barriers (intrinsic and extrinsic) to learning experienced by the learners as perceived by the teacher
- Any in-service professional training attended by the teacher
- The teacher's understanding of inclusive education
- The school based support team (SBST)
- Inclusive education teaching and learning strategies used in the classroom by the teacher
- Any support received from other agencies for the teaching and learning of the learners in the classroom
- Any difficulties the teacher experienced with trying to bring about inclusive education in the classroom

The questionnaire helped to inform the formulation of the interview questions, in order to elicit deep and rich information from the teachers.

3.9.2 Semi-structured Interviews

Semi-structured, one-to-one interviews were conducted with the informed consent of the three foundation phase teachers in order to gain "a detailed picture of a participant's beliefs about, or perceptions or accounts of, a particular topic" (De Vos et al., 2011, p. 351). I had a set of predetermined open-ended questions, informed by literature and the response in the questionnaires, on an interview schedule which helped guide the interview while allowing it "to be fluid rather than rigid" (Yin, 2009, p. 106) (refer to Appendix E).

I was free to probe the responses given by the teachers, letting them express their ideas in a way that was not dictated by me (O'Leary, 2005, p. 116). I enquired into what was said in the questionnaire and how the school and teachers engaged with inclusive education in the classroom. The interviews were conducted at times convenient for the teachers and I obtained consent from two of the teachers to audio record their interviews to provide an accurate rendition. The third teacher did not want to be audio recorded, so I wrote her answers on paper. I then transcribed the audio recordings of the interviews.

3.9.3 Observations

The observations in both phase two and three were non-participatory in nature; I was an observer maintaining "distance from the observed events in order to avoid influencing them" (Flick, 2006). I attempted to observe events as they naturally occurred, as unobtrusively as possible, with the knowledge that the act of observation would, to varying degrees, influence those being observed.

I took both structured and unstructured field notes during my observations, of the flow of events, ensuring that behaviour and interaction continued uninterrupted by intrusion as they would have done without my presence (Flick, 2006, p. 216).

The structured field notes were put together, informed by literature, to help me look for specific features at the school, in the classroom and during the lessons of the teachers (refer to Appendix D).

The unstructured field notes did not restrict or limit my attention but allowed me to be open to observing the teacher and the processes, practices and challenges she utilised and faced in the classroom (Flick, 2006). I observed the teacher as she interacted and engaged with the whole class, how she presented the class to herself, and how she prepared and implemented her teaching and learning to accommodate the presentation. As an observer, I was aware of the potential danger of the subjective nature of human perception which could lead to a distortion of the real situation (Merriam, 1991). I used peer review and critical friends to overcome this potential bias.

A couple of video recorders were used to make recordings of the teacher during the week's observation in phase 3. These were placed as inconspicuously as possible at the back and to the side of the classroom so as not to unnerve the teacher and learners (De Vos et al., 2011, p 359). Initially the learners were aware of the video recorders and questioned why they were there, but once the teacher explained the situation, they quickly settled into their daily routine. The recordings allowed for a comprehensive and holistic presentation of conditions and activities in the classroom (Flick, 2006), allowing for the identification and transcription of critical incidents in the engagement of the teacher with the learners. The transcriptions of these incidents served as the primary record. Informed consent for this was obtained from the teacher who had been advised that under no circumstances would any visual or audio recordings of her or the learners be shown or publicised. All information concerning the learners and the teacher would remain strictly confidential and they would not be identified by name in the thesis.

I chose to use a broad camera focus, which gave "a good panoramic view of the social situation" and captured the context of the situation on film (Flick, 2006, p. 242).

The audio and video recordings were transcribed and a preliminary analysis made from the extracts. Follow-up interviews were conducted with the respective teachers. This enabled questions to be asked in context about individual components of their teaching (Maxwell, 1996, p. 128).

3.10 Data Generation/Collection

All the data resources collected from the questionnaires, interviews, and observations were organised, filed and stored in a safe location.

I collated the responses from the questionnaires from the three teachers onto one spreadsheet so that I could readily and easily compare and analyse their answers (Appendix C).

I transcribed the audio and video recordings from the interviews and observations and once again collated the data collected from the three foundation phase teachers and their classes, to compare and analyse the information received. I categorised the responses from the interviews under intrinsic and extrinsic factors, as well as additional factors, and noted the "stories" told by the teachers about certain of the learners in their classes experiencing barriers to learning, what barriers they were experiencing, what support they needed, what support they were receiving and what difficulties were being experienced in meeting some of their needs.

Finally, I transcribed the audio recordings of the follow-up interviews and collated the data received from the three foundation phase teachers.

3.11 Data Analysis and Interpretation

The data analysis was done in two phases with the aim of providing insights into the research questions:

Phase 1: Through inductive reasoning, and moving from concrete observations to general theoretical explanations (De Vos, 2011, p. 49), patterns and trends in the questionnaire, interviews and observation transcriptions were identified. Open coding was used to synthesise and classify patterns and trends into categories and broad themes (Merriam, 2001, p. 179), taking into account the inclusive culture and policies of the school, the inclusive practices, strategies, features, skills and techniques adopted in the classroom by the teachers (Okeke et al., 2014; Beattie et al., 2006; Davis et al., 2004), and the intrinsic and extrinsic barriers to learning experienced by some of the learners, and what was being done to assist them.

The aim was to express data and phenomena in the form of concepts (Flick, 2006, p. 297). In the determination of the various categories in my research I used Walton's and Nel's (2012, p. 10) categories in their inclusive web as a heuristic to assist me, having been influenced by the statement by Arrington (2013, p. 6) that "heuristics are cognitive frameworks for processing information encountered in the environment and ultimately making decisions and judgments about that information".

Phase 2: The emergent themes were analysed and interpreted, helping to gain insights as to the engagement of and interactions between the teacher and the learners, including those experiencing barriers to learning, in the foundation phase classroom.

As the analysis and understanding of my research deepened, I established that the majority of Walton's and Nel's inclusive web addressed the macro level and said little to the micro level of the teacher and learners in the classroom. I found that I needed to generate a framework that addressed this level more specifically to assist the analysis and interpretation of the actual practices of inclusive education in the classroom. This framework and its development are discussed in Chapter Six.

Finally, it was important to ensure that the real-life events, situations, and phenomena in the case study were allowed to "speak for themselves, rather than to be largely interpreted, evaluated or judged by the researcher" (Cohen, Manion, & Morison, 2011, p. 290).

3.12 Ethical Issues

The case study method of research seeks to understand human subjects in real-life situations. There was, therefore, a need to protect these individuals throughout the research. Yin (2009) states the importance of conducting a case study with great care and sensitivity, by taking into account all ethical considerations. These included:

- Protecting the privacy and confidentiality of the school and all participants, especially the learners involved. The school and participants in the research remained anonymous. In order to protect the identity of the school, teachers and learners I used pseudonyms for them (Cohen et al., 2011). I named the school "Baobab School" as it has a large tree

to the one side of its court yard, and I chose names for the teachers and learners by using pseudonyms according to their home language.

- Voluntary participation, means that no participant was forced to participate in the research and were informed that they could withdraw from the research at any stage (Cohen et al., 2011).

- I gained the informed consent (see letter to the principal and the consent form to the foundation phase teachers in Appendix A and B) from all persons involved in the case study, including the school's principal, teachers, and the Department of Education. The cooperation of the participants of the case study were respectfully requested, the importance of the research carefully explained, and any refusal of consent was accepted and respected (De Vos, 2011, p. 121). Accurate and complete information was given by the researcher so that the participants could comprehend fully the details of the research and consequently were able to make a voluntary and thoroughly reasoned decision about their possible participation (De Vos, 2011, p. 117). Informed consent was obtained from the principal and the teachers for the questionnaires, interviews, and observations. Two of the teachers consented to the audio recording of their interviews and one teacher was reluctant to have her interview audio recorded, so I respected her request and wrote down her answers to the interview questions. With the consent of the Grade 2 teacher, I visually recorded her class for the week of observations during the third phase. Once I completed the transcriptions of the video recordings, I deleted them.

- Protection for the participants from any harm, both physical and emotional, ensured the participants' welfare (De Vos, 2011, p. 115).

3.13 Trustworthiness

De Vos et al. (2011, p. 113) state that "research should be based on mutual trust, acceptance, cooperation, promises and well-accepted conventions and expectations between all parties involved in a research project". I, therefore, had a responsibility to those that participated in the research, as well as a responsibility to be accurate and honest in the reporting of the research (De Vos et al., 2011). Evidence had to be provided that my study was conducted in a rigorous, systematic, credible, trustworthy, and ethical manner, and the responsibility of the researcher was to "make sure you have captured 'truth'; reached conclusions not tainted by error and

unrecognized bias; and have conducted your research with professional integrity" and "the rights and well-being of those involved with your study are protected at all times" (O'Leary, 2005, p. 61).

The following strategies were used to enhance the trustworthiness of my research:

- Traceable data: I ensured the data collected was carefully organised, filed and stored in a safe location.

- Triangulation of data: A process which "combines data drawn from different sources and at different times, in different places or from different people" (Flick, 2004, p. 178). I used the data obtained from the questionnaires, interviews, and observations from the three foundation phase teachers and their classes and from the principal, at different times and places. Yin (2009, p. 114) states that "a major strength of case study data collection is the opportunity to use many different sources of evidence", which allows for the development of "converging lines of inquiry" and "a process of triangulation and corroboration".

- Member-checking: I invited the teachers to review the video and audio recordings with me, and to respond to my collected data, transcripts, findings, and interpretations, in order to verify the information that had been collected.

- Peer review: I used peer review and critical friends, such as my supervisors, to help overcome the potential bias of the subjectivity and unreliable nature of human perception (Merriam, 1991).

- Researcher positionality: As a qualified learning support teacher, I was aware of the possible power relations between myself and the teachers in my study and how this might influence my research process. I strove to establish a partnership with the teachers and a firm level of trust. I attempted to provide evidence that my assumptions, experiences, relationship to the participants and theoretical orientation were explained and made visible (Wilmot, 2005, p. 149). I also used a research journal to show researcher reflexivity and the attempt to be open and honest.

- Thick description of phenomenon under scrutiny: Shenton (2004, p. 69) states that a detailed description is "an important provision for promoting credibility as it helps convey the actual situations that have been investigated and, to an extent, the contexts that surround them".

3.14 Conclusion

This chapter presented the research methodology used in this study to attain the research goal. It used a qualitative research approach in an interpretative framework to answer the research questions. It explained the research design decision to use a case study, using questionnaires, interviews and observations to collect data. Finally, it discussed the ethics and trustworthiness of the research. In the next chapters, I proceed to an analysis and interpretation of the data in order to present the findings.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION: OVERVIEW AND INTERVIEWS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents an overview of Baobab School, and the findings from the questionnaires and interviews with the three foundation phase teachers. I then present the factors which emerged from the questionnaires and interviews.

4.2 Overview of Baobab School

Baobab School, which had formerly been run by Catholic nuns, maintained a Catholic and Christian ethos. This was reflected daily in the prayers that were said throughout the day by learners, as well as the Bible readings and virtues that were presented at Wednesday Assemblies.

In Assembly one Wednesday morning, I observed the Grade R and Grade 1 classes present the virtues of love, kindness, caring, sharing, peace, and hope, alongside various Bible readings upholding a strong Christian ethos. They held up large posters on which they had drawn the words describing these virtues, and recited a poem on being kind that they had learnt by heart. The Grade R and Grade 1 teachers did the readings and spoke about the virtues. This illustrated the importance the school placed on teachers and learners being inclusive. They encouraged all learners to be accepting of one another and to be caring and kind to everyone at the school.

Line-ups were held every morning before lessons commenced, but on Wednesdays were formal Assemblies at which Bible readings were offered. They were held in the front court-yard and the entire school attended with learners lined up according to their grades. There was not enough room in the hall for all the learners, so Assembly was held in the court-yard. The number of learners had increased substantially since the time the school was first built, and various structures, such as the hall, had not been enlarged to accommodate all the learners. Additions, however, were made to the number of classrooms. This is discussed below.

The principal was a calm and steady presence at the school. He addressed the learners and teachers every morning, when they had lined up in the court-yard before going to their classrooms. As head of the school, he set an example of quiet but firm authority.

There was a set daily routine at the school, from morning line up in the court-yard, to Assembly every Wednesday, to a hot meal served to each grade throughout the morning, to first and second break. The teachers were always present and lessons were on time. The sense of responsibility and commitment to the welfare of the school and learners emanated from the principal through to the teachers and other staff at the school.

The serving of a hot meal to all the grades was staggered throughout the morning. At 09h10 the Grade Ones interrupted their lesson to collect and eat their meal, after which the lesson resumed. Each of the other grades followed the same routine thereafter. This interrupted the flow of the lesson and may have made it difficult for the learners to follow the concept that had been taught earlier.

The school's code of conduct, its rules and discipline, were enforced and maintained. I saw evidence of this on various occasions, from the principal's speaking at Assembly about the need to respect each other and their elders, to a teacher's informing Grade 2 in class not to go to the bottom field to play at break time. This was the area designated for the high school grades because the school did not want younger learners mingling with older learners when not being carefully supervised.

Learners were polite when an adult entered the classroom, standing up to greet him or her, and they thanked catering staff after being served their meal. They seemed to have internalised good manners as part of what was expected at their school, helping them identify with and be proud of their school. I did, however, see learners being unruly and rough with each other in the court-yard and corridors where there was no supervision. This is possibly normal behaviour among boys playing together and was not unlike the behaviour of boys at the independent school at which I work, although at Baobab School it was louder and rougher.

There was evidence of collaboration between the principal, teachers, and support staff. The foundation phase teachers informed me of meetings scheduled in the afternoons which took place a couple of times a week during the period I was at the school for interviews and observations. Also, teachers had meetings with heads of departments or the school based support team (SBST) concerning any learners who concerned them. I did not attend these meetings.

The school grounds were kept clean. Learners were assigned particular days on which to collect refuse around the school instilling in them a sense of responsibility for the care of their school.

The school grounds had three levels. The first housed the main school buildings, namely the front court-yard, the principal's office, and reception, the hall and various upstairs classrooms housing the higher grades, and downstairs classrooms for lower grades. This appeared to be the original school structure. The second level had smaller classroom structures which had been added on at a later stage and were made of pre-cast concrete panels. The final level was the playground consisting of a fenced-in area of flattened bare ground with some patches of grass.

The physical infrastructure of the school was functional but run down, and in need of a coat of paint and repairs to uneven and broken surfaces. Toilets and hand basins were in working order. There was only one ramp provided for physically disabled persons at the entrance to the school. The movement of a physically disabled person around the school would be difficult across the three levels, with only steps from one level to the other. There were no other facilities for physically disabled learners, though I was informed that there were no learners with physical disabilities needing a wheelchair at that time.

The upper level classrooms I observed for Grade 1 and Grade 3 were old, but had sufficient space for desks and chairs for 36 learners. The lower level classrooms were very small having little room to walk freely around chairs and desks. The teacher and learners had to climb over bags or were unable to walk through to the back of the classroom when learners were seated. The Grade 2 classroom I observed was one such classroom.

The three foundation phase classrooms had sufficient desks, chairs, cupboards, and shelves for teacher and learners. There was a black board and numerous educational resources, such as posters, charts, abacuses, and books, but the furniture and resources were old and tired-looking. The only visible new resources were the small corner libraries.

I was informed by the foundation phase teachers that the libraries were donated by a local, non-profit organisation which had rolled out the libraries over the past three years to Grades 1, 2 and 3 classrooms. They consisted of two shelves of a selection of English, IsiXhosa, and Afrikaans books appropriate for the grade. The books were beautifully illustrated and were covered with protective plastic covers. A small colourful carpet and some bright cushions had also been donated by the organisation for the library corner in each classroom, as illustrated in Figures 4.1 and 4.2 below.

Figure 4.1: Classroom library
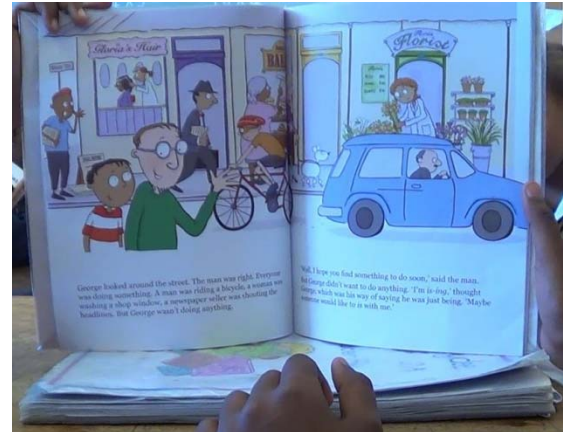
Figure 4.2: Library book

In the Grade 3 classroom, I observed that the black board had a line of cupboards underneath it making it difficult for the teacher, Mrs Snyman (pseudonym), to reach the board. She stood on a chair to write on the board which could be hazardous. During one of her lessons she resorted to an A3 sheet of paper stuck onto the one side of the board rather than having to climb on the chair.

4.3 Interview with the Grade 1 Teacher

I interviewed Mrs Coetzee after one morning of classroom observations. The interview was audio recorded and later transcribed. I conducted the interview in English and Mrs Coetzee was fluent in the language.

A summary of the findings from the interview is provided below.

4.3.1 Intrinsic factors

Mrs Coetzee stated that currently she had three learners in her class experiencing intrinsic barriers to learning.

Mrs Coetzee noticed that one learner was experiencing visual impairments.

Mrs Coetzee: One child was always squinting, even though the child was sitting right in front of the class, and she still couldn't write properly from the board.
I sent her for testing and she eventually got glasses.

The parents actually took her to get the eyes tested.

A plan was conceived and implemented for this learner to receive glasses. The necessary support was obtained for her to correct the visual impairment after which she could see clearly so there was no barrier to her learning.

There were another two learners, Mrs Coetzee said, experiencing learning difficulties.

Mrs Coetzee: Buhle (pseudonym) couldn't write his name at the beginning of the year. The problem is his mother worked in Umthata and then there was a tornado and the school he was at, the roof was blown off and it was damaged, and the mother took him out of school and he never attended school and he was at home for most of the year and the mother never helped him at home.
He would hold a book upside down, without knowing the book was upside down. He did not have the correct pencil grip. He couldn't count.

Mrs Coetzee mentioned that Buhle could neither understand nor speak any English when he started at Baobab school.

Mrs Coetzee: What happened is that the secretary accidently made a mistake, because he wasn't accepted and she gave him an acceptance letter, and when the mother came for the orientation, we couldn't refuse him and so he had to learn from scratch.

Clearly Buhle experienced an extrinsic barrier to learning, when his previous school proved to be unsafe and he could not attend school there. He stayed at home for the rest of the year where there was very little stimulation. In addition, he entered Mrs Coetzee's class having no English. Because he was far behind in his learning, Mrs Coetzee stressed that he needed to catchh up. Buhle had a combination of extrinsic (inappropriate language of teaching and learning) and intrinsic (learning difficulties) barriers to learning. So often intrinsic and extrinsic barriers to learning are seen as separate, but, as in this case, the barriers feed into each other.

Unaware initially of Buhle's situation when observing Mrs Coetzee's classroom, I did not focus on any particular learner. Buhle may have been one of the slower learners for whom Mrs Coetzee allowed additional time for them to complete their work.

The other learner Mrs Coetzee identified as experiencing learning difficulties was Liyema (pseudonym).

Mrs Coetzee: Liyema, he will sit and I will explain things, but he is just not interested. He will just do his own thing or he will turn his back, not looking at me.

It is not clear if Liyema actually had learning difficulties or other possible barriers which could have caused his lack of interest. Mrs Coetzee felt he might be ADHD, as he was easily distracted and would do other things rather than follow the lesson. He then fell behind and would miss concepts being taught.

I asked Mrs Coetzee if she had had any children experiencing physical impairments in her class in the past.

Mrs Coetzee: I had a child [Agatha] – she is actually in Grade 3 now with Mrs Snyman.
….. she [has a physical disability/is palsy]
She didn't do too good because I kept her for two years.
The first year she couldn't do anything. She couldn't write her name. She could only count to 6 or 8. She couldn't write between the lines.
I kept her for the second year and she was in my class again, but you could see there was an improvement.
She could count and all that. She was always by herself and eventually she started interacting and playing with the other kids.
She is very, very slow.

I was informed that Agatha (pseudonym) was thought to have had a stroke at a young age and was affected physically and intellectually. Mrs Coetzee said she had filled in the SNA forms and sent them to the Department of Education, expecting to have the department follow up and provide support for Agatha. Unfortunately, "nobody came". Agatha is now in Grade 3 in Mrs Snyman's class (see 5.4.1 Lesson 1) but still there has been no response from the DBST.

Agatha's mother did manage to organise for her to receive physiotherapy and Mrs Coetzee did see an improvement in her physical movements. Mrs Coetzee gave Agatha additional individual support, both in the classroom and at break time, she repeated her Grade 1 year with her and she attended a literacy programme during aftercare, as another form of support and stimulation. This demonstrates how the school, teachers and parents put a plan in place to provide as much support as they could for Agatha.

I asked Mrs Coetzee if she had had any learners experiencing emotional/behavioural problems.

Mrs Coetzee: I had a child, Lulama (pseudonym). He is in Grade 2 this year.
He had behaviour problems.
He would go under the tables and pinch the children and I would try to get him out from under the table and he would hold onto the leg of the table. Now I have to ask for assistance and ask someone to come and help me, and then he would kick me even, but once he bit me, my leg was blue. When I bring him to the office, we had to carry him to the office, he would kick on the door, bang on the things.

> He had a little brother, but the brother was taken away. I don't know actually what the reason was, but the little brother lives with the grandparents in Port Elizabeth.
> The mother said it could be that he misses the brother, that's why the outbursts and the mother had a very abusive boyfriend and everything happened in front of him.
> The children didn't want to play with him because he had these outbursts or he would hurt them. He couldn't even sleep at night.

Mrs Coetzee spoke to Lulama's parents and referred him to a psychologist. She received a report from the psychologist with recommendations. Lulama was placed on Ritalin and sent to a free counselling centre where the psychologist recommended that Mrs Coetzee involve Lulama with the other learners and not seat him separately in the class. Mrs Coetzee said his emotional outbursts subsided. In this case, the successful implementation of a support plan for Lulama was confirmed by a visible improvement in his behaviour.

I asked Mrs Coetzee about having had any children on the autistic spectrum or any children experiencing Foetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) in her class in the past. She said she had not been aware of any, but mentioned that FAS was prevalent in the Afrikaans medium classes.

4.3.2 Extrinsic factors

- *Inappropriate languages of teaching and learning (LoTL)*

I asked Mrs Coetzee about the selection and screening of children coming into the English classes.

Mrs Coetzee: Some slip through that can't speak English.
You start from scratch with the few that slip through.
Some children excel and do better than the ones whose home language is English.

The question that may need to be asked is how inclusive is Baobab School when screening learners as to their English ability when they apply for the English medium classes, especially at the Grade 1 level? Mrs Coetzee mentioned that some learners had done very well with the English language, even when they began with no English, illustrating that, for some, learning in a language not their home tongue may not be a barrier to learning.

- *Inadequate/inappropriate support services*

Mrs Coetzee felt there was inadequate support from the Department of Education and the DBST.

Mrs Coetzee: For example, if you fill in all those thick forms (SNA forms) that you submit to the department, they don't come back to you. They don't screen the child – nothing.
That is why we would rather refer them to the [Psychiatric Hospital].

She expressed her disillusionment with the Department and its failure to implement any support plan for learners experiencing barriers to learning at Baobab School. She felt that it was preferable for the school itself to try and put in place a support plan of its own for a particular learner.

Mrs Coetzee stated that the DBST had given workshops.

Mrs Coetzee: Some were very helpful and some you would just sit there and you waste your time.
There were the ones who also showed us how to fill in the SNA forms and all those things. Ja because it is a lengthy process. You fill them in, but nothing comes from that at the moment.
The one that I remember is for the use of laptops and laptop training. This was quite useful.
…..training us in how to use email, internet, short cuts and all things like that.
Interviewer: Did they say something about introducing laptops to children?
Mrs Coetzee: No, only for the teachers and principal.
It is more administrative things.
All the information is sent through to them as to the class, how many are in the class, how many Afrikaans speaking, how many English speaking, how many isiXhosa speaking. Even now for next year's intake, how many applied, how many were accepted, how many were rejected.

Mrs Coetzee stated that the DBST had provided some workshops on administration details in education. There had been no workshops, however, on the implementation of support for learners experiencing barriers to learning, from strategies for teaching of such learners, to providing resources or professional help needed by learners. There was also no computer training for learners provided by the DBST.

- *Poverty and underdevelopment*

I asked Mrs Coetzee about the support for those children whose parents could not pay for school uniforms.

Mrs Coetzee: The past principal, ….. , would send money sometimes for needy children. ……. The teachers would identify the really needy ones, then they would use the funds to buy for the really needy children.

The school and teachers had attempted to put a plan in place for the families who were really struggling financially by utilising donations given to the school.

- *Lack of parental recognition/involvement*

Mrs Coetzee felt the parents of her Grade 1 learners were involved and interested in their children's school and education.

Mrs Coetzee: I think most parents are involved. If you request to see them, then they would come. They are very interested and involved.
Interviewer: Do they help the children with homework?
Mrs Coetzee: Not all of them with homework.

I enquired about the parent workshops that were held at the school.

Mrs Coetzee: Quite a few parents have indicated they want to attend the workshops – around 40, but at the end there were 14 parents that attended the workshops for the 8 weeks.
Interviewer: What do you cover in these workshops?
Mrs Coetzee: Like languages and Mathematics. Like more about how you teach your child informally at home. Like games you can play with your child.
Doing Maths at home – ask your child to take out 6 potatoes, let's count the potatoes and see if you are right.
How to have good talking time with your children.
How important reading is. They even made their own booklets.
We write a checklist which we gave to them at the beginning of the workshop and at the end of the workshop, asking how regularly do you brush your teeth, how often do you read to your child, do you have good talking time?
And at the end of the workshop we gave them the same questionnaire and some of the parents there was an improvement.
And we encourage them to go to the library. You don't have to buy books. You can sit in the library. They have story time at the library. Some of them have done those things.

An attempt had been made by the school to involve and educate parents through the parent workshops. Only 14 parents had attended. Some constructive suggestions were made at the workshops to parents for the stimulation of their children and to encourage using such community facilities as the city library.

4.3.3 Other factors

I asked Mrs Coetzee further questions on the SBST at Baobab School and other details pertaining to the implementation of an inclusive education in the classroom.

- *School Based Support Team (SBST)*

Mrs Coetzee confirmed that Baobab school had a SBST and that it was made up of the principal, Heads of Department, and other teachers. I asked her what function the SBST fulfilled.

Mrs Coetzee: Like the children that have learning difficulties, they will sit with them, even fill in the forms, sit with the parents and tell them the problems, what they can do, refer them – liaising and organising.

The SBST provided a supportive and collaborative role for the learners experiencing barriers to learning and for their parents.

- *Strategies used to assist learners experiencing barriers to learning in the classroom*

I asked Mrs Coetzee what strategies she used to help learners experiencing difficulties in her classroom. She explained that she would seat the weaker learners close to her, or in the front of the class, and would seat a stronger learner next to a weaker one, so he or she could assist the weaker learner. This "buddy system" helps to support the weaker learners in the class.

Mrs Coetzee said that if a learner struggled with a concept, she would work with him or her individually, taking him or her through the process step-by-step to get to the final answer. She would use concrete resources, such as crayons, counters, or blocks, to assist a learner when doing sums, so he or she could manage the resources in order to better understand a concept.

She also would recommend having certain learners repeat the year if it was deemed necessary. This would help reinforce any concepts or fill any gaps with which they had struggled in the previous year.

- *Reading*

Mrs Coetzee stated that she had set books for her class. She used a large A3 book for the entire class to be able to see and read along with her, and the learners also read individually in groups, with each learner taking a turn to read.

Mrs Coetzee: The ones with learning difficulties find it difficult to read. They are beginning to recognise short, simple words.

The weaker learners struggled to read the large class book and set class reader. Mrs Coetzee explained she did not have a variety of standardised reading books and had to make do with copies of the set class reader. The learners struggling to read had to be taken through these books on an individual basis.

- *Difficulties experienced in implementing inclusive education in the classroom*

Mrs Coetzee explained the difficulties she experienced when working individually with a learner at the same time that she was having to monitor the rest of the class. Some learners in the class would complete their work and then become disruptive. She would have to interrupt her work with an individual learner to provide further work for the other learners. She felt that a teacher aid or remedial teacher could be of help in such a situation.

She also mentioned that there was a problem with the discipline of the learners to the extent that some had had to be suspended. She felt that a possible cause was the "background of the child", citing the case of a child who had had behavioural problems. She had come to school with a knife in Grade 3 at the time her father had just come out of prison. She was no longer at the school as "she is at the school for naughty children". Mrs Coetzee felt the behaviour of the children was getting worse with each year. She was concerned that the school did not have the capacity to manage those learners who were experiencing severe behavioural problems. This raises the question as to the school's approach to discipline and possibly illustrates the need for increased professional support for learners experiencing behavioural problems, as well as in-service training for teachers on how to manage learners experiencing these difficulties. The DBST has a critical role to play as to the support and training needed for schools, teachers and learners experiencing problematic behavioural issues.

- *Support Agencies*

Mrs Coetzee spoke of a number of agencies that had assisted Baobab School. These included the small classroom libraries from a local, non-profit organisation; the Mathematics resources from and workshops with a university initiative; the donation of books from a well-resourced fee-paying public school and independent schools; and the use of the sports fields and computers at a neighbouring independent school.

The importance of the support agencies to the school and learners was appreciated because this ensured the availability of resources, facilities, and training that would otherwise not have been available at Baobab School.

4.4 Interview with the Grade 2 Teacher

After one morning of classroom observations, I interviewed Ms Miya, the Grade 2 teacher. The interview was audio recorded and later transcribed. It was conducted in English as Ms Miya was fluent, and conversed well, in this language.

A summary of the findings from the interview is provided below.

4.4.1 Intrinsic factors

Ms Miya stated she had four learners experiencing intrinsic barriers to learning in her class at the time of the interview, and some were experiencing co-morbid difficulties.

There were two learners that she noticed who experienced visual difficulties.

Ms Miya: At the beginning of the year, I noticed that the child's writing was not good. Then I moved the child to the front. It got better, but I could still see there was something wrong. I informed the parent and the parent said she was going to look into it. Problem is that we have such cases whereby we inform the parent but, and they say they will look into it, but it never goes anywhere.
Interviewer: Do you have standard eye checks at school?
Ms Miya: No, not that I am aware of since I have been here.
         The second one (learner with visual difficulties), I know she has glasses, but she doesn't bring them to school.
         The last past terms she hasn't been bringing them, which is a problem, but she still sits in front. They can see the font because it is big.

It appeared that the visual impairments were not then barriers to learning for the two learners, even though the one learner had not had her eyes checked at the time of the interview, and the other learner who had glasses did not wear them. Ms Miya was sure that they both could still see what was written on the black board as they were seated at the front of the class. They could also read their books, as the font was in large print. This could become a potential barrier to learning, however, as they progressed through the grades: the seating situation could change,

the font size could get smaller, and there may be medical issues with the learners' eyes that should be seen by an eye specialist.

A third learner was Asanda, who Ms Miya felt experienced both learning and emotional difficulties. In our interview she explained that Asanda had lost his mother the previous year and consequently had missed a great deal of schooling during that year. She was concerned that he was experiencing not only learning difficulties from gaps in his schooling, but also emotional difficulties from the loss of his mother and a court case that was pending between his father and aunt concerning his custody. She had observed days when "he seemed to be in his own world", not being able to concentrate or focus on any lessons at school that day.

Ms Miya: He (Asanda) tries really hard for Maths. He still needs concrete and everyone else has exceeded that and they got a bit faster than he does. He still needs one-on-one time and concrete apparatus and more time spent with him explaining things.

Ms Miya realised the difficulties Asanda was experiencing and had put in place extra support for him. She was supporting him on an individual basis, using concrete resources to help him visually and physically conceptualise various Mathematics concepts. She also provided him with emotional support, gently watching over him on a daily basis. Asanda was referred to a psychologist and received counselling for the loss of his mother. Ms Miya later informed me that he would be repeating his Grade 2 year with her.

The fourth learner Ms Miya discussed experienced both health and emotional difficulties.

Ms Miya: The mother informed me she has been tormented because of her status. She was born H.I.V.
She (the learner) is closed in. You try and assist.
They (other learners) exclude her because of her status. The children know. A few of them know about H.I.V. and they are able to torment and stigmatise each other because of the things they know about each other.
She hasn't been able to come out of her shell. I find that she is very reserved and any time we try and say come we are going to play together, you will find she will sit on her own. She is not involved.
It also affects her learning and that she tries to do her work, but her focus just drifts away. She is not concentrating, so the work doesn't get finished and falls behind.
Health wise she is on medication.

Ms Miya was sensitive to the learner with H.I.V. and attempted to help her interact with the other learners. No mention was made of arranging to have her receive counselling with a

psychologist to help her cope with the illness and the stigmatisation she encountered from other children.

4.4.2 Extrinsic factors

- *Inflexible Curriculum – Reading*

Ms Miya explained that there was a standardised set reader for the term and all learners should be able to read it. This, however, was not always possible, as certain learners had not achieved the level of the set reader.

Ms Miya: …..but at the same time I have to take into consideration the level that the child is in, so to me it is giving them what they can read.
We spend more time with the ones that are struggling, giving individual time for the ones who need to go back to basics.
Interviewer: You had readers coming from [the] university – students?
Ms Miya: Yes ….. they (the students) come and assist the learners with reading and then read on the level the child is on. You see that there is some improvement with the reading one-on-one.
Next year they will come again for the Grade 2s.
There is also the [….] Centre for Maths and [a university initiative], and the donation of the libraries from Grades 1, 2 and 3.
The community gets very involved with supporting learners to learn.

Ms Miya expressed the need to spend more individual time with those learners who were struggling to read. It was beneficial to her and her learners that students from the university would come to help individual reading after which she saw an improvement in the reading ability of the learners. She was pleased that the programme with the students would continue in the following year. She mentioned her appreciation of the support from the community and other initiatives, such as the Mathematics workshops and the donated classroom libraries.

- *Inappropriate languages of teaching and learning (LoTL)*

Ms Miya confirmed that she taught in English.

Interviewer: How do you find learners whose first language is say isiXhosa or Afrikaans? How do you find they are when learning in English?
Ms Miya: Since they have started in Grade 1 with their English classes, then they have got the basics in communication in English and writing, then in Grade 2 we have to

> develop that. With some you notice that they are still reliant on their own home language to be able to identify the things in English, so if they are confused then I say it in their own language.

Ms Miya would assist learners with the understanding of an English word or term, by translating in the learner's home language of isiXhosa or Afrikaans. It was an asset and of benefit to the learners that Ms Miya was multilingual.

- *Inadequate/inappropriate support services*

I asked Ms Miya what support services she received from the Department of Education.

Ms Miya: It's a process from the Government. It is taking time. You go through the District Based Support Team (DBST), you fill in all the SNA forms.
Interviewer: Have you received any help from the DBST?
Ms Miya: This year I haven't gotten any help.
              I have been in contact with the parents a lot. So they advise that you find your own means before you go for trying the Department.
              So with Asanda, the Aunt took him to a psychologist on her own private [at her own expense].
              She works at [a psychiatric hospital], so that helped. So that is how she is getting these sessions for him. So he managed to go for psychological sessions and get psychological help.

Ms Miya sent completed SNA forms to the DBST, but had not received a response. There was no further feedback from them as to their receiving help for Asanda. Fortunately, his aunt could organise for Asanda to receive counselling with a psychologist at the psychiatric hospital at which she worked.

- *Inaccessible/unsafe learning environment*

Ms Miya felt the learning environment at the school was adequate. Her only concern was her small classroom into which her 36 learners and their desks and chairs could barely fit. When seated, Ms Miya and the learners had difficulty walking between the chairs. Ms Miya consequently did not have easy access to the learners at the back of the classroom. This could have resulted in a learner being overlooked if he or she struggled with a particular concept that was being taught.

- *Inadequate implementation of policies and legislation*

Ms Miya said she learnt about the policies and legislation on inclusive education at university.

Ms Miya: We had a lot of teaching on it. With the implementation of the policies and legislation, it is quite difficult. It is the tricky part.
Interviewer: Have you had further in-service training?
Ms Miya: Last year there was a meeting with social workers and one of the ladies from the Department who was present, on how to fill in a form for a child with difficulties in learning, which was quite helpful.
There are workshops on the processes of filling in a form, but the thing is we don't know what happens when it gets to the Department. We don't know what makes the process take so long when it gets there. There is no feedback.

Ms Miya stressed her frustration with the actual implementation of the policies on inclusive education. She felt there was no follow up or action after the completed SNA forms were sent to the Department of Education and DBST. She also made the comment that there was no in-service training by the Department for the implementation of inclusive education in the classroom.

- *Poverty and underdevelopment*

Ms Miya mentioned that the poverty and underdevelopment experienced by the learners was an on-going concern.

Ms Miya: There was a girl who came without a jacket over winter.
Interviewer: What did you do to help?
Ms Miya: Children leave things at school or others who make donations.
There are a lot of cases that you notice. Shoes torn, the well-being of the child. When you are cold and wet it is difficult to learn.

Ms Miya felt that the poverty of some of the learners affected their learning ability as they were at times cold and wet.

- *Lack of parental recognition/involvement*

Ms Miya said there was a lack of parental involvement.

Interviewer: Can you think of any way you could get them more involved?

Ms Miya: Difficult one, because some parents don't come to the school even if they are called by the principal. It is quite tricky.
Only a certain amount come to the workshop for the parents. It is the same people who come over and over again. The parents you need to see, you don't see.

Ms Miya was concerned that there were parents who were not involved in the well-being of their children at school, and did not even come to the school for meetings with the teacher or principal to discuss their child. There were only a certain number of parents who were continuously involved.

4.4.3 Other factors

I asked Ms Miya a few more questions about the SBST at Baobab School and the implementation of inclusive education in her classroom:

- *School Based Support Team (SBST)*

Ms Miya: I haven't approached them [the SBST]. I speak to the grade head about getting assistance.

Ms Miya had not felt the need to meet with the SBST as she always spoke to the head of her grade to find ways of supporting any of her learners.

- *Difficulties experienced in implementing inclusive education in the classroom?*

I asked Ms Miya what difficulties, if any, she experienced in implementing inclusive education in the classroom.

Ms Miya: Time constraints – I don't have enough time.
Learners cover different concepts at different paces. I am working with one learner that is slower and the others are already done and then there is a distraction and then in the end you have to split yourself, come and see this one and that one.
And learner numbers are a thing, and learning space is another thing.
You can't get less number of students, making the day longer would be stressful as they are little.

An extra teacher or teacher aid – that would be helpful.

Ms Miya was concerned with being able to cover and complete the curriculum with her learners within the year, especially while attempting to assist the slower learners and learners experiencing difficulties understanding certain concepts. She was also torn between these slower learners and the stronger learners who completed their work at a quicker pace.

She mentioned the large class numbers and the small space in her classroom, stating that there did not seem to be a solution to these problems, as the classes could not be made smaller in terms of the number of learners and the school day could not be made longer, as that would be too tiring for the younger learners.

She did, however, suggest a possible solution, that of introducing a teacher aid to the class to help her with all the learners.

- *Differentiated teaching and learning*

I asked Ms Miya if she had used differentiated teaching and learning in her class.

Ms Miya: I have done it at the beginning of the term, but then with the work load you tend to be focusing them (the learners) on catching them up, and doing their work individually with them.
Interviewer: How is it for you as a teacher?
Ms Miya: It is a big workload. You have to plan properly to play it out in the classroom.
Interviewer: Would you need more resources?
Ms Miya: Definitely. Everyone would need their own things at those levels.

Ms Miya had attempted to introduce the teaching strategy of differentiated teaching and learning at the beginning of the year to her class, but found the work load was too great. She felt she did not have sufficient time to plan properly or sufficient resources to ensure the effectiveness of this particular strategy.

- *Assessments*

I asked Ms Miya how she assessed the learners in her class.

Ms Miya: Marking, observing them, spelling test.
Each term we send out reports.

We let the parents know, and some will respond and others don't.

We let the parents know they (the learners) are having challenges and how they can help at home as well.

Interviewer: Have you had a child repeat a year?

Ms Miya: This year I am going to have to, but there is another thing – age.

The Department says that if you have kept the child back one year, you have to send them on. I have had to send a girl on to Grade 3, but she was still catching up Grade 2 work.

I will be keeping back Asanda. He hasn't been kept back yet. He is going to be the only one.

Ms Miya assessed her learners through observation in the classroom, by marking the learners work on a daily basis, and with weekly spelling assessments. A term report was sent out to the parents. If there was a learner she was concerned about, she would ask to meet with the parents to discuss their challenges, and to offer recommendations as to what could be done to assist their child. If it was found necessary for a child to repeat the year, the parents would be informed, as long as the learner had not already repeated a year in the same phase.

- *Challenges experienced*

I ended the interview by asking the final question of whether or not there were any other challenges that Ms Miya experienced in the classroom.

Ms Miya: Parents and their involvement, which is crucial. When you see your Mom is coming to school and wants to know what you are doing at school and how they can help you while you are at school, it is also encouraging, and when you don't see that, it is also discouraging to the child.

Language, because they do come from different language backgrounds, but it is also helpful because the Afrikaans learners and Xhosa learners can help others when learning the other languages – sharing of languages.

Bigger classroom, more space.

More resources would be good to have and a teacher aid.

Ms Miya expressed the importance of having the parents involved with their children at the school; this would have a positive effect on their child if they were seen to be interested and invested in their child's education. The opposite would occur if they were seen to be uninterested. She felt that the uninterested and uninvolved parents continued to be a challenge for the school.

She stated that another challenge was attempting to teach in English to learners who had different home languages. She did mention, however, that there was a positive side to learners having a variety of home languages, as they could help each other in understanding the other additional languages taught, such as isiXhosa and Afrikaans.

She repeated the need for a bigger classroom and more resources, as well as the need for a teacher aid to assist in the classroom.

4.5 Interview with Grade 3 Teacher

I conducted a brief interview with Mrs Snyman during the first break on the day I observed her classroom. She did not allow me to audio record her, so I made notes during the short interview. She was also fluent in English. I only had time to discuss the learners she perceived to be experiencing intrinsic barriers to learning in her class before first break ended.

4.5.1 Intrinsic factors

I asked Mrs Snyman how many learners she thought experienced intrinsic barriers to learning in her class. Her response was that she had seven such learners.

She stated that Agatha, the learner who had had a stroke when she was younger and had been in Mrs Coetzee's class for two years, was one of the learners experiencing both physical and intellectual disabilities in her class.

Mrs Snyman: She is very slow and behind the others.
I have tried to meet with the mother, but she has never come (to discuss Agatha's difficulties with Mrs Snyman).

Mrs Snyman stated that she spent extra time with Agatha giving her the necessary individual support that she needed. She also gave her extra time to complete her work as she was very slow. She felt she would have benefitted by repeating the Grade 3 year, but could not because learners could only repeat one year in a phase, and Agatha had already repeated Grade 1 with Mrs Coetzee. She had attempted to meet with Agatha's mother; however, this had not been successful, possibly due to Agatha's mother being too busy: she worked at a restaurant and often worked late. With no collaboration with the mother, it would have been difficult for Mrs

Snyman to plan and put in place more extensive support systems for Agatha throughout the year.

Mrs Snyman spoke of the other six learners having ADHD.

Mrs Snyman: I have quite a lot of learners with ADHD.
One boy I have put in front of the class because he is so distracted and does nothing.
Some have been put on Ritalin. The psychologist gives them Ritalin.
I can see when they haven't taken the Ritalin. It is very clear.

Mrs Snyman stated that she had six learners with ADHD in her class. Some of the learners had seen a psychologist and Ritalin had been prescribed for them. At times a learner would forget to take his or her Ritalin and Mrs Snyman would notice the difference and realise that the medication. This illustrated the positive and definite effect that the medication had on the learners, calming them, and helping them to focus in the classroom. She found that seating some of the learners at the front of the class helped ensure they remained focused and it was easier for her to redirect them if they were distracted.

4.6 Emergent factors from the interviews

There were a number of factors that emerged from the interviews with the three foundation phase teachers. They were as follows:

4.6.1 Intrinsic factors

Mrs Coetzee had had learners experiencing visual, physical, and intellectual barriers to learning in her class, as well as learners experiencing learning difficulties and behavioural problems.

Support plans had been put in place for some of the learners. This was seen in the one case with the provision of glasses for the learner with a visual impairment; in another case where physiotherapy, counselling, and individual learning support was arranged for Agatha, the learner that had had a possible stroke at a young age; and finally, in the case of Lulama, the learner experiencing behavioural problems, who was provided with medication and received counselling. This support was provided by the school, teacher and the local community. No

support was forthcoming from the Department of Education and the DBST for over a year, and in Agatha's case almost three years, even though applications had been made by the school by sending through the completed SNA forms.

Bhule had an unfortunate start to his education, when the school he attended became an unsafe environment and was closed down. This was an historical extrinsic barrier to learning for him. He remained at home, receiving little educational stimulation, until he was fortunate enough to be able to attend Baobab School. When entering the school, he had had no English and was far behind the other learners in Mrs Coetzee's class. He had developed intrinsic and extrinsic barriers to learning, experiencing learning difficulties in class, as well as having an inappropriate language of teaching and learning. Mrs Coetzee was able to provide him with additional learning support to help him learn English and to catch up and close the gaps he was experiencing in education in her class.

Mrs Coetzee spoke of a learner, Liyema, who did not seem interested in learning. Little was done to investigate the reasons behind his lack of interest, to obtaining feedback from his parents, or to have him psychological and scholastic assessments. There may have been a number of underlying reasons for lack of interest. It is of concern that if the correct support plan is not put in place for this learner, he will fail to be properly educated, and would fall further and further behind the standards of his year.

Mrs Coetzee spoke of a case of a learner's experiencing behavioural problems who could not be accommodated by the school. The girl was eventually sent to "the school for naughty children". This is a distressing situation, as the education system is failing to provide the best possible support for young children who are struggling in a broken-down social environment. Baobab School has a Code of Conduct which is followed in cases of disciplinary issues with their learners. They are not equipped, however, to manage situations of extreme violence and had to let this particular young girl go. There were no structures put in place by the DBST to support Baobab School in this instance.

Ms Miya had learners experiencing visual and emotional barriers to learning in her class, as well as learners experiencing health problems and learning difficulties.

The two learners experiencing visual barriers to learning had not been successfully accommodated, as the parents of the one learner had not responded to Ms Miya's concerns, so this learner had not had her eyes assessed. The parents may have avoided having their child assessed due to the implications of cost. The second learner had had her eyes assessed and had

received glasses; however, she did not wear them at school. She may have misplaced them, kept on forgetting to bring them to school or did not like wearing them. The possible visual barrier to learning could become of far greater concern in later grades for the learners, when the font would become smaller and more difficult to read. This would in turn affect their ability to read and learn. This difficulty could be remedied by the learners seeing an eye specialist and then wearing their glasses.

A support plan had been put in place for Asanda, the learner experiencing emotional and learning difficulties due to the loss of his mother the previous year. He received support in the form of counselling, individual learning support from Ms Miya, and repeating his Grade 2 year.

Finally, no support plan had been put in place for the learner experiencing health problems and emotional difficulties, who had been diagnosed as H.I.V. positive at birth. The learner was struggling to concentrate at school and was falling behind in class. She was being stigmatised by her peers and there was no support in the form of counselling for her or the education of the teachers, parents and other learners at school regarding her condition. The Department of Education had not arranged for the professional training of teachers for best practice in supporting learners who were H.I.V. positive.

Ms Miya had not approached the SBST concerning any of her learners experiencing barriers to learning, though she had sought advice from her head of department. She had not filled in any SNA forms for the learners during the year, as she felt it was preferable for the school to find its own solutions for assisting learners.

Mrs Snyman had one learner experiencing physical and intellectual barriers to learning and six learners that she felt had ADHD.

It was interesting to observe Agatha's progress through the grades in the foundation phase at Baobab School. She had started in Grade 1 in Mrs Coetzee's class, repeated the year there, and was now in Mrs Snyman's Grade 3 class. It was clear that she needed support throughout the grades. Mrs Snyman was concerned that she had not received sufficient support during her year and was falling further behind. She would have liked her to have repeated another year in Grade 3; this, however, was not possible as the education policy stipulates that a child can only repeat one year within any learning phase, such as, in Agatha's case, the foundation phase. Mrs Snyman had also had no feedback from or collaboration with Agatha's mother or the DBST. She could, therefore, only provide support within the classroom, with one-on-one tuition and by granting extra time to complete her work. It was not clear how Agatha coped with higher

level understanding and learning in the class. This would become more evident as she progressed up the grades.

The learners with ADHD had been accommodated by receiving medication which assisted them with concentration and focus. Mrs Snyman also seated one of these learners in the front of the class, on his own, so that he would not distract, or be distracted by, other learners. I was not able to establish how these learners had been assessed or how the diagnosis of ADHD had been reached. The psychologist had recommended, and the doctor at the clinic across the road, had prescribed, the medication.

Learners having FAS were discussed, but were not experienced by the teachers in the English medium classes. Mrs Coetzee suggested that the teachers in the Afrikaans medium classes may have had learners in their classes who were born with this condition.

4.6.2 Extrinsic factors

The three teachers spoke of a number of extrinsic barriers to learning. These included:

- Inappropriate languages of teaching and learning (LoTL): learners who could not speak English were unable to enrol into the English classes at Baobab School. A few learners with no spoken English did manage to enter the English classes and it appears that they were successfully accommodated.
- Inadequate/inappropriate support services: the Department of Education and the DBST provided no such support, no follow-up or feedback even after the SNA forms had been sent to the DBST. There was also no professional in-service training for teachers provided by the DBST on the implementation of inclusive education in the classroom.
- An inflexible curriculum and inadequate resources in the case of reading: there were only a few standardised books with differentiated reading levels enabling all learners at different reading levels to read. Ms Miya had made an attempt to introduce differentiated teaching and learning which could provide a flexible curriculum adapted to varying levels of competence, but because of lack of resources and limited time for preparation the load became too much for her to continue.

- Poverty and underdevelopment resulting in the poorer learners having to rely on donations for school clothes. Ms Miya felt that wet and cold children found it difficult to learn and that there were a number of cases of learners who fell into this category.

- Lack of parental recognition/involvement with only the same few parents becoming involved with their children's learning and attending parent workshops. There were parents who did not respond to the principal or the teachers when asked to come in for a meeting concerning their child.

- The learning environment was inadequate for the learners in Ms Miya's class as the classroom was too small for the number of learners in the class. All three teachers felt there were time constraints, insufficient resources, and staff shortages at the school.

- Educational and scholastic assessments were inadequate and not always available to assess learners experiencing barriers to learning, making it difficult to determine the actual needs of the learners.

4.6.3 Other factors

Other factors which arose included the following:

- *Inclusivity*

The question that arose when conducting the interviews was how inclusive was Baobab School? The policy of the school was to have a maximum of 36 learners per class. The teachers felt that this number of learners was too high, making it difficult for them to ensure sufficient teacher-learner time and attention. The selection of learners for the English classes required that learners should be able to understand and speak English. Mrs Coetzee spoke of a few learners who had slipped through the selection process who had been enrolled in her class knowing no English at all. Baobab School did not allow unlimited enrolment of learners of any language.

- *SBST*

The SBST were providing a collaborative and supportive role to the learners experiencing barriers to learning and their parents. The learners would be discussed with the respective parents and support plans would be put in place using the school's resources and professional help from the community. The necessary SNA forms were filled in and sent to the DBST, but no follow-up or feedback was forthcoming from the Department of Education.

- *Learning Support Strategies*

The three teachers used a number of learning support strategies. These included the deliberate seating of weaker learners next to stronger learners, seating them in the front of the class, or next to the teacher's desk. The teachers would work individually with these learners, and used concrete and semi-concrete resources where possible. They would also allow them extra time to complete their work, and if need be, they would repeat the year.

- *Challenges*

The teachers felt that it was challenging to manage a large class of 36 learners and at the same time deal with learners experiencing barriers to learning who needed individual and undivided attention. Mrs Coetzee also felt that the discipline of learners was an increasing concern because behavioural issues among learners was increasing over the years and the school was finding this difficult to manage.

- *Support Agencies*

The teachers were grateful for all the support received from various initiatives in the community. These initiatives assisted in areas such as free assessments and counselling for learners, workshops for the teachers and parents, donated resources and the classroom libraries, as well as the free use of facilities at fee-paying schools. Baobab School would not have been

able to provide the more effective on-going learning support to their learners without the assistance of these initiatives.

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter provides an overview of Baobab School and presents the findings from the questionnaires and interviews with three foundation phase teachers, and includes factors which emerge from these findings. The next chapter presents findings from the classroom observations of the engagement of the teachers with their learners and their inclusive practices in the classroom, and considers factors emerging from these findings. A synthesis is then provided from the information that emerged from the questionnaires, interviews and observations.

CHAPTER FIVE

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION: OBSERVATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of my classroom observations of the three foundation phase teachers. The one morning observation of the Grade 1 classroom was done before I interviewed the teacher, so I observed the class without knowing of any learners who might be experiencing barriers to learning. In the case of the Grade 2 teacher, I did one morning of observation first, then interviewed the teacher, and finally did the more intensive week-long classroom observation, when I knew that one of the learners in her class was experiencing barriers to learning. Finally, I did a morning of observation of the Grade 3 class, then a short interview with the teacher during break time on the same day and was informed of two learners experiencing barriers to learning in her class on that particular day.

I present my findings below by providing a summary of classroom observations and selected lessons in the three foundation phase grades and follow this with the factors that emerge from these observations.

Finally, I collated the factors in the overview of Baobab School onto a table, showing the emergent factors of the teacher interviews and the classroom observations. The table provides a synthesis of these factors to see quickly and clearly, and to connect them to Walton's and Nel's inclusive spider's web analogy, which is a heuristic used in the following chapter which discusses my findings.

5.2 Grade 1: Classroom observation

I observed Mrs Coetzee's classroom for a morning of lessons. I did not take video recordings; however, I did make detailed field notes. As I had not as yet had an interview with Mrs Coetzee, I did not know of any of the learners in the class who were experiencing barriers to learning. I remained seated at the side of the classroom, to the one side of the teacher's desk. I did not circulate as I wanted to remain as unobtrusive as possible.

5.2.1 Lesson 1:   **Mathematics Lesson**

Duration: 2 hours
Concept: Working with the number 20

Mrs Coetzee started her lesson at 08h30 after she had her learners revise, by reciting out loud together, their counting, the 2x, 5x and 10x tables, the days of the week, and the months of the year, in both English and Afrikaans. This focused on rote learning, the most basic form of learning required of the learners for recalling facts and basic concepts. This illustrates the need for learners to memorise and remember facts by going over them on numerous occasions.

Mrs Coetzee told the learners to take out their Mathematics textbooks, to sharpen their pencils and to write the date at the top of the page. She was very particular with her instructions, making it clear what she expected of them. Mrs Coetzee proceeded to review the previous lesson's number, the number 19, with the learners, illustrating the connection of the previous Mathematics lesson with the current one, working with the number 20. They each had a copy of the 100s counting table in front of them, a semi-concrete tool, to assist the learners to work with the numbers 19 and 20.

Mrs Coetzee: Can you show the number 19?
Learners: They pointed to the number 19 on the 100s table.
Mrs Coetzee: What number comes before 19?
Learners: 18 (they pointed to 18 on the table)
Mrs Coetzee: What number comes after 19?
Learners: 20 (they pointed to 20 on the table)

Mrs Coetzee then went on to work in the textbook with the number 20 with the learners who had to practise writing the number 20 and its number name.

Mrs Coetzee: What numbers are in the number 20?
Learners: 2 and 0
Mrs Coetzee: Trace the number 20 and the number name.

Mrs Coetzee spent time walking around the class, to check the learners work in their textbooks. As I was seated to the one side of the classroom, I could not see how and what the learners were writing, but Mrs Coetzee seemed happy with the learners' work.

In the middle of the Mathematics lesson, at 09h10, Mrs Coetzee asked the learners to line up to get their breakfast. They went to the kitchen to get their hot meal, returned, and stood behind their desks. After saying their prayers, they sat down to eat their meal. They then stacked their

plates at the door, washed their hands in a large basin of water in the corridor and fifteen minutes later returned to their desks to resume their Mathematics lesson. In my view the meal interrupted the flow of the lesson and was distracting to some of the learners as it took some time for them to settle back to their work. Mrs Coetzee attempted to minimise the disruption by making the process as quick and orderly as possible. It took a further five minutes for them to settle down before Mrs Coetzee could resume the lesson. She instructed the learners to sit at their desks with their 100s number tables in front of them and to look up at her, so she knew when they were ready. She continued the lesson by asking her learners the following:

Mrs Coetzee: What is 20 minus 1?
Learners: 19
Mrs Coetzee: What is 20 + 1?
Learners: 21
Mrs Coetzee: One more than 20 is?
Learners: 21
Mrs Coetzee: One less than 20 is?
Learners: 19
Mrs Coetzee: Turn to the next page (in their exercise books). Join the number with the number word. Listen carefully. When I talk, you keep quiet and you listen.

The learners referred to their 100s number tables when answering Mrs Coetzee. She kept on refocusing her learners by reminding them to be quiet. The learners proceeded to match the list of numbers to the list of number names in the textbook by drawing a line between them.

Mrs Coetzee walked around the class checking that the learners were doing their work correctly. A learner seated in the front of the class was having difficulty matching the number to the number name. She responded by asking him to look at the first letter of the number word "two" while to recognise and read the word. He said "t". He then realised that "two" began with the letter "t". Having recognised the word, he drew a line joining "2" with "two". Mrs Coetzee thus had demonstrated to the learner the technique of recognising unknown words, by looking at the first letter and sounding it out, helping him break up, sound out and regroup a word, to ascertain what the word was. Mrs Coetzee may have seated this learner at the front of the class deliberately as he may have been experiencing learning difficulties and would need extra help from her.

The lesson concluded with Mrs Coetzee's asking the learners to place their books in the middle of their tables before going out for first break.

5.2.2 Lesson 2:   Writing exercises – the letter "u" in print form

                        Duration: 1 hour 20 minutes

Mrs Coetzee commenced the next lesson at 10h45 by asking a learner to hand out their writing books. She gave short, clear instructions to the learners.

Mrs Coetzee: Please sharpen your pencil. Take out one crayon. It must not be yellow or black.
                Stop talking. Some children are not listening.
                Put your pencils on your book. Eyes on the board.

In giving these instructions to the learners, Mrs Coetzee was demonstrating on the board the technique of writing in print. She began by drawing the pattern for "u".

Mrs Coetzee: Skip a line. I put my finger there so I know I must skip a line.
                Do the pattern in colour. Do not write with yellow because I cannot see yellow.
                Do not lift your crayon.
                Write slowly. No need to rush.
                Don't lift your hand up when you do the pattern.
                Do not colour in.

Mrs Coetzee had her learners use a colour for the pattern to make it stand out and to separate the pattern from the actual letter writing, helping the learners readily to see the difference. She walked around the class observing the learners writing their pattern across the page and seemed satisfied with most of the learners' writing. She helped one learner hold her crayon correctly, by using the "pincer grip" with her thumb and first two fingers. She ensured that the learners were writing their pattern neatly and between the lines.

The writing of the pattern repetitively across the page helped the learners to improve and strengthen their fine motor ability and letter writing technique.

When the learners had completed the pattern, Mrs Coetzee continued to demonstrate by writing a capital "U" and lower case "u" next to it on the board a few times.

Mrs Coetzee: Write on the line next to the margin.
                Write a capital "U" in two lines, turn, and go up.
                Put your finger under your pattern, next to the capital "U" and write a small "u".
                Don't press so hard.
                Now I am going to do the whole row.
                Use one finger space, do your capital "U" and small "u".
                Come down, go round, come up, go down on the same line.
                Complete the whole row until you have no more space.

Mrs Coetzee modelled exactly what and how the learners needed to write, explaining and breaking down every step in the process. Once again Mrs Coetzee walked around the class observing the learners writing the letter "u" using a pencil. She reminded one learner that he was not using one-finger spaces between his "u's" and another that she was not touching the line. These suggestions were made in passing and seemed not to be directed at a learner who may have been experiencing learning difficulties. The other learners seemed to be doing their writing to her satisfaction. I could not see the learners' work as I was seated to one side of the classroom and, not wanting to distract the learners, I remained in my seat.

Mrs Coetzee continued by writing some words with the letter "u" in them on the board, illustrating the progression and scaffolding of writing the letter "u", from the repeated pattern, to writing the upper and lower case, to words with the letter "u" in them and finally the writing of full sentences.

Mrs Coetzee: I will write the word "up".
What am I going to do first?
Put your finger down first.
Now write "up".
Now write "us".
A longer word "bus"
What sound does "bus" start with? A "b".
I want a long word. "U" for "umbrella".
The word "umbrella" has two "l's".
I am going to write a sentence on the board.
I am going to skip a line. (Mrs Coetzee wrote "Una uses an umbrella" on the board).
I start the sentence with a capital letter. I start a person's name with a capital letter. What comes at the end of a sentence? Yes, a full stop.

Mrs Coetzee walked around the class checking the learners' writing. Once again, she seemed satisfied with the learners' work as she nodded her head and praised some of the learners. She then proceeded to write the multiples of 2 (from 2 to 14) on the board to have the learners practise writing their numbers, reminding them to use one finger spaces between the numbers. She emphasised the importance of spacing between words and numbers, so as to be able to recognise them correctly. Finally, she ended with the "u" pattern again ensuring they used their pencil crayons. She continued to walk around the class praising a few learners saying "Keep it that way. Nice writing".

She then instructed them to close their books and place them in the middle of the table when they were finished. One learner in front was slower than the others, so the learners had to wait

quietly until he had completed his writing. She accommodated this learner by allowing him extra time.

5.3 Grade 2: Classroom observation

After one morning of observations of Ms Miya's classroom taking detailed field notes and after a one-on-one interview with her, I observed her class for an entire week. I took video recordings during the week, with her written consent, as well as detailed field notes. As the learners became used to me, I started to walk around the classroom, observing and videoing them and Ms Miya more closely. I was aware of only the one learner, Asanda, experiencing barriers to learning as I observed the class. The other learners experiencing barriers were not pointed out to me.

5.3.1 Lesson 1:   Mathematics Lesson

Duration: 1 hour 50 minutes
Concept: Mixed multiplication by grouping, repeat addition, skip counting

Ms Miya's lesson commenced at 08h00 with the learners' practising their counting forward from 160 to 200, out loud together, and in 10s from 110 to 200. Not all the learners took part in the counting. Some were initially distracted by the video cameras and a couple of boys were not interested in counting out loud. The counting required little understanding, but concentrated only on rote learning through repetition. It could be seen that this form of learning did not engage all learners effectively, with some being distracted and others seeming uninterested.

Ms Miya then began the mixed multiplication lesson by asking the question:

Ms Miya: Who can tell me what "three 3s" make? (She drew 3 groups of 3 small circles on the board.) Yes, Anathi (pseudonym).
Anathi: 6
Ms Miya: Let's count again, Anathi. Let's count them together. What do they make?
Learners: The learners counted the circles in the groups on the board whilst Ms Miya pointed to them. They came to the answer of 9.

Ms Miya then counted in 3s asking the learners to count with her, pointing at each grouping in turn, 3, 6, 9. She also wrote on the board 3+3+3 = 9, thinking aloud as she did so. She then went on to ask:

Ms Miya: Tell me how many "four 4s" make? Let's go for it.
Langa: 16
Anathi: 12
Mbulelo: 24
Ms Miya: Langa says 16, Anathi says 12 and Mbulelo says 24. Let's see.

Ms Miya proceeded to draw 4 groups of 4 circles and wrote up 4+4+4+4.

Ms Miya: How many 4s. 4 of them. Let's count them altogether.

The learners counted out loud together while Ms Miya pointed to the circles, and arrived at the answer 16.

Ms Miya: Let's count in 4s. Let's go for it.
Learners: 4, 8, 12, 16.

It could be seen that Ms Miya was attempting to demonstrate the concept of grouping and continuous adding by using various examples of semi-concrete drawings on the board. Leading up to the concept of multiplication, she then asked the following question:

Ms Miya: We worked out a sign we already know, "times". (She drew the character "x"
             on the board). So, times, what does it mean? You tell me, what do you have to
             do when you see that sign?
Learners: Times
Ms Miya: Let's try it with a sum.

Ms Miya wrote up 5 x 2 on the board and asked the learners what this came to. Some learners replied with 10.

Ms Miya: How did you get to 10?
Learner: Double the 5
Ms Miya: What do you mean by doubled?
Learner: Put two 5s together.
Ms Miya: If we write it as a plus sum, how should we write it?

Ms Miya wrote 5 + 5 = 10 on the board.

Ms Miya: We come to the same number.
Ms Miya: Let's go to another one.

Ms Miya wrote 6 x 3 on the board and asked Phumla (pseudonym) to come and do the sum on the board for the class. She was actively involving a learner.

Ms Miya: Come show us.
Phumla: She wrote 6+6+6 = 18
Ms Miya: Phumla did it as a plus sum and still got to the same answer. There are different ways of answering.

While observing the learners during the lesson conducted above, I saw that not all were engaged and following the processes being carried out on the board. One learner, Cebisa (pseudonym), seated at the front of the class, had her back to Ms Miya, turning around only a few times briefly to watch her. The learner opposite her, Fundiswa (pseudonym), was drawing in a book in front of her and only occasionally looked up at the board. Ms Miya did not ensure that all the learners were turned to face her and were focusing on the lesson and the concept being taught. The consequence was that she had to explain the process again at a later stage to these two learners (see below).

Ms Miya instructed the learners to get out their Mathematics exercise books and to open them at page 106 for mixed multiplication. She read out the instructions in the book and went through the first example given in the yellow box at the top of their exercise books on 5+5+5=15, 3 groups of 5 is 15 and 3 x 5 = 15 or 5 x 3 = 15. She asked the learners to look at the table below using the example in the yellow box to guide them. There was a further example given in the first row of the table which Ms Miya went through and then the learners were asked to complete the other three empty rows in the table. The learners began to work in their exercise books and Ms Miya walked around observing their work.

Ms Miya seemed unhappy with the learners' understanding of what they had to do so, a few minutes later, explained with another example which she wrote on the board. This possibly illustrated that not all the learners had followed the previous examples, either because they were not focused and concentrating on the lesson or because they were unable to follow the logical reasoning of the process.

She drew 5 columns on the board, once again explaining to the learners that they needed to write in the numbers for skip counting (6, 12, 18), draw in the groups with small circles (000000, 000000, 000000), repeat addition (6+6+6), write "3 rows of 6" and finally write the times sum of 3 x 6 = 18 and 6 x 3=18 in each of the columns (see Figure 5.1 below).
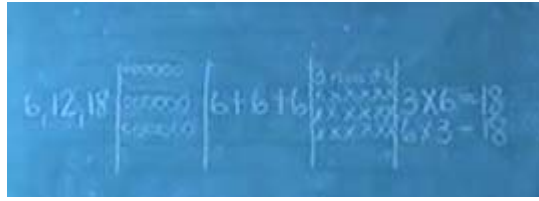
Figure 5.1: Demonstration of mixed multiplication on the board

The learners began to do the exercises and Ms Miya walked around the class checking the learners as they worked. She spent extra time on an individual basis with three learners who were struggling with the exercises.

The first learner was Fundiswa, who had not paid attention during the lesson. Ms Miya rubbed out the work she had done so far and went through the first exercise again with her. Cebisa, the learner opposite Fundiswa, also listened to Ms Miya explaining the exercise to Fundiswa and was then able to continue with the exercises in her book. This would not have been necessary, possibly, if the two girls had been made to pay attention earlier in the lesson. Their being seated in front did not necessarily ensure that they were concentrating on the lesson.

The second learner, Bongani (pseudonym), was at the very back of the class. He had engaged with the lesson, as I saw him raise his hand on a few occasions. He, however, became confused with the conceptualisation of the number of groups and the amounts in each group. He was confused by the difference between the two exercises in the book, because the first exercise had 4 groups of 3 circles and the second exercise had 3 groups of 4 circles. Ms Miya took out a container of colourful discs or counters to help demonstrate the difference visually and physically. She had Bongani count out each group and the number of counters in each group. He could then see the groups clearly. She had used counters as an aid to assist Bongani because he had struggled to understand the semi-concrete drawings of groups of circles in the textbook (see Figure 5.2 below).

Figure: 5.2: Grouping with counters

By observing the work done by a couple of learners next to Bongani, it was clear to me that they too had not understood the reasoning process of mixed multiplication and so were doing their exercises incorrectly. Ms Miya was busy with Bongani and, therefore, was unaware that these learners also were doing their work incorrectly and she was not able to assist them all at the same time (see Figure 5.3 below). I also noticed that a poor example was given in the exercise book, which may have added to the confusion of the learners; there were 4 groups of three circles shown under equal groups, and there were 3 rows of 4 crosses printed under the arrays (see Figure 5.3 below).

Figure 5.3: Incorrectly done worksheet

The final learner was Asanda. He was seated in the front of the class, next to Ms Miya's desk. He had not begun the exercises, seeming unsure as to what to do and seemed to have persistent difficulty with the logical reasoning and critical thinking process of repeat addition, grouping and multiplication. He was extremely shy, lacked confidence and had low self-esteem. Ms Miya sat next to him and quietly worked with him.

Ms Miya demonstrated to Asanda, one-on-one, the concept of 3 groups of four by drawing the circles in his exercise book. She showed him how to group the circles into 3 groups of four, which would then represent 4+4+4=12 or 3 x 4=12. She then had him add all the circles in the groups asking him how many there were. He answered with 12. She went on to say to Asanda:

Ms Miya:	Remember this is times, asking you to repeat something. Now show me this with 5 rows of 6.
Asanda:	He slowly started drawing the circles in the 5 groups with 6 counters in each group with the assistance of Ms Miya. He was very hesitant and kept looking up and checking with Ms Miya.

Ms Miya did not use the counters with Asanda, but used only the semi-concrete drawings of the group of circles.

While Ms Miya was working with these learners on an individual basis, some of the learners had completed their exercises and approached her to have their work marked. They interrupted her when assisting struggling learners. The noise level in the class also began to increase and Ms Miya responded by saying:

Ms Miya:	Once you are done with your Maths, get a book from the corner (classroom library). (Some of the learners went across and selected a book to read).

Using the library meant the learners could practise their reading and it would keep them occupied as well. The lesson ended at 09h50 with Ms Miya's instructing the learners to line up to go and get their hot meal.

5.3.2 Lesson 2: Mathematics lesson

Duration: 2 hours
Concept: Halving

The lesson began at 08h00, this time with the learners' practising counting backwards from 200 to 170. The learners were more focused in this lesson, possibly because counting

backwards requires more concentration and does not come as easily as does counting forwards. Asanda used his fingers when counting down from the 10 to the 1 between 200 to 190, 190 to 180 and 180 to 170, visibly seeing how many fingers were left when counting down. Ms Miya commenced the lesson by asking a question.

Ms Miya:	Now I want to know what I mean when I speak of a half. What do you have to do when you cut in half?
Learner:	Take an orange and cut it in half.
Learner:	Fractions.
Ms Miya:	There is a half in fractions. I am talking about let's say 10 sweets and somebody says share them in half.
Learner:	Each child will get 5.
Ms Miya:	How many children will there be?
Learners:	2
Ms Miya:	2. Okay, what else do you know about halves? Vusi is trying to have a conversation, please listen.
Vusi:	Sharing an apple into 2.
Ms Miya:	Sharing an apple for 2 children is also a half. (She drew the apple cut in half on the board shared between 2 stick figures). Each child must get the same amount, almost the same size, so equal sharing.

Ms Miya illustrated halving by using an example of cutting an apple in half and sharing it between two people. She drew two half apples on the board with two stick figures underneath them, demonstrating that each stick figure received half an apple.

Ms Miya then used another example of halving by getting a group of 8 learners on the one side of the classroom to come up to the front of the class.

Ms Miya: So, if we are sharing, where would we share in the last row?

The learners in the front of the class conversed amongst themselves and then split into 2 groups of 4 each. Some of the other learners in the class shouted out 4 on each side.

Ms Miya continued by instructing one of the learners to sit down and asked where would we share in half? There were 7 learners, so she responded by saying we have 3 and 3 and we will cut the one learner in half. She continued by having one learner sit down each time, until the last two learners were left and they were halved, 1 and 1 on each side. All the learners were engaged with this example, visibly seeing the process of halving. Ms Miya had made the lesson more interesting for the learners by involving them in an activity that demonstrated the significance of halving.

Ms Miya: Always equal sharing and two parts.

Ms Miya went on to present examples of sharing 24 cupcakes and 30 bananas in half and various learners answered with 12 and 15 respectively. She then asked the learners to take out their Mathematics workbooks, to write the date and "Halving" as the heading. She wrote some exercises on the board for the learners to attempt (see figure 5.4 below).
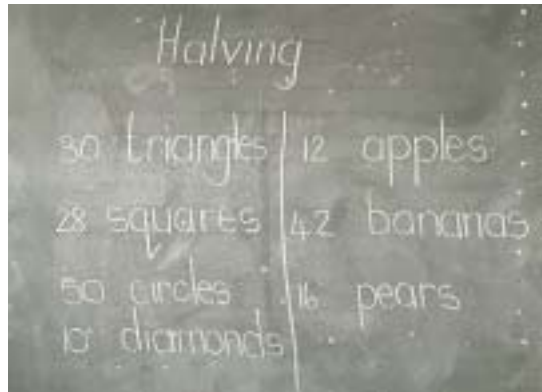
Figure 5.4: Halving exercises

The learners started working in their Mathematics workbooks, while Ms Miya walked around the classroom checking the learners' work and helping individual learners who were having difficulties with the concept of halving. She spent a full 20 minutes assisting Asanda with the understanding and logical reasoning of the concept of halving.

To help Asanda with the concept Ms Miya used concrete objects. She handed Asanda a container of red beads. The sum on the board was to halve 30 triangles (see illustration Figure 5.5 above).

Ms Miya:	Count the beads first. There are 30 beads. (The beads represented the 30 triangles to be halved).
Asanda:	He slowly counted out 30 beads.
Ms Miya:	Share them in half. (She drew a line on the page in his exercise book and showed him the process of sharing and halving by placing one bead on either side of the line).
Asanda:	He continued to place one bead at a time on either side of the line.
Ms Miya:	Now count the beads on one side of the line.
Asanda:	He slowly counted the beads, struggling to get to the correct amount of 15.

Asanda had difficulties holding and counting the beads. This could have been due to his fine motor ability or the difficulty of counting correctly.

Ms Miya decided to get out her container of the larger colourful counters. This was easier for Asanda to manipulate as they were flat and larger in size. She had Asanda count out 30 counters and to once again place them on either side of the line. She then asked him to count the number

of counters on the one side of the line. This time he found it easier to count out the correct amount of 15 counters on each side of the line. She then asked him to attempt the next sum of 28 squares.

Ms Miya had visually and kinaesthetically shown Asanda a technique of halving a set number of counters by placing them, one at a time, on either side of the line. He was sharing the counters between the two sides. She was extremely patient and encouraged Asanda by gently prompting him through the process.

Some of the learners followed the way Ms Miya had demonstrated with an example on the board, and drew the number of objects to be halved in their text books, such as 10 diamonds, then drawing a line half way between these drawn objects (after 5 diamonds), representing halving them. They used semi-concrete drawings to help them visualise the halving of the objects.

The lesson ended with Ms Miya's asking the learners to line up to get their hot meal of the day. Asanda and a few other learners had not yet completed their work.

5.3.3 Lesson 3:   Mathematics Lesson

Duration: 1 hour 20 minutes
Concepts: More than, less than, the difference

The lesson began at 08h20 after school Assembly, which was held every Wednesday morning. Ms Miya started the lesson off with a game called "I wish that I had ….". She opened a package of new Mathematics resources, which included large charts, large foam die, and large colourful Lego blocks. She told the class that she had received them at a workshop the previous afternoon. She introduced the game to her class using a large, bright blue, foam dice.

Ms Miya: We are going to play a game called 'I wish that I had…' and you are going to tell me how many more I will need from the number I am showing you on the dice, so as to get to the number that I wish that I had.

Ms Miya then held up the dice showing the number 4.

Ms Miya: Here is the number 4. I wish that I had 20. How many more do I need?

The learners responded enthusiastically, some with the correct answer of 16 and others with incorrect answers. Ms Miya then guided them through until they had established the correct answer. She was demonstrating the process of "adding on" in a fun game and continued to play this game using several other examples.

Ms Miya then handed out to each learner in the class 6 large colourful Lego blocks. There was great excitement with all the learners talking at once. Once the learners had received their 6 Lego blocks and settled down, Ms Miya proceeded with the lesson.

Ms Miya:	Put one Lego on top of the other. Leave it like this. (She held up the 6 Lego blocks which were stacked on top of each other). What do you notice about your Lego?
Learner:	Rainbow colours.
Learner:	3D shape.
Ms Miya:	What 3D shape do they remind you of?
Learner:	A rectangular prism.
Ms Miya:	Yes. What else?
Learner:	They are the same number, 6
Ms Miya:	Yes, each of you has 6 Lego. Now give 3 to your friend.

The learners worked in pairs and one learner handed the other learner 3 of his or her Lego blocks.

Ms Miya:	How many does your friend have?
Learners:	9
Ms Miya:	How many do you have now?
Learners:	3
Ms Miya:	Now take 5 from your friend. How many do you have?
Learners:	8
Learners:	4
Ms Miya:	How many would you give your friend for your friend to have the same?
Learners:	2
Ms Miya:	Put your Lego in the middle and keep your hands away from them. Listen carefully.
Ms Miya:	I have 12 blocks and my friend has 6. How many more blocks do I have than my friend?
Learners:	6
Ms Miya:	Yes, I have 6 more than my friend.

Ms Miya was demonstrating through a paired activity how many more than or less than the learners each had, learning visually to compare their Lego blocks. Ms Miya went through a couple of examples and then asked the learners to get out their workbooks. She wrote a word sum on the board and the learners began to work it out.

Word sum: Tom has 16 marbles. His friend has 9. How many more marbles does Tom have?

Ms Miya went and sat at Asanda's group table (the desks of 6 learners were pushed together). She asked the learners to make one stack of 16 Lego blocks and another of 9 Lego blocks to represent the 16 marbles and 9 marbles. They then held the stacks next to each other so as to see the difference. They saw that the longer stack had 7 more blocks than the shorter stack. This was an effective way of visually and kinaesthetically recognising the difference between the blocks (see Figure 5.5 below).

Ms Miya: Answer: Tom has 7 more Lego than his friend.
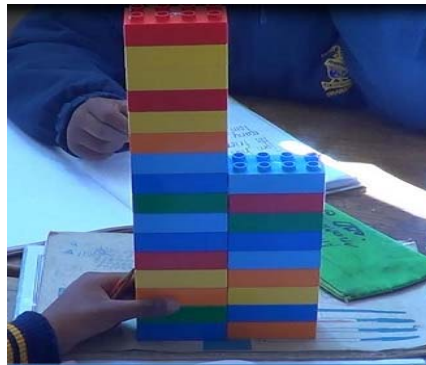
Figure 5.5: Visually seeing the difference between two amounts with two stacks of Lego Blocks

Observing some learners at another table, who had calculated their answer as 16 + 9 = 25, Ms Miya realised that they had not understood what was being asked of them by the word sum. In deciding to illustrate further, Ms Miya wrote another word sum on the board, and demonstrated the process of working out the difference the same way she had done at Asanda's group table, but now to the entire class.

Word sum: Anne buys 12 bananas. Nick buys 8. How many more bananas does Anne have?

To illustrate the workings of this sum to the class, Ms Miya had two learners come up to the front of the class. She had the one learner hold up a stack of 12 Lego blocks and the other learner hold up a stack of 8 Lego blocks. They then held the blocks up against each other, so that the learners could see the difference between the two stacks, and that the longer stack had 4 more blocks than the shorter stack had.

Ms Miya: Answer: Anne has 4 more bananas.

The lesson was interrupted at 09h40 as the learners had to line up to get their hot meal and they then went into first break. At 10h30 the learners resumed their lesson by sitting at their desks

to continue their Mathematics word sums for another 20 minutes. Ms Miya spent further time with a girl, Nceba, who continued to find it difficult to understand the concept of more than and less than. In observing some other learners in the class, I noticed that the number sentences in their books illustrated that they had also not understood what the word sums were asking of them. One learner had written 9+7=2 and another had written 9+7=7. This illustrates the difficulty some of the learners had in interpreting the word sums.

At 10h50 Ms Miya asked the learners to place their books in the middle of their desk and she went on to her English lesson.

5.3.4 Lesson 4: **English Lesson**

Duration: 1 hour 10 minutes
Concept: Synonyms

The learners came in to class after first break and Ms Miya was writing "synonyms" on the board. She then wrote "big, happy, fast, pretty" underneath. She proceeded to speak to the class.

Ms Miya: I want you to think and tell me some words that mean the same thing as these words. (She pointed to the words big, happy, fast and pretty).
Learner: Big and small
Ms Miya: Does this mean the same thing?
Learner: Large
Ms Miya: Big and large mean the same thing. Small means the opposite. Who can think of a word the same as small?
Learner: Tiny

By using the examples, the learners gave to her question, "what word has the same meaning as 'big'?", Ms Miya showed what words had the same meaning as big, such as large, and what words had the opposite meaning, such as small.

She wrote other examples on the board and the learners themselves offered enjoy, excited, joy and glad for "happy", speedy and quick for "fast", and beautiful, cute and attractive for "pretty". Ms Miya wrote these synonyms on the board, and then handed out worksheets to each learner and pointed to the word "synonyms" on the board.

Ms Miya: Here is a word and it is pronounced syn-o-nyms. Let us say it together. (The learners' repeated synonyms after Ms Miya). What does it mean?
Learner: The same meaning.

Ms Miya: Words that mean the same thing. Words that have the same meaning. Let's read the worksheet together (see Figure 5.6 below).
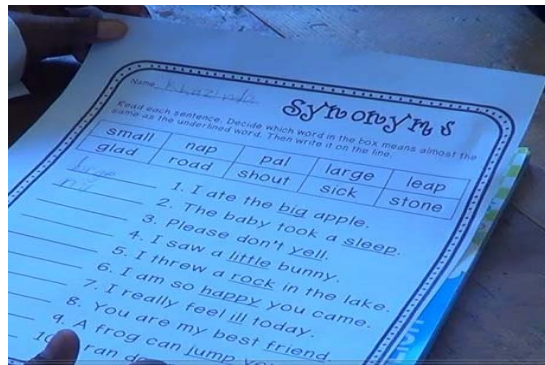
Figure 5.6: Synonyms worksheet

Ms Miya read through the entire worksheet with the learners, and explained that they were to write the correct synonym taken from the box of words, place it next to the given sentence, and then "cross out the word you have used so you know you have used it". She gave clear instructions demonstrating the process of selecting and placing the synonyms next to the correct sentence.

Ms Miya: I ate the big apple. What word is the same as big? Try to find it in the box. Write it on the line.

The learners were told to cut and paste their worksheet into their English workbooks and then to start working.

Ms Miya sat next to Asanda. He had difficulty reading and understanding the meaning of some of the words, such as "leap", so would guess the synonym incorrectly. Ms Miya went back and read each of the words in the box to him, asking him their meaning and explaining their meaning when he didn't know. She then asked him to find the word in the box that had a similar meaning to the underlined word in the sentence, going through each sentence with him and watching him write the correct word on the line. At this time some of learners became disruptive and noisy, and Ms Miya admonished them, saying "it looks like 4 people are staying in at break'. She was also interrupted a few times by learners approaching her to have their work checked and marked.

Ms Miya asked the learners to put their hands up when they had completed their worksheet and she went around marking their work. It was not clear if Ms Miya had had a chance to mark all

the learners' work nor if she was able to ascertain if all the learners had understood and correctly completed their worksheet.

5.3.5 Lesson 5:   Phonics Lesson

> Duration: 30 minutes
> Concept: Phonetic sound "ar"

On Monday Ms Miya introduced the phonetic sound and words for the week.

Ms Miya:	We are going to move on to phonics. (She wrote "ar" on the board).
Ms Miya:	Say the sound "ar"
Ms Miya:	Looking at me. What's the sound?
Learners:	They said "ar"
Ms Miya:	Tell your friend the sound.
Learners:	They said "ar" to each other.
Ms Miya:	Write the sound on the back of your friend.
Learners:	They wrote on each other's backs.
Ms Miya:	Think of a word that has the sound "ar" in it. Raise up your hand.
Learners:	Far, car, farm, barn, arm, art, bar, large, park, star, hard (Ms Miya wrote the words on the board).
Ms Miya:	Read the words from the top.
Learners:	They read the words on the board.

Through many different ways of using the phonetic sound "ar", from sounding it out, to writing it on a friend's back, to coming up with different words with "ar" in them, Ms Miya was reinforcing the phonetic sound "ar" among her learners. She used auditory, visual, and tactile learning styles to help the learners memorise the sound.

These words then became the learners' spelling words for the week, which were to be learned for their homework in preparation for the spelling test held every Friday. In going over the words, Ms Miya told the learners to read the word, then to close their eyes and spell it out loud. This modelled the process of learning their phonics words for their homework. The phonics words are illustrated in Figure 5.7 below.
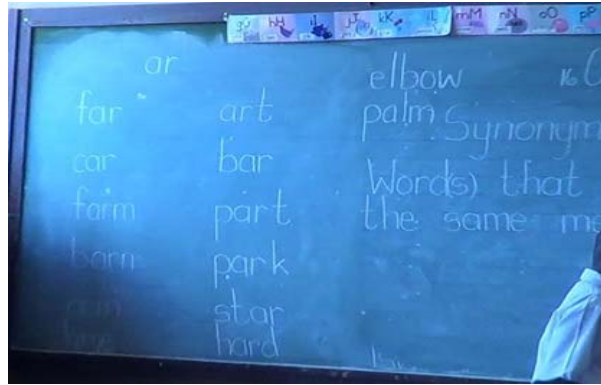
Figure 5.7: "ar" phonics words

The learners wrote the words in their phonics workbooks and were instructed to choose four words and then to write four sentences with these words. Ms Miya reminded them not to forget capital letters and full stops for each sentence and she walked around the class checking their work. She praised a few of the learners saying, "Some nice sentences". Once again this helped the learners reinforce their sense of the "ar" sound, and having to place the various "ar" words in context in a sentence, establishing the meaning of the words.

On the Friday morning Ms Miya instructed her learners to take out their spelling assessment books for their spelling test on the "ar" words. Ms Miya proceeded to read out the spelling words for the learners to write down in their books. She said the word and then used the word in a sentence to place it in context.

Ms Miya: Hard. It is not easy, but it is hard. The word is hard.

The spelling test was one of the methods of assessment Ms Miya used to establish the progress of her learners.

At the end of the test she had the learners read out all the words back to her. She then walked around the class marking the learners' books. Ms Miya approached Asanda and repeated some of the spelling words that he had missed for him to write down.

I did not see Ms Miya record the marks of each learner for their spelling test, but this could have been done at a later stage.

5.3.6 Lesson 6:   **Reading Lesson**

Duration: 30 minutes

On Monday at 12h30, Ms Miya instructed certain learners to go to their reading lesson with a university reading programme initiative. It was explained to me that these learners were each paired with a university student to assist the learner with reading out loud on an individual basis.

The remaining learners were asked to read in pairs to each other, having selected a book from the classroom library. They each took turns reading a page to each other. Ms Miya approached two of the learners reading together and asked them to show her the word "went" and the word "after", and pointed to a word in the book, asking "What is this word?", verifying whether the learners recognised certain words in the book they were reading. This helped Ms Miya establish each learner's sight reading and word recognition.

Ms Miya then sat next to Asanda. They looked at the front cover of his book together and discussed it. The book was entitled "Keep the Change". She used her finger to follow the words in the book as she read along with him (see Figure 5.8 below). Ms Miya referred to the pictures by pointing to them, (I could not hear what was being read). Ms Miya demonstrated techniques that Asanda could use when reading a book, such as using the illustrations to help provide the context of what was being read and using a finger to help track the word being read.

Figure 5.8: Ms Miya reading with Asanda

Later in the week, in another reading lesson, Ms Miya instructed her learners to get out their reading file and turn to the photocopied reading entitled "Hannah the Hero". She asked the entire class to read the text together, using their fingers to point to the words being read. Two

learners struggled to follow the text, their fingers not pointing to the correct word being read out loud by the class. Asanda did not join in the reading out loud. The reading material was possibly too difficult and at too high a level for some of the learners to follow comfortably. There was not enough time for Ms Miya to discuss what was read with her learners before the bell went for lunch.

5.4 Grade 3: Classroom observation

I spent a morning observing Mrs Snyman's class. I did not take any video recordings; however, I made detailed field notes. I was aware of there being two learners experiencing barriers to learning in her classroom.

5.4.1 Lesson 1: Writing exercises – the letter "e" in cursive writing
Duration: 45 minutes

I joined Mrs Snyman's class at 09h00 in the morning. I sat quietly on the one side of the classroom, remaining as unobtrusive as possible. The learners were just completing their Mathematics lesson and were preparing to begin their cursive writing lesson. Mrs Snyman began the lesson giving short, clear instructions to the learners and demonstrated the writing process on the board. She had to stand on a chair to reach the board, as the board was above a row of cupboards.

Mrs Snyman: Write the date, neat and tidy handwriting, capital letter between 3 lines. I count 1, 2, and 3 and start on the third line.

Mrs Snyman first demonstrated doing the pattern "e" on the board, stating that "we leave no spaces". She walked around the class, between each step of writing on the board, checking the learners work. She then went on to demonstrate writing a capital and lower case "e" in cursive and repeated this a few times on the board. The learners quietly and carefully wrote the letter "e' across the page. They then copied Mrs Snyman by writing a sentence in cursive with the letter "e" in it, namely "Elam eats eight sweets". Mrs Snyman took her learners through the

process step-by-step allowing the learners to follow her easily and the slower learners to complete each step.

At this point the learners were asked to line up to go and get their hot meal which interrupted the flow of Mrs Snyman's lesson. They resumed their cursive writing thereafter. The learner, Agatha, with physical and intellectual difficulties, was very slow and did not complete her cursive writing by first break. She was allowed to continue with her writing after break. Mrs Snyman accommodated her slower learners by allowing them extra time.

5.4.2 Lesson 2: Class reading

Duration: 20 minutes

After break, Mrs Snyman set up her reading stand with a large A3 "sunshine" book entitled "The Terrible Tiger". She had all her learners sit on the carpet in front of the stand. One learner was disruptive and over-excited, so Mrs Snyman had him sit next to her, close to the stand, keeping a close eye on him. She explained to me later that he was one of her ADHD learners. Mrs Snyman pointed to the front of the book and then paged through the book with the learners looking at the illustrations giving the learners an overview of the story and the technique of using the illustrations to help read of the text. She encouraged the learners to predict what they thought might happen in the story.

Mrs Snyman: Look at the cover. What do you think the story is about?
Learners: A snake, a rope, a tiger. (On the front cover only the tail of the tiger was visible).
Mrs Snyman: The title of this book is "The Terrible Tiger". (She pointed to the words as she read them).
The author of the book is "Joy Cowley". (She pointed to the author's name).
The illustration was done by "John Francis". He drew the pictures.
What can you tell me about the picture?
Learners: I see a girl and a boy and a butterfly. They are holding sticks. They are going to make a fire.
Mrs Snyman: What do you think will happen next? Okay, let's see.
They are going in the jungle. They are going down the hill.
What do you think will happen now?
Learners: They are following the footprints of the animal.
Mrs Snyman: What can you tell me about this picture now?
Learners: Blue bird. Yellow grass. Burnt from the sun. It is autumn.
Mrs Snyman: What do you think will happen on the next page? What is this?
Learners: A snake. A tiger.
Mrs Snyman: Why are they running away?
Learners: Because they saw a tiger.

Mrs Snyman: Where are they running?
Learners: Home.
Mrs Snyman: How will the story end?
Learners: They are going to tell the parents.
Mrs Snyman: What does scamper mean?
Learners: Run.
Mrs Snyman: Let's read the story.

Mrs Snyman proceeded to read the story along with the learners. Not all the learners read along with her. This could have been due to the level of reading being too difficult for some of them, or that they were distracted, or that they preferred to just listen.

At the end of the morning, for the final 15 minutes, Mrs Snyman handed out reading books entitled "Proudly South African". She asked the learners to sit in pairs, with one book between them, and to practise reading to one another. This ensured that all the learners had a chance to practise their reading. She walked around the class listening to the learners, stating that they should give the reader a chance to read the word first and if he or she struggled with the word, then he or she could help him or her. Mrs Snyman explained the technique of paired reading to the learners and how they should help each other when reading.

5.4.3 Lesson 3:   **English**

Duration: 40 minutes
Concept: Verbs – present and past tense

Mrs Snyman began the lesson on verbs by asking a question.

Mrs Snyman: Can you still remember what a verb is?
Learners: An action word.
Mrs Snyman: Yes, an action word like run, jump, swim, read, hop, cook, drive, write, dance. Those are all verbs. We can write verbs in present and past tense.

Mrs Snyman gave examples of action words and then proceeded to stick a sheet of paper on the board with examples of verbs in the present and past tense, such as buy – bought, fall – fell, eat – ate, catch – caught, and fly – flew. She went through the verbs on the sheet and then instructed the learners to take out their exercise books. The activity they had to complete was to draw what they had done over the weekend and to write a sentence for each picture in the past tense, using verbs in the past tense. Mrs Snyman reminded the learners that not all verbs in the past tense ended with an "ed", but that the "whole word changed".

The learners began to do their drawings and write their sentences. As I was on the one side of the classroom, I was unable to see the work of the learners. The learners were, however, engaged in their work, and remained seated at their desks, while a low hum was heard in the classroom. Mrs Snyman once again walked around the class reminding the learners about various factors, such as stating that they should write in full sentences. At the end of the lesson the learners were asked to hand in their exercise books. I could not determine whether or not learners had completed their work.

5.5 Emergent factors from the classroom observations

There were a number of factors that emerged from the observations of the three teachers' classrooms.

- *Supportive classroom environment*

The classroom environment was gently but firmly controlled by Mrs Coetzee. The learners were constantly reminded, rather than scolded or reprimanded, to be quiet whilst working. When she spoke to the learners, she told them to put down their pencils and to look at her, ensuring they were focused on her when she gave the next instruction. She could also check that all of the learners were paying attention and were not distracted by something else. Consequently, Mrs Coetzee did not have to repeat parts of her lesson continuously.

The learners were quiet and engaged in Mrs Coetzee's lessons. The structure, routine and discipline were well established and there were few distractions because of unruly behaviour. If the noise level increased by too much, Mrs Coetzee would inform the learners to quieten them down. This environment would have made it easier for any learners who found it difficult to focus and concentrate as there were few distractions and noise.

The learners responded to Mrs Coetzee's questions and put their hand up to ask a question when they were unsure about something. Even though Mrs Coetzee had a strict routine and process in her class, the learners were comfortable about asking and answering questions. This was because she encouraged questions and answers from her learners. So, because they felt they could approach Mrs Coetzee for help, learners who were struggling to grasp a concept, benefitted considerably.

The classroom environment in Ms Miya's class was always busy, happy and relaxed. There was often a "hum" in the class, which would rise substantially at times and then would be brought back to a more manageable level by Ms Miya.

Ms Miya was a calm and quietly spoken teacher, who very seldom raised her voice and when she did, it was only to be heard and it was not in anger. When the class became noisy, she would quieten the learners down in a firm, clear voice.

She had established a routine in her class, which the learners understood and adhered to, such as saying good morning at the start of the day, lining up row by row before break, saying their prayers before meal times, and writing up their homework at the end of the morning.

Some learners, however, would become distracted or were not focusing or concentrating on the lesson. There was continuous movement in the classroom, with learners standing up, walking around the classroom, and leaving the classroom. This added to the distractions in the class.

The learners were comfortable to ask and answer questions, not fearful of giving the incorrect answer. Ms Miya did not admonish a learner if the answer was incorrect, but would redirect the learners to find the correct answer. This was illustrated in the English lesson on synonyms when Ms Miya asked the class to give her some examples of synonyms and a learner responded with big and small, rather than large (5.3.4 Lesson 4). Ms Miya explained they were opposites and began to guide the learners to find words that were similar to both big and small.

In the Mathematics lesson on repeated addition and groupings (5.3.1 Lesson 1), and to explain learn the concept of multiplication, Ms Miya once again did not say to a learner that she was incorrect, but encouraged her to rethink her answer and to recount the groups to come up with the correct answer.

Ms Miya verbally praised and encouraged her learners, where she commented to the learners as she was walking around the class during the phonics lesson (5.3.5 Lesson 5), "Some nice sentences". She acknowledged some of the learners' creative sentence writing and praised them for working constructively. This would help motivate the learners to continue working creatively.

In Mrs Snyman's class the learners worked quietly at their desks. She did not have to overly control the noise level in her class. She later informed me that five of the boys that were ADHD

were away for a hockey tournament, so her class was quieter than usual, as the boys were not there to disrupt her lessons. One of the boys with ADHD was sitting at a desk on his own up at the front of the class, next to the blackboard. He did become excited when the learners were asked to sit on the carpet at the front of the class for reading (5.4.2 Lesson 2). Mrs Snyman had him sit next to her during the reading lesson to make sure he did not become disruptive.

Mrs Snyman did not raise her voice to the learners, but clearly and firmly gave instructions. The routine and boundaries seemed to be well established in the classroom. The learners seemed to be relaxed and comfortable, and understood what was expected of them.

Mrs Snyman praised some learners as she walked around her class checking their work. She affirmed that they were doing their work correctly and neatly. This was encouraging to the learners she praised. She praised Agatha's handwriting when she practised writing the cursive letter "e" (5.4.1 Lesson 1), being aware of the difficulties she experienced with writing due to the stroke she had had when she was younger.

- *Reviewing the previous lesson*

On most days Mrs Coetzee and Ms Miya spent five to ten minutes at the beginning of the first lesson of the morning reviewing numbers and times tables with their learners, and in Mrs Coetzee's class, the days of the week and months of the year in both English and Afrikaans. This was a form of rote learning for the learners to review and memorise them.

Mrs Coetzee reviewed the number 19 from a previous lesson, before she went on to her lesson of working with number 20 (5.2.1 Lesson 1), and reminded them what they had done before; this helped to make a connection with the next number on which they were working.

- *Clear instructions and repetition*

Mrs Coetzee and Mrs Snyman gave short and clear instructions throughout their writing lessons, when practising writing the letter "u" (5.2.2 Lesson 2) and the letter "e" (5.4.1 Lesson 1) respectively, as well as repeating the instructions a few times. This was important as the learners needed to follow precisely how to write the letters and numbers in the lesson, learning the correct technique to write in print. They realised the learners' attention span was short, and still in need of careful development, without overwhelming the learners with too much information at one time. By using short, clear instructions and by repeating the steps, they

seemed satisfied with the progress of their learners in writing and that they were accomplishing what they had set out to do. This also applied to the learners who were slow and had difficulties with the writing technique. The repetitive pattern and letter writing would also help the learners develop and strengthen their fine motor ability in their writing hand.

Ms Miya gave short, clear instructions to her class, repeated them a few times, and made sure the learners understood what was asked of them and that they were following through. This was clearly seen in the lessons on synonyms and the phonetic sound "ar" (5.3.4 Lesson 4 and 5.3.5 Lesson 5).

- *Modelling using think-aloud techniques*

Mrs Coetzee modelled the writing of the letter "u" on the board in print, step-by-step for the learners (5.2.2 Lesson 2), clearly describing the process, of coming down, around and up, as she wrote. The learners could see and hear how to write the letter and they copied the process in their exercise books. This would assist learners with differing learning styles, whether auditory, visual or kinaesthetic.

Mrs Snyman also modelled writing the cursive letter "e" on the board for the learners, using think-aloud techniques (5.4.1 Lesson 1).

Mrs Snyman: The capital letter we write like this. Look at my hand. I use four fingers, but how many do you use? You use one finger (for spacing between the letters).

This teaching strategy assisted the learners to see and hear exactly what to do and how to go about writing a particular letter in cursive.

Ms Miya modelled the process of grouping and repeat addition using think aloud techniques when introducing the concept of mixed multiplication (5.3.1 Lesson 1). She wrote on the board, and spoke to the class at the same time explaining the process of repeat addition and grouping. This physically demonstrated the process the learners were to follow in their textbooks.

- *Use of a variety of examples*

Ms Miya used a variety of examples to teach a certain concept. When teaching the concept of halving (5.3.2 Lesson 2), she used examples of cutting an apple in half, drawing a picture of two half apples on the board and sharing it between two stick figures; she asked a group of 8 learners to come up to the front of the class and to split the group in half; she drew 30 triangles

on the board and a line to halve them, with 15 on each side of the line; and beads and counters were used to halve the given amount.

Many examples were given by Ms Miya for phonics "ar" words and both Mrs Coetzee and Mrs Snyman gave a variety of examples of words with "u" and "e" in them in their writing lessons.

Mrs Snyman gave a variety of examples in her lesson on verbs in both present and past tense (5.4.3 Lesson 3) to give ideas to the learners when they were told to do an exercise describing what they did over the weekend while using verbs in the past tense.

- *Accommodating different learning styles*

All three teachers actively accommodated the different learning styles of the learners, from auditory, visual, tactile or kinaesthetic learners. The teachers spoke about and demonstrated certain concepts, having the learners listen and watch, and then they had them practise the concept, such as in Mrs Coetzee's and Mrs Snyman's classes when learning to write in print or in cursive (5.2.2 Lesson 2 and 5.4.1 Lesson 1).

Concrete resources were used in Ms Miya's class when the learners physically manipulated Lego blocks, beads, or counters in their Mathematics lessons, which provided not only visual but tactile and kinaesthetic means of learning (5.3.1 Lesson 1, 5.3.2 Lesson 2 and 5.3.3 Lesson 3).

- *Active involvement of learners*

In introducing a concept, Ms Miya, actively involved her learners. This was seen in the Mathematics lesson on halving (5.3.2 Lesson 2), when a group of 8 learners came to the front of the class to stand in a line, and she asked them to split the line into two equal halves of 4 learners. Ms Miya had a learner, Phumla, come up to the front of the class and demonstrate, by drawing on the board, an equal number of groups in Mathematics (5.3.1 Lesson 1). She also had her learners actively work in pairs, with their Lego blocks, on the concept of more than, less than, and the difference (5.3.3 Lesson 3), having two learners come up to the front of the class, using the Lego block stacks held up next to each other, to show the difference to the class.

- *Scaffolding*

Scaffolding was used by Mrs Coetzee with both the teaching of working with numbers, moving through the numbers on the 100s table (5.2.1 Lesson 1), to the teaching of writing the letters in the alphabet in print (5.2.2 Lesson 2). She worked with a number at a time per Mathematics lesson and a letter at a time per writing lesson. Scaffolding was also illustrated in the writing lesson, when Mrs Coetzee started with the pattern, then proceeded with writing the upper and lower case of the letter "u", then words with "u" in them and finally the writing of a sentence with "u" in the words of the sentence. The tasks and activities were broken down by Mrs Coetzee into achievable chunks, which helped the learners to gain confidence in their abilities without becoming anxious, especially in the case of slower learners. This was also seen in Mrs Snyman's class when she demonstrated writing the cursive letter "e" (5.4.1 Lesson 1), and each stage was practised before she moved on to the next stage.

When Ms Miya used scaffolding, she broke a concept down into smaller pieces and gradually built it up for her learners. There were numerous examples of this, such as in the mixed multiplication lesson (5.3.1 Lesson 1), when she broke the concept down into grouping and repeat addition, and also during the halving lesson (5.3.2 Lesson 2), when she used the concept of sharing between two people.

- *Supportive Reading techniques*

The teachers used various techniques to assist their learners with reading.

They had them look at and use the illustrations in the books to help them understand the context of what they were reading. They discussed the illustrations first before they started to read the text. They also encouraged the learners to predict what might happen in the story (5.3.6 Lesson 6 and 5.4.2 Lesson 2).

When reading, the teachers encouraged the learners to break up and sound out a word they were unsure of (5.2.1 Lesson 1). They would discuss the meaning of these words, so the learners could better understand what was being read. They also had the learners use their fingers to help them track the words as they read (5.3.6 Lesson 6).

- *Use of concrete resources*

Mrs Coetzee used the semi-concrete resource of the 100s table for the learners when working with the number 20 (5.2.1 Lesson 1). They could then see the numbers before and after the number 20 and where the number 20 lay in the 100s table.

Ms Miya often used concrete resources in her Mathematics lessons to help demonstrate a particular concept. She used large colourful Lego blocks as a concrete method of introducing the concept of more than, less than, and difference (5.3.3 Lesson 3). She had the learners use concrete beads and counters in two other lessons, when she demonstrated the concepts of multiplication and halving (5.3.1 Lesson 1 and 5.3.2 Lesson 2). This provided both a visual and a kinaesthetic means of learning about a particular concept, and helped learners manipulate concrete objects.

- *Working in pairs and groups*

Ms Miya had her learners work in pairs in the Mathematics lesson which introduced the concepts of more than, less than and difference with the Lego blocks (5.3.3 Lesson 3). The learners were asked to compare their Lego stack of blocks with that of their friend. She also had a group of learners at Asanda's group table work together with the two stacks of Lego blocks, so that comparing them revealed the difference between the two stacks. This encouraged the learners to discuss among themselves the process and the concept, and helped them come up with the answer together.

Ms Miya (5.3.6 Lesson 6) and Mrs Snyman (5.4.2 Lesson 2) had their classes pair up for reading, asking the learners to take their book and read to each other. This was a non-threatening process of practising reading out loud.

- *Individual/one-on-one support*

Individual support was given when Mrs Coetzee helped a learner hold her crayon correctly (5.2.2 Lesson 2) and when she prompted a learner who was trying to read the word "two" (5.2.1 Lesson 1). It was important for Mrs Coetzee actually to illustrate to the one learner how to hold her pencil correctly. She helped the learner place her thumb and fingers on the pencil. The other

learner was learning the technique of breaking down, sounding out, and reconstructing a word and Mrs Coetzee provided him with the individual support while he practised this process.

Ms Miya spent time with a few learners on an individual basis and in particular with Asanda. I observed Ms Miya patiently working with Asanda on numerous occasions, such as on the concepts of mixed multiplication, halving, and more than, less than, and difference during her Mathematics lessons (5.3.1 Lesson 1, 5.3.2 Lesson 2 and 5.3.3 Lesson 3). She also worked individually with Asanda during the English lesson on synonyms (5.3.4 Lesson 4) and the reading lesson (5.3.6 Lesson 6).

- *Minimising noise level and interruptions*

While Ms Miya was working individually with a learner, some of the learners had completed their work and became restless and noisy (5.3.1 Lesson 1 and 5.3.4 Lesson 4). She responded by saying:

Ms Miya: Grade 2, there is a lot of standing up. Sit down please! There is a lot of noise. Anathi you are out of your chair again.

While working with one learner, other learners came up to Ms Miya pressing her to have their work checked and marked (5.3.1 Lesson 1 and 5.3.4 Lesson 4) which was distracting for the particular learner with whom Ms Miya was working.

- *Continuous Assessments*

Ms Miya did weekly spelling assessments with the learners in her class, giving out words to learn every Monday on a particular phonetic sound, such as "ar", and then testing the learners on these words every Friday (5.3.5 Lesson 5). She would remind the learners of how to go about learning their words and would include the learning in their homework every day.

- *Accommodations*

Mrs Coetzee allowed for additional time for a slower learner to complete his work in her class (5.2.2 Lesson 2).

The learners with visual difficulties in Ms Miya's class were seated at the front of the class so as to be able to see the board and Asanda was seated close to Ms Miya's desk at the front of the class so that she could easily keep an eye on him.

Extra time was given for the slower learners in Ms Miya's class, while the other learners who had completed their work, were asked to get a book from the corner classroom library (5.3.1 Lesson 1) and to read.

Ms Miya also allowed Asanda additional time for the spelling test at the end of the week, repeating some of the words for him to spell (5.3.5 Lesson 5).

Mrs Snyman accommodated the slower learners, such as Agatha, by allowing them additional time to complete their work (5.4.1 Lesson 1).

5.6 Synthesis of emergent factors

In the table below, I have provided a synthesis of all the factors that emerged from the interviews and observations above and have linked them in Chapter Six, in the discussion of my findings, to Walton's and Nel's spider's web diagram of an inclusive school (2012). In so doing, I established whether the factors were at a macro or micro level.

The macro level refers to the inclusive education policies, the school and its inclusive culture, and the broader community support structures. The micro level refers to the teachers and their teaching and learning practices in an inclusive classroom. This level also includes the learning support provided to learners experiencing barriers to learning.

Walton and Nel focus more on the macro level in their spider's web diagram of an inclusive school, with only three of the radii, namely instructional practices, assessment modification and individual support, focusing on the micro level. On entering the classroom and by observing the teacher and learners, I found that I went deeply into the micro level of inclusive education and an inclusive classroom.

Table 5.1:   Synthesis of the emergent factors

	Emergent factors	Includes:	Level
1.	The Learner – intrinsic barriers to learning	- visual impairments - physical impairments	

		- intellectual impairments - emotional/behavioural difficulties - health difficulties - learning difficulties - ADHD and FAS	micro
2.	The School – an inclusive culture		macro
3.	The School – inclusive policies		macro
4.	Poverty and underdevelopment	- infrastructure - too small classrooms - too many pupils per class - staff shortages - resource shortages - uniforms for learners	macro
4.	DBST	- inadequate support services	macro
5.	SBST		macro
6.	Teacher training		macro
7.	Parental recognition/involvement		macro
8.	Community support structures/agencies	- NGOs - university initiatives - psychiatric hospital - clinics	macro
9.	The classroom - language of teaching and learning		micro
10.	The classroom - inflexible curriculum/inadequate resources	- differentiated teaching and learning - insufficient books for differentiated reading levels	micro
11.	The classroom – supportive learning environment	- positive attitude of teachers - routine and structure	

		- set boundaries	micro
		- praise	
		- discipline	
		- few distractions	
12.	The classroom – teaching and learning strategies	- reviewing previous lesson	micro
		- short, clear instructions	
		- repetition	
		- modelling think-aloud techniques	
		- use of a variety of examples	
		- accommodating different learning styles	
		- active involvement of learners	
		- scaffolding	
		- reading techniques	
		- use of concrete resources	
		- working in pairs/groups	
		- individual/one-on-one support	
		- accommodations/modifications	
		- assessments	

5.7 Conclusion

In Chapters Four and Five, I presented an overview of Baobab School and the findings from and interpretations of the questionnaires, interviews and observations of the school and the three foundation phase teachers and their classrooms, and followed with the factors that emerged from these findings. I then collated the emergent factors from the questionnaires, interviews, and observations onto a table. The intention was to establish the factors at the macro and micro level and to connect them to Walton's and Nel's inclusive spider's web analogy which I use as a heuristic in my next chapter on the discussion of my findings.

CHAPTER SIX

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

6.1 Introduction

On entering the three foundation phase classrooms I found dedicated teachers, attempting to provide the best possible inclusive education for the learners in their classes, including the learners they perceived to be experiencing barriers to learning. They were willing and determined to provide the knowledge, skills, and support needed by the learners despite the challenges they faced on a daily basis. I gained some valuable insights into the inclusive practices at Baobab School, ways in which the principal, teachers, and staff engaged with the learners, and, most importantly, what was happening in the classrooms with the teachers and their engagement with the learners and their teaching and learning practices.

In this chapter I discuss the development of a micro level framework of an inclusive classroom which emerged through the process of my research and the use of Walton's and Nel's inclusion web of a school as a heuristic to assist in addressing the inclusivity of Baobab School and the inclusive practices in the foundation phase classrooms. I begin with establishing the macro and micro level web criteria of inclusivity at Baobab School and the foundation phase classrooms, and then discuss in more detail each of the criteria and factors which enabled or constrained the inclusive education of the learners.

6.2 The Micro Level Web: The Inclusive Classroom

In Chapter Five I established the macro and micro levels of the emergent factors of the questionnaires, interviews, and observations from my research. In so doing, I noted that the majority of Walton's and Nel's inclusion web of a school (Figure 2.2), discussed in the literature review, addressed the macro level. This included the school and its inclusive policies and culture, its accessibility, teacher training, the SBST and specialist personnel, as well as the community support structures that were linked to the school. The web, however, said little to the micro level, where only three of the radii of the web, namely instructional practices,

assessment modification and individual support, addressed the micro level in an inclusive classroom.

The main focus of my research was at the micro level. I entered the classroom and observed the practices used by the teacher to ensure that all learners, including those experiencing barriers to learning, received an inclusive education; in this way the actual workings and implementation of inclusive education could be closely monitored.

In order to address the inclusive classroom particularly at the micro level, I generated a framework which could include criteria necessary for the inclusive education of learners and which was informed by literature and data acquired through research (Figure 6.1 below). The micro level framework helped fill a gap of the literature, allowing a more appropriate analysis of teachers' engagement with learners. Walton's and Nel's inclusion web addressed the more systemic, macro level, so my emergent framework would be able to address the inclusive classroom at the micro level.

I decided to depict the inclusive classroom, with the teacher and his or her learners, as a micro level web, which could "attach" comfortably to Walton's and Nel's analogy of an inclusive web of a school. My deeper focus of the micro level web inclusive classroom is illustrated in the diagram below (Figure 6.1).

Figure 6.1: Micro level web: The inclusive classroom
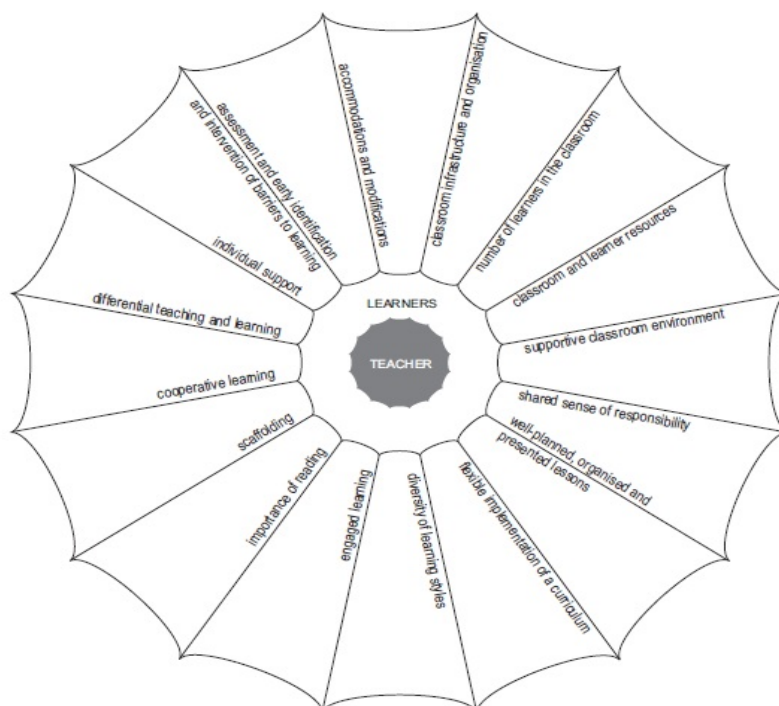
The inclusion web of the school, as depicted by Walton and Nel, would have many micro level webs connected to it, as a school has many classrooms with teachers and their learners in it. Each micro level web would then have its own radii branching off from its centre. The centre would be made up of the teacher surrounded by his or her learners, including learners experiencing barriers to learning. The radii would include the following criteria of an inclusive classroom influenced by literature and informed by my research:

- Number of learners in the classroom

- Infrastructure and organisation of the classroom

- Classroom and learner resources

- Shared sense of responsibility

- Supportive classroom environment

- Well planned, organised and presented lessons

- Flexible implementation of a curriculum

- Diversity of learning styles

- Engaged learning

- The promotion of the importance of reading

- Scaffolding

- Cooperative learning

- Differentiated teaching and learning

- Individual support

- Assessment and early identification and intervention of barriers to learning

- Accommodations and modifications

As in the building of a web, the radii of an inclusive classroom are not finite, but can be extended by other criteria that can promote the inclusivity of the classroom. The building of inclusivity in a classroom would be an ongoing process.

6.3 The Criteria of the Macro and Micro Level Webs

In my analysis and discussion of Baobab School and the foundation phase classrooms, informed by my research, I worked with Walton and Nel's (2012, p.10) spider's web analogy

of an inclusive school to act as a lens and heuristic to identify the criteria for the macro and micro levels of the web (refer to Figure 6.2 below).

Figure 6.2: An inclusive school conceived as a spider's web [Source: Walton & Nel (2012:10)]
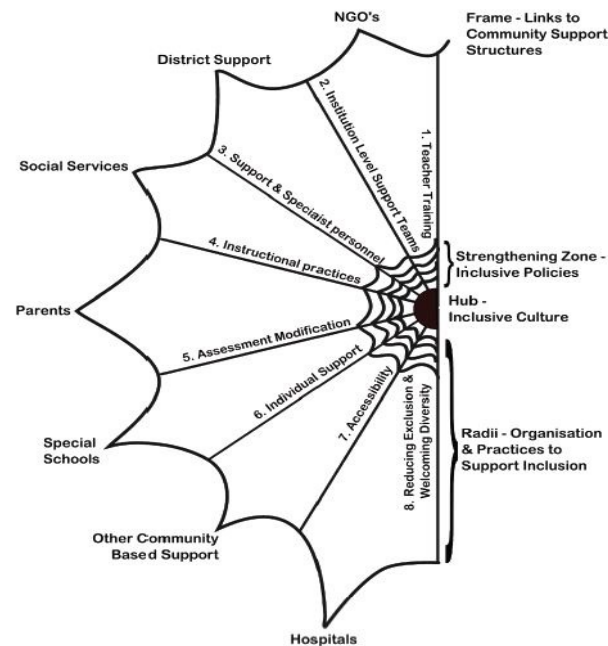
As depicted in the inclusion web, I began at the macro level by analysing and discussing the inclusive culture of the school which was at the centre of the web, and then the school's inclusive policies, the "strengthening zone" of the web. This was followed by analysis and by addressing the macro level criteria in the "radii of the web", and the organisation and practices to support inclusion at the school, all of which is included in the criteria presented in Table 6.1 below:

Table 6.1:   Macro Level: Radii of Web

Radii of Web	Evidence	Cross reference	Literature reference
1. Teacher training	Interviews – Grade 1 and 2	4.3.2 4.4.2	Prinsloo et al., 2001 Swart et al., 2002 Walton, 2006 Engelbrecht et al., 2007 Schwille et al., 2007 Walton et al., 2009 Landsberg et al., 2011 Geldenhuys et al., 2013 McConnachie, 2013

			Pienaar et al., 2013 Donohue et al., 2014
2. SBST (ILST)	Interviews – Grade 1 and 2	4.3.3 4.4.3	South Africa. DoE, 2001 Walton, 2006 Walton et al., 2012 Pienaar et al., 2013 Donohue et al., 2014 Okeke et al., 2014
3. Support and Specialist Personnel	Interviews – Grade 1, 2 and 3	4.3.2 4.4.2 4.5.1	Brice et al., 2000 Engelbrecht et al., 2001 Walton, 2006 Walton et al., 2012 Geldenhuys et al., 2013 Okeke et al., 2014 Engelbrecht et al., 2015
4. Instructional practices 5. Assessment Modification 6. Individual Support	These will be more fully analysed in the micro level web as seen in Table 6.3 below		
7. Accessibility	Interviews – emergent factors – extrinsic barriers to learning - inappropriate LoTL	4.6.2	Prinsloo, 2001 Walton, 2006 Walton et al., 2012 Pienaar et al., 2013 Florian, 2014 Okeke et al., 2014
8. Reducing Exclusion and Welcoming Diversity	Overview of the school	4.2	South Africa. DoE, 2001; Booth et al., 2002 Landsberg et al., 2011 Walton et al., 2012 Nel et al., 2013 Pienaar et al., 2013 Florian, 2014 Okeke et al., 2014 Engelbrecht et al., 2015

I then addressed the "frame of the web" at the macro level, which included links to the school's community support structures as presented in Table 6.2 below:

Table 6.2:   Macro Level: Frame of Web

Frame of Web	Evidence	Cross reference	Literature reference
1. NGO's	Overview of the school. Classroom observation – Grade 2, Lesson 3. Interviews– Grades 1 and 2. Emergent factors from the interviews.	4.2 5.3.3 4.3.2 4.4.2 4.6.2	Walton et al., 2012 Nel et al., 2013
2. DBST	Interviews – Grades 1 and 2. Emergent factors from the interviews.	4.3.2 4.4.2 4.6.2	South Africa. DoE, 2001 Walton et al., 2012 Geldenhuys et al., 2013
3. Social services	Interviews – Grades 1 and 2	4.3.2 4.4.2	Walton et al., 2012 Nel et al., 2013
4. Parents	Interviews – Grades 1, 2, and 3. Emergent factors from the interviews.	4.3.2 4.4.2 4.3.3 4.5.1 4.6.2	Prinsloo, 2110 Swart et al., 2002 Engelbrecht et al., 2007 Landsberg et al., 2011 Walton et al., 2012 Pienaar et al., 2013 Donohue et al., 2014
5. Special Schools	-	-	
6. Other Community Based Support (The university, fee-paying schools)	Interviews - Grades 1 and 2	4.3.2 4.4.2	Walton et al., 2012 Nel et al., 2013
7. Hospitals	Interviews - Grades 1 and 2	4.3.2 4.4.2	Walton et al., 2012 Nel et al., 2013

Finally, I addressed the micro level criteria (Table 6.3 below), the teaching and learning strategies, practices, techniques and skills that the foundation phase teachers used in their classrooms to enable an inclusive education for their learners, including the learners experiencing barriers to learning, depicted as the radii in the micro level web (Figure 6.1 above).

Table 6.3:   **Micro Level: Radii of Web**

	Practices	Evidence	Cross reference	Literature reference
1.	Number of learners in the classroom	Emergent factors from the interviews – extrinsic factors	4.6.2	Swart et al., 2002 Engelbrecht et al., 2007 Landsberg et al., 2011 Geldenhuys et al., 2013 Pienaar et al., 2013
2.	Infrastructure and organisation of the classroom	Overview of the school Emergent factors from the interviews – extrinsic factors	4.2 4.6.2	Swart et al., 2002 Engelbrecht et al., 2007 Landsberg et al., 2011 Geldenhuys et al., 2013 Pienaar et al., 2013 Makoelle et al., 2016
3.	Classroom and learner resources	Emergent factors from the interviews – extrinsic factors	4.6.2	Swart et al., 2002 Engelbrecht et al., 2007 Landsberg et al., 2011 Geldenhuys et al., 2013 Pienaar et al., 2013
4.	Shared sense of responsibility	Overview of the school	4.2	Brice et al., 2000 Engelbrecht et al., 2001 Beattie et al., 2006 Pienaar et al., 2013 Okeke et al., 2014
5.	Positive attitude of the teacher	Emergent factors from classroom observations – classroom environment	5.5	Swart et al., 2002 Beattie et al., 2006 Nel et al., 2013 Donohue et al., 2014
6.	Supportive classroom environment	Emergent factors from classroom observations – classroom environment	5.5	Engelbrecht et al., 2001 Pienaar et al., 2013
7.	Learners feeling comfortable, safe and appreciated	Emergent factors from classroom observations – classroom environment	5.5	Engelbrecht et al., 2001 Pienaar et al., 2013

8.	Routine and structure	Emergent factors from classroom observations – classroom environment	5.5	Engelbrecht et al., 2001 Pienaar et al., 2013
9.	Positive reinforcement – praise	Emergent factors from classroom observations – classroom environment	5.5	Engelbrecht et al., 2001 Pienaar et al., 2013
10.	Discipline	Emergent factors from classroom observations – classroom environment	5.5	Engelbrecht et al., 2001 Pienaar et al., 2013
11.	Planning, organisation and presentation of lessons (flexible implementation of the curriculum, reviewing previous lesson, short and clear instructions, repetition, use of a variety of examples, modelling think-aloud techniques)	Emergent factors from classroom observations	5.5	Beattie et al., 2006 Pienaar et al., 2013 Okeke et al., 2014
12.	Encouraging diverse learning styles	Emergent factors from classroom observations – accommodating different learning styles	5.5	Nel et al., 2013 Pienaar et al., 2013
13.	Engaging learners – active involvement of learners	Emergent factors from classroom observations – active involvement of learners	5.5	Pienaar et al., 2013
14.	Importance of reading	Emergent factors from classroom observations – working in pairs and groups. Interview with Grade 2 teacher – extrinsic factors – inflexible curriculum – reading. Interviews – emergent factors – extrinsic factors.	5.5 4.4.2 4.6.2	Slavin, 2009

15.	Scaffolding	Emergent factors from classroom observations – scaffolding	5.5		Nel et al., 2013
16.	Cooperative learning – groups, pairs	Emergent factors from classroom observations – working in pairs and groups	5.5		Davis et al., 2004 Pienaar et al., 2013 Okeke et al., 2014
17.	Differentiated teaching and learning	Interview with Grade 2 teacher – extrinsic factors - differentiated teaching and learning	4.4.2		Davis et al., 2004 Pienaar et al., 2013 Okeke et al., 2014
18.	Individual/one-on-one support	Emergent factors from classroom observations – individual/one-on-one support. Interviews – emergent factors – extrinsic factors.	5.5 4.6.2		Walton et al., 2012
19.	Assessments and early identification and intervention of barriers to learning	Emergent factors from classroom observations – assessments. Interview with Grade 2 teacher – extrinsic factors – assessments. Interviews – emergent factors - extrinsic factors.	5.5 4.4.2 4.6.2		Lerner et al., 2003 Davis et al., 2004 Landsberg et al., 2005 Nel et al., 2013 Pienaar et al., 2013 Okeke et al., 2014
20.	Accommodations/modifications	Emergent factors from classroom observations – accommodations	5.5		South Africa. DoE, 2005e Beattie et al., 2006 Walton, 2006 Nel et al., 2013

6.4 Macro level

In my analysis and discussion of the various macro and micro level criteria established in the two inclusion webs and tables above, I first defined the criteria, proceeding to note the questions concerning the criteria that I asked during my research, and then followed with a

discussion as to what enabled and constrained the inclusive education of the learners in the school and classroom pertaining to the criteria.

6.4.1 Inclusive Culture of Baobab School

An inclusive culture is the acceptance of differences in cultural, religious, ethnic, racial, age, gender, disability and language backgrounds, accommodating differing viewpoints and backgrounds in all individuals at the school and in the classroom (Pienaar et al., 2013). The question I asked was: what enabled and what constrained an inclusive culture at Baobab School?

Baobab School had a strong Christian ethos which encouraged learners to be kind, caring, respectful, and accepting of one another's differences (4.2 Overview of Baobab School). The principal and teachers set examples of this by showing an authentic respect for differences which was evident in their behaviour around the school and in the classes. A sense of responsibility and pride in their school was instilled in the learners. This enabled an inclusive culture in the school, where teachers modelled and encouraged these behaviours of inclusivity, and learners were seen to demonstrate readily the respect and acceptance of one another at the school. There was an inclusive culture at Baobab School that "reflected beliefs, values and implicit norms promoting accepting, tolerant and collaborative environment for all students" (Babić, Simić & Friedman, 2018, p. 458).

6.4.2 Inclusive Policies of Baobab School

The inclusive policies of a school should guide and entrench its inclusive practices (Walton et al., 2012). The questions I asked were: did the principal and teachers understand what was entailed by an inclusive education, school and classroom, and were the school's policies enabling or constraining of inclusivity at the school?

The principal and the foundation phase teachers understood what inclusive education, as well as what an inclusive school and classroom, entailed. They stated that an inclusive school was a school in which "all learners had access to meaningful learning" (Appendix C -

Questionnaires) including those experiencing barriers to learning. They stressed that the inclusive classroom "catered for all learners irrespective of their needs and barriers to learning" (Appendix C – Questionnaires). This inclusive teaching and learning applied to the learners once they were accepted at the school.

Baobab School had the policy of a maximum intake of 36 learners per class. The school tried to allow as large an intake as possible per class, while at the same time attempting to ensure that learners received a quality education with satisfactory individual teacher-learner time. The foundation phase teachers felt the number of learners in their classes were too large, as they continued to struggle with providing sufficient quality time for their learners (4.6.3 Other factors). Suggestions were made as to the provision of a teacher aid, possibly a recently qualified teacher from university in needing of gaining teaching experience, to assist each teacher in his or her classroom to enable more teacher-learner time with learners.

Baobab School also had the policy of restricting their intake of learners as to their language ability (4.6.2 Extrinsic factors). Learners needed to have the ability to speak English so as to enter the English medium foundation phase classes. This was constraining as to inclusivity for learners unable to speak English. The teachers stated that the learners who managed to slip through the system and enter the Grade 1 class having no English, were able to learn the language adequately and in time, so it was not essential to have a basic knowledge of English on entering the class. It is understood, however, that if a learner were more proficient in Afrikaans, for example, than in English, he or she would benefit by entering the Afrikaans medium foundation phase classes at the school. It is of beneficial for learners to be taught initially in their home language, the medium with which they are normally most comfortable. Pienaar and Raymond emphasise that "literacy instruction should ideally begin in the learner's first language" (2013, p. 73). Many of the learners' first language was isiXhosa, with Afrikaans and English being their first and second additional language. The school did not offer isiXhosa medium foundation phase classes; isiXhosa lessons were, however, provided as an additional language in the syllabus of each grade.

Ms Miya was proficient in all three languages which means she could translate for any learners who were struggling to understand something said in English. She also noted that having learners with a variety of home languages in her class, enabled them to assist each other when learning the other additional languages (4.4.3 Other factors, Challenges experienced). Mrs Coetzee and Mrs Snyman were fluent in both English and Afrikaans, so could assist and

translate in these two languages. They had a Xhosa speaking teacher come and teach their learners during their Xhosa lessons. Learners who were taught in their first or second additional language could benefit from the support of a teacher who was multilingual, and who could converse with them in their home language (4.4.2 Extrinsic factors, Inappropriate languages of teaching and learning). "If teachers 'borrow' some words from other languages present in the classroom, learners could more easily make associations between these concepts in their mother tongue and the language of instruction" (Okeke et al., 2014, p. 266).

Learners from different religious backgrounds were not excluded from the school; on entering the school, however, they were informed that they were required to uphold and respect its Catholic ethos (4.2 Overview of the school). This was stated in the school's code of conduct, which the parents had to sign on the admittance of their children.

The admittance policies of Baobab School limited the initial accessibility of learners, in the attempt to ensure that once they were admitted, they would receive the best possible inclusive education in the classroom that the school could provide. This was done by limiting the number of learners per class, allowing for adequate teacher-learner time; ensuring that the language of teaching and learning was accessible to the learners admitted into the class so they could understand and speak the language; and that learners would embrace the inclusive culture of respect and acceptance entrenched in the Catholic ethos of the school.

6.4.3 Organisation and practices to support inclusion at the school and in the classroom

The criteria in the radii of the web in Walton's and Nel's inclusion web were used as a tool to identify the criteria of the organisation and practices that supported inclusion at Baobab School in the foundation phase classrooms. These criteria will be discussed in more detail below.

o *Teacher training*

South African studies have acknowledged the importance of pre-service and in-service professional training of teachers in the attitudes, knowledge and skills required for an inclusive education in schools and classrooms (Walton, 2006; Ntombela, 2011). The question I asked

was: what enabled and constrained the teachers at Baobab School in receiving in-service professional training in the implementation of inclusive teaching and learning practices, as well as in barriers to learning and in how to address such barriers?

Ms Miya had undertaken formal learning in inclusive education while at university, three years prior to the date of the interview. Mrs Coetzee and Mrs Snyman, who had been teaching for 20 and 36 years respectively at the time of their interviews, had not received any formal training from their teacher training institutes as to inclusive education. They had received in-service training from the DBST and the Department of Education for the filling in of SNA forms for learners experiencing barriers to learning. They had also undergone training in the use of laptop computers, which were supplied to them, and in recording the administrative factors of their learners in their classrooms. This included capturing all the information concerning the learners, such as the yearly intake, the acceptance and rejection of learners, their home language, and their demographics (4.3.2 Interview with Grade 1 Teacher, Extrinsic factors). The in-service professional training that the teachers had received from the Department was of an administrative nature.

Mrs Coetzee and Ms Miya were concerned that they had not received any training in the implementation of an inclusive education and inclusive teaching and learning practices in the classroom, nor in barriers to learning and how best to address them. The inclusive education of the learners was constrained by the lack of professional in-service teacher training as teachers did not have the necessary knowledge and skills to provide the support needed to the learners experiencing barriers to learning nor in how best to accommodate them and adapt their classroom teaching. This was seen in the inability of the teachers adequately to support the H.I.V. learner and the learners with behavioural problems (4.3.2 Extrinsic factors, Difficulties experienced in implementing inclusive education in the classroom; 4.4.1 Intrinsic factors).

There had, however, been workshops that the foundation phase teachers had attended in the teaching and learning of various subjects, such as Mathematics, by particular NGOs interested in the implementation of inclusive education in Grahamstown schools.

Ms Miya had attended such a workshop in Mathematics with an NGO in Grahamstown during the week I observed her class. She received various resources from the NGO and their workshop demonstrated methods of using the resources in the teaching and learning of certain concepts in Mathematics (5.3.3 Lesson 3). The resources provided visual and concrete manipulative tools for the learners, which readily assisted all of them with their learning,

including learners experiencing barriers to learning who struggled to understand semi-concrete and abstract concepts illustrated in the textbooks.

The university had also offered teachers at the schools in Grahamstown workshops on the implementation of inclusive teaching and learning practices in other subjects, such as in reading. They provided the learners at Baobab School with books for them to read and had also arranged for students who had volunteered to read with them on an individual basis. The results were seen in Ms Miya's reading lesson (5.3.6 Lesson 6). Ms Miya stated that the learners who struggled with reading were helped with their reading by being part of this initiative.

It would appear that in-service professional teacher training in the implementation of inclusive teaching and learning practices for Baobab School was forthcoming from NGOs, the university and other initiatives in Grahamstown, all of which enabled the inclusive education of the learners. The teachers, however, felt they remained inadequately equipped to deal with certain learners at the school, such as those with behavioural and health problems, as they had had no professional training in inclusive practices in the classroom or in the barriers to learning experienced by learners and how to address them. This resulted in a feeling of inadequacy as how to address issues arising among learners who were stigmatised, stereotyped, and labelled, such as the learner born H.I.V. positive.

o *SBST (ILST)*

The SBST of a school mainly comprises the teachers, but may include the parents, support staff, and experts from the community. The team coordinates the support for learners experiencing barriers to learning (Okeke et al., 2014). The questions I asked concerning the SBST at Baobab School were: who comprised the team, what were their functions and were they enabling or constraining the inclusive education of learners experiencing barriers to learning?

Baobab School had a SBST, consisting of the principal and teachers, which provided support to learners experiencing barriers to learning and to their parents. They helped the parents fill out the SNA forms and send them off to the DBST, as well as helping to put in place a support plan to assist the learners and their parents where possible. But because there was no come-

back nor feedback from the DBST once the SNA forms were sent to them, the SBST, teachers and parents attempted to find other courses of action to support the learners.

There was access to free assessment and counselling from the psychologists at the university and the psychiatric hospital (4.3 Interview with Grade 1 Teacher and 4.4 Interview with Grade 2 Teacher), and free medication from the clinics such as the supply of Ritalin for learners diagnosed with ADHD (4.5 Interview with Grade 3 Teacher) and antiretroviral drugs for the learner born H.I.V. positive (4.4 Interview with Grade 2 Teacher). The teachers attempted to assist where they could in the classroom giving individual, one-on-one support to the learners experiencing barriers to learning.

The foundation phase teachers admitted that even with the SBST, they struggled to provide the necessary support for the learners experiencing barriers to learning, because of various constraining factors such as large learner numbers, insufficient resources and infrastructure, and inadequate in-service professional training. They felt out of their depth with the more severe cases such as with learners experiencing behavioural problems from abuse (4.3 Interview with Grade 1 Teacher) or their H.I.V. status (4.4 Interview with Grade 2 Teacher).

The SBST at Baobab School enabled the provision of support to the teachers and parents in assisting them where they could in organising individual support plans for the learners experiencing barriers to learning.

o   *Support and Specialist Personnel*

Support and specialist personnel include doctors, nurses, audiologists, eye specialists, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, speech and language therapists, and counsellors. Learners experiencing barriers to learning may require the services of one or more of these specialists to help provide the best possible support. The question I asked was; how did the teachers, along with the parents, access the support and specialist personnel for the learners experiencing barriers to learning to enable an inclusive education?

The foundation phase teachers at Baobab School stated that they had received no support from the DBST or Department of Education with any specialist personnel or resources for the learners experiencing barriers to learning. As no SNA applications had received any follow up

from the Department, the teachers and parents of the learners attempted to make their own plans by finding free or low-cost access to specialist personnel in the community. This included access to various doctors, nurses, psychologists, eye specialists and physiotherapists from the community. The lack of support personnel being provided by the DBST and Department of Education was a constraining factor in providing the necessary support for learners experiencing barriers to learning. Fortunately access to support and specialist personnel in the community enabled support to be put in place for some of the learners at Baobab School.

6.4.4 Community support structures

When interviewing and observing the teachers, I asked the question: what community support structures were there in Grahamstown which supported Baobab School, its teachers and learners, and what type of support did they provide to enable the learners? There were numerous community support structures in Grahamstown that did assist Baobab School and the teachers to support their learners, including those experiencing barriers to learning.

o *NGOs*

There were a number of NGOs in Grahamstown that provided Baobab School with educational resources, such as their classroom libraries and Mathematics resources, as well as workshops for the teachers in the use of the resources in fun and instructional ways to demonstrate concepts to the learners in their classes.

It was encouraging to have these initiatives actively seeking to provide constructive support in enabling the education of learners at schools in Grahamstown. More support in the area of assisting learners experiencing barriers to learning and how best to teach them and incorporate them into the learning process was, however, much needed.

o   *DBST*

The DBST in Grahamstown had provided workshops on the filling out of the SNA forms for learners experiencing barriers to learning. They had also provided the principal and teachers with laptops and training in the use of the laptops for administrative purposes (4.3.2 Extrinsic factors, Inadequate/inappropriate support services). They had not, as yet, provided any in-service professional training in the actual implementation of inclusive education practices in the classroom. The teachers felt they needed additional support on how to work with learners experiencing barriers to learning, such as those with learning, intellectual, physical, health, emotional and behavioural barriers. They did not always feel adequately equipped to manage these learners, as they had not had any training in the inclusive teaching and learning practices and the emotional support required for learners experiencing these difficulties.

Professional personnel, such as psychologists, counsellors, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, speech therapists, doctors, and paediatricians could be approached, but because they were expensive many parents could not afford their services. Baobab School had found personnel in the community willing to provide their professional support free of charge but access to such service for every learner with difficulties was unrealistic, so many learners could not be provided with the support they needed. The support needed by learners experiencing barriers to learning was constrained by the lack of follow-up initiative from the DBST once the SNA forms had been filled in.

o   *Social services*

Social services at the clinics provided support in the form of medication for the H.I.V. learners and Ritalin for the learners with ADHD. They did not have the capacity for counselling support.

The aftercare centre adjacent to Baobab School had trained social service workers managing the centre. The aftercare was an NGO, an initiative that was started by the wife of a former vice-chancellor of the university in Grahamstown. The centre provided the learners from the surrounding schools with a safe place to stay in the afternoons after school. The children were given breakfast, lunch and tea at the centre, and social workers would assist learners with their homework in the afternoons. Various voluntary stimulation programmes were provided for

learners in the afternoons, such as an English literacy programme, a music and drama programme, and a soccer and rugby programme. I am personally involved at the centre as I run the English literacy programme.

o *Parents*

It is important that parents acknowledge their role in the education of their children and also that they are regarded as "key to effective learning and development of their children as well as in school governance" (Pienaar et al., 2013, p. 28). With this in mind, I asked the teachers how involved the parents were in their children's education at the school.

There were a select number of parents of children at Baobab School who were actively involved in their children's education (4.3.2 Extrinsic factors, Lack of parental recognition/involvement). They responded to the teachers requests to see them, and attended meetings and functions at the school. Some of the parents responded to the teachers when they were informed their child was experiencing difficulties and actively worked alongside the teachers to provide the best possible support for their child. Some parents also attended the parent workshops, actively taking up the suggestions provided, such as taking their children to the city library. Parental recognition and involvement enabled the inclusive education of their children.

Unfortunately, there were some families who offered little or no parental involvement in Baobab School and their children's education (4.4.2 Extrinsic factors, Lack of parental recognition/involvement). Geldenhuys and Wevers (2013) established in their study of primary schools in the Eastern Cape that many of the parents did not involve themselves much in the education and development of their children, but would leave this entirely up to the school. They stated that "the lack of support from parents places much strain on educators, which, in turn, hampers the implementation of inclusive education in the school" (2013, p. 11). This was apparent with certain learners at Baobab School, such as, for example parents not responding to the teachers or principal when asked to come in for a meeting concerning their child to discuss the difficulties he or she was experiencing (4.6.2 Extrinsic factors). This could have been due to a number of reasons, such as working long hours or personal struggles of their

own, also parents of children experiencing barriers to learning may have been in denial and did not want to acknowledge that their child had difficulties.

For those children experiencing barriers to learning whose parents were reluctant to cooperate with the school, their teachers found it difficult to provide the best possible support, because without the permission and help from the parents they could not acquire professional assistance where it was most needed among children with emotional and behavioural problems. The learner support was constrained by the lack of involvement of the parents which could result in the problems of these children then manifesting into even greater long-term difficulties.

o   *Special schools*

Community-based involvement is essential and that special schools, with their experienced and skilled staff, need to offer assistance and support to schools in South Africa in terms of skills and resources for learners experiencing barriers to learning. I asked the teachers if any assistance was provided to Baobab School from the special needs school in Grahamstown?

There was one special needs school in Grahamstown. The teachers at Baobab School mentioned that there was no interaction with the school for professional advice or educational resources. The teachers stated that a few learners in the past had been referred to the special school, but not directly from their own classes. The possible reasons that no support was forthcoming from the special school could be that their support was being offered to other schools in Grahamstown or that they had insufficient staff, resources, and time to provide support outside their own special school.

o   *Other community-based support*

Other community-based support came from initiatives at the university, such as the counselling centre, the reading programme and professional training courses for the teachers at Quintile 1, 2 and 3 schools in Grahamstown. Support also came from surrounding fee-paying schools allowing the use of their facilities, such as sports facilities and computers, as well as having donated educational resources, such as books. These initiatives provided much needed support,

skills, and resources to help facilitate and enable an inclusive education for the learners at Baobab School.

o *Hospitals*

The psychiatric hospital in Grahamstown provided support free of charge to certain learners experiencing barriers to learning at Baobab School in the form of educational, scholastic and behavioural assessments, as well as counselling, by the psychologists. This would not have been provided otherwise for the learners whose parents could not afford the fees of professional personnel, to enable the further support of these learners.

6.5 Micro Level

6.5.1 Organisation and practices to support inclusion in the classroom

The radii of the micro level web were established from the criteria that emerged from my research on practices supporting inclusion in the foundation phase classrooms, as well as being influenced by my literature review. The criteria will be discussed in more detail below.

o *Number of learners in the classroom*

Overcrowded classrooms "limit the active learning strategies that teachers can employ and the amount of individual attention learners can receive" (Pienaar et al., 2013, p. 26). Engelbrecht et al. (2015) noted that classrooms often had over 40 learners, some even up to 70 learners per classroom, with only one teacher per class. The larger number of learners added to the stressors of the teacher having to deal with all the challenges and diversity of needs of learners in the classroom, as well as far less possible attention being given per learner. I asked the question: was the inclusive education of the learners constrained by the number of learners in the classroom at Baobab School?

All three foundation phase teachers stated their concern that having 36 learners in their classrooms was too large, because that number made it impossible for them to offer sufficient individual time and attention to every needy learner, especially those experiencing barriers to learning (4.6.2 Extrinsic factors). That number made the struggle to deal with the variety of challenges and diversity of needs of all their learners even more difficult.

Ms Miya, for example, was unaware of some of the learners doing their work incorrectly while she was assisting a couple of struggling learners in her class, because she did not have a chance to circulate around the entire class due to the large number of learners (5.3.1 Lesson 1). The inclusive education of the learners was, therefore, constrained by the large number of learners in the classroom.

o *Infrastructure and organisation of the classroom*

The infrastructure of the classroom should be well constructed and of an adequate size to accommodate all the learners in it comfortably, and should allow enough space for the learners to move around the desks and chairs. There should be sufficient light to allow the learners to see any work being done in the classroom. The organisation of the classroom should ensure "the coordination of people, objects, and space within a classroom to support teacher-student, student-student, and teacher-assistant interactions, including how your room is designed, where you keep the things you need, and how you plan for traffic flow within the room" (Beattie et al., 2006, p.59). I asked the question: did the infrastructure and organisation of the classroom enable or constrain the inclusive education of the learners?

Ms Miya's classroom was too small to accommodate all her 36 learners comfortably, making it difficult for her to access learners at the back of the classroom. The insufficient space and Ms Miya's being unable to reach certain learners in her classroom constrained the inclusive education of those learners.

The other two foundation phase classrooms had sufficient space to allow learners to move around and interact with one another and the teacher comfortably, enabling their inclusive teaching and learning experience.

The positioning of the blackboard above shelves in the Grade 3 classroom (4.2 Overview of Baobab School) made it difficult for Mrs Snyman to reach the board and it was dangerous for her to have to stand on a chair so that she could reach the board. The physical layout of the furniture in the classroom constrained her ability to write on the board as a visual tool when teaching. She resorted writing on pieces of A3 sheets of paper and then pinning them onto the one side of the board.

The teachers organised the desks of the learners facing each other in groups of three or four desks pushed together, allowing for six or eight learners to be seated in a group (two learners per desk). The seating arrangement of learners, so that they were comfortable and able to interact with one another, was conducive to an atmosphere of inclusivity and this enabled cooperative learning (Makoelle et al., 2016, p. 151).

The teachers had cupboards and shelves in which to store their classroom resources and wall space to display educational posters to enable an organised and stimulating classroom space.

o *Classroom and learner resources*

There needs to be adequate, up-to-date educational resources in the classroom so that all the learners are enabled in their teaching and learning. I asked the question: was the learners' inclusive education enabled by the resources available in their classrooms?

The three foundation phase classrooms all had old and tattered educational resources in the form of posters, charts, abacuses, and scales. The only visible new resources were the classroom libraries (4.2 Overview of Baobab School) and Mathematics resources donated by NGO initiatives in Grahamstown (5.3.3 Lesson 3). The donations received by the NGOs enabled reading, and the use of manipulative tools in the understanding of Mathematics concepts, by the learners.

The teachers spoke of a shortage of reading resources in terms of books with differentiated reading levels. The reading ability of learners was constrained by the lack of these resources, as the level of reading material for some learners was too difficult for them so they could not follow the text being read in class.

o *Shared sense of responsibility*

The responsibility of the inclusive education of learners in the classroom needs to be shared with and supported by teachers, parents, support staff and experts in the community (Engelbrecht et al., 2006 & Okeke et al., 2014). Learners also need to have a shared sense of responsibility to their learning in the classroom.

The shared sense of responsibility of all role players in the inclusive education of learners happens at both the macro and micro levels. I have placed this particular criterion under the micro level, as the shared sense of responsibility of all the stakeholders enables the inclusive education of the learners in the classroom. I asked the question: was the shared sense of responsibility among all stakeholders an enabling factor in the inclusive education of the learners?

There was a shared sense of responsibility at Baobab School, emanating from the principal and radiating out to the teachers and other staff members. They were seen to be actively involved with the learners throughout the day at the school. Together they worked at instilling respect in the learners for the school, their elders, and their peers, and thereby created an environment conducive to learning. The learners were enthusiastic and interested in their learning, attempting to complete their daily work and activities in the classroom. This shared sense of responsibility was essential in ensuring the effective inclusive education of learners at the school. As Pienaar and Raymond stated, "collaboration is predominantly part of indirect support in inclusive education where adults support other adults in order to support learners effectively" (2013, p.243).

This shared sense of responsibility also encompassed finding the best possible support for learners who experienced barriers to learning at Baobab School. The teachers contacted the parents of learners who they knew were experiencing difficulties in class. In collaboration with the parents they could put a support plan in place for the learners by meeting with the SBST, filling out the SNA forms, accessing any necessary medical intervention, and putting in place the extra academic support needed by the learners. The various stakeholders helped enable further support for and inclusive education of these learners.

Completed SNA forms were sent to the DBST to attempt to induce support from the Department, in terms of expert personnel and resources, however there was no response from

them (4.3.2 & 4.4.2 Extrinsic factors, Inadequate/inappropriate support services). The shared sense of responsibility in the inclusive education of the learners was constrained by the lack of support coming from the Department and DBST for learners experiencing barriers to learning.

o   *Supportive classroom learning environment*

A supportive learning environment in the classroom provides a conducive environment for the learners to be able to learn. According to Pienaar and Raymond (2013) this should include seating arrangements that take into consideration the needs of the learners, as well as adequate teaching and learning resources. There should be mixed-ability and same-ability groupings of learners on a daily basis in order to establish an interactive learning environment in which learners are engaged with their lessons. Positive discipline approaches should be used by the teacher to manage the class. The question I asked when observing the classrooms was: was there a supportive learning environment which enabled the inclusive education of the learners in the classroom?

The three classrooms I observed all had a supportive learning environment where it could be seen that the learners felt appreciated, comfortable and safe. The teachers had a positive attitude about the inclusive education of learners in their classrooms, including the learners who experienced difficulties. The teachers were always on time, starting their lessons punctually to present planned and organised lessons. Structure and routine were established in the classrooms, so that the learners knew what was expected of them and what their boundaries were. Learners experiencing difficulties were seated at the front of the class, next to the teacher's desk or next to an academically stronger learner. The teachers were interested in their learners and engaged in conversation with them. Engelbrecht and Green (2001, p. 76) point out that "the attention given to learners is a distinctive indicator of the quality of a responsive learning environment" for learners. The learners received positive reinforcement in the form of praise when seen to be working well and were disciplined if necessary. The teachers went out of their way to spend extra time in their classes with the learners who struggled with concepts and with their work. The positive environment in the classrooms enabled the learners, including learners experiencing barriers to learning, readily to be able to learn.

Mrs Coetzee and Mrs Snyman, the two teachers who had been teaching for a longer period of time, had instilled firmer structures and discipline in their classes than had Ms Miya. Ms Miya was relaxed, allowing her learners freedom of movement in the classroom. This did result in distractions for the learners on a daily basis, and certainly distracted her and the individual learners with whom she worked. This in turn made it difficult for learners experiencing learning difficulties to focus on what they were being taught. Further distractions arose when learners approached Ms Miya to have their work marked (5.3.1 Lesson 1). Ms Miya could have asked the learners to hand in their books to be marked at a later stage, or alternatively (in addition), as Ms Miya and Mrs Coetzee had suggested, to have a teacher aid in their classes to assist them where necessary. These strategies would assist in enabling the inclusive education of the learners.

o   *Well planned, organised and presented lessons*

Well-planned, well-organised and well-presented lessons promote a high quality of teaching and learning by teachers. Okeke et al. (2014) point out that when preparing lessons, teachers need to consider what would impact on and enhance the quality of teaching and learning in their lessons. The implementation of the curriculum should be flexible, with the teacher adapting it where necessary. The lessons should include the reviewing and re-teaching of any core content before commencing with new content, the use of clear examples and skill modelling for new content, practice by learners until they are able to perform at an acceptable level, feedback and correction provided by the teacher, and the periodic review of content and skills (Pienaar et al., 2013). I asked the question when observing the lessons presented by the teachers in the classroom: were the lessons well planned, organised, and presented, and did they enable the teaching and learning of learners?

The lessons presented by the teachers in the foundation phase had been planned and organised. Copies of worksheets on the concepts to be taught were made for the learners or they had their subject workbooks to work in. The previous lesson in the subject was reviewed to remind the learners what they had covered previously before they began with the next concept or stage in their learning (5.2.1 Lesson 1). The instructions given by the teachers were short and clear, with the use of repetition and a variety of examples, and think-aloud techniques were modelled for the learners better to understand what was required of them (5.2.2 Lesson 2; 5.4.1 Lesson

1). These techniques enabled all the learners in their inclusive education, especially those who struggled or were slow in completing their work.

Ms Miya used the above techniques, but they were possibly rendered less effective due to the continuous movement and distractions in the classroom. Ms Miya did not have as firm a control over her class as did the other two teachers and this resulted in a number of learners not focusing on her lesson and, therefore, not following and not understanding the taught concept nor what was required of them.

There were learners who were engaged in her lesson, but still struggled to grasp the concepts taught. One such instance was when the concept of mixed multiplication by grouping, repeat addition, and skip counting was taught in one of the Mathematics lessons (5.3.1 Lesson 1). There was confusion among learners as to the different groupings leading to the same answer, such as 6 groups of 3 = 18 and 3 groups of 6 = 18. Even the Mathematics textbook was unclear on this and added to the confusion (5.3.1 Lesson 1, Figure 5.3). This lack of clarity constrained the adequate understanding of the learners on the concept being taught.

Ms Miya attempted to overcome this confusion by having some of her learners who were struggling, utilise counters to help illustrate the groupings concretely. Concrete resources enabled a better understanding by learners of the concept being taught.

It was not clear if Ms Miya managed to mark all the learners' work during lessons as a form of continuous assessment. During the week of observations, Ms Miya did not ask her learners to hand in their books for marking but randomly marked the work of learners who had completed their work during the lesson. The slower learners did not always complete their work so did not have their work marked. The learners were not asked to carry out corrections, and therefore, were not enabled to learn from their mistakes by correcting them.

o *Diversity of learning styles*

A learning style refers to "the strategies a learner adopts with learning tasks and situations" (Nel et al., 2013). The best practice for teachers is to provide multiple and flexible teaching and learning styles to accommodate learners with differing styles of learning. These include visual, auditory, kinaesthetic or tactile learning styles. When observing the classrooms and

lessons presented by the teachers, I asked the question: were the teachers accommodating the diverse learning styles of their learners to enable their learning in the classroom?

The teachers were seen to present their lessons in a manner that catered for the diverse learning styles of their learners, encouraging visual, auditory, tactile, and kinaesthetic learning. They used concrete and semi-concrete resources, such as counters, Lego blocks and 100s counting tables, with their learners so they could use visual, tactile and kinaesthetic learning to help them better understand various concepts in Mathematics.

The teachers combined auditory, visual and kinaesthetic teaching and learning strategies, demonstrating to their learners on the board how and what needed to be done, such as writing in print or in cursive. The writing exercises were tactile and kinaesthetic, to help learners strengthen their fine motor abilities in their hand-writing which improved their writing ability.

In learning a phonetic sound, Ms Miya had her learners use various forms of learning styles, from auditory learning when they said the "ar" sound, to tactile and kinaesthetic learning when they wrote the sound on each other's backs, to visual and kinaesthetic learning when they wrote the words with the phonetic sound in them in their exercise books (5.3.5 lesson 5). Pienaar and Raymond stress that "the best practice for teachers is to provide multiple and flexible approaches to teaching and learning that will empower all their learners to learn optimally" (2013, p. 56).

Learners experiencing learning difficulties benefitted especially from concrete methods of teaching and learning because concrete resources enabled these learners physically to see, touch, and manipulate the educational resources; these learners tended to remain at the concrete level for a longer period than the academically stronger learners who could understand concepts being taught through semi-concrete or abstract examples.

o *Engaged learning – active involvement of learners*

To ensure learners are engaged in their learning in the classroom, teachers need to actively provide flexible and varied options for learners to practise and reinforce their knowledge and skills. I asked the question when observing the classes: were all the learners engaged and actively involved in the activities in the classrooms to enable their learning?

Ms Miya on a number of occasions actively involved her learners in her lessons by using a variety of strategies and methods for the learners to practise their knowledge and skills, such as working in pairs or groups, using different concrete materials, having learners come up to the front of the class to demonstrate a concept, and playing games. These methods engaged and enabled them with their learning and provided "differing amounts and types of practice to achieve skill mastery and to maintain learning" (Pienaar and Raymond, 2013, p. 135).

Rote learning, such as when the learners said their numbers, tables, days of the week and months of the year, over and over again, to memorise them, did not always engage all the learners. Their learning and engagement possibly became constrained due to the rather boring and repetitive nature of rote learning.

Mrs Coetzee and Mrs Snyman ensured that their learners were always facing and focusing on them when they introduced a concept or gave instructions. Ms Miya occasionally did this, however, at times did not quieten the class down nor did she draw the learners' attention to her before she gave an instruction or introduced a new concept. These distracted learners were not engaged and, therefore, did not follow what was being taught or said by Ms Miya during the lesson.

o *The promotion of the importance of reading*

Slavin (2009) points out that the mastery of reading is central to school learning. Learners need to "learn to read" to be able eventually to "read to learn". The questions I asked were: to what extent were the teachers actively enabling reading and were the learners engaged in their reading?

All three foundation phase classes had reading lessons, as in this phase the learners were learning to read. These lessons were done as class reading and the teacher read to the entire class using a large, colourfully illustrated book; or group reading, with the learners reading in groups of five or six, each taking a turn; and finally, paired reading, when learners read to each other in pairs. They did not take any books home to read for homework or pleasure. They did, however, have access to their classroom libraries during the school day, where they were encouraged to read if they had finished their class work. The school was fortunate that the

classroom libraries were donated by an NGO in Grahamstown as they had no main school library.

The teachers used various reading strategies and techniques to help the learners with their reading (5.3.6 Lesson 6; 5.4.2 Lesson 2). The learners were encouraged to look at the illustrations in their books to help them better understand what was being read, as well as to predict what may happen further on in their book, also they were encouraged to discuss what they thought was happening in the book in order to establish their comprehension of the text. The strategy of breaking up and sounding out words was used to assist learners to establish the word they were attempting to read, as well as the use of their finger to point at the words they were reading to help them track the text. These various strategies enabled the learners to learn to read.

The teachers expressed their frustration as to the lack of sufficient standardised reading books for the learners (4.3.3 Other factors, Reading). The learners had to share books or make do with photocopies of reading material. Some of the reading material was too difficult for some of the learners in the class, so they were unable to follow what was being read. They would have benefitted from reading at a simpler level and possibly would have been less discouraged. The reading ability of learners was constrained by the lack of access to the books appropriate for their level of reading, especially learners who experienced difficulties in learning to read.

The university had established a reading initiative with Baobab School, arranging for students from the university to read with learners at the school on an individual, and voluntary, basis (5.3.6 Lesson 6). The university also supplied the reading books. Teachers at the school stated that they had seen an improvement in the level of reading of the learners who had taken part in this initiative. Some of the learners also attended a literacy programme held one afternoon a week at the school's day care centre. These initiatives improved the learners' reading skills.

The parents who had attended the parent workshops held once a week by another initiative of the university, were encouraged to take their children to the local city library where they could withdraw books and attend story time (4.3.2 Extrinsic factors, Lack of parental recognition/involvement). Some parents were reported to have done this with their children, enabling the joy of reading.

Baobab School had, therefore, received support from various initiatives to help facilitate, encourage and enable the reading ability of the learners. The school and community initiatives

had realised the importance of reading for learners in the process of enabling an inclusive education.

o *Scaffolding*

In the teaching and learning strategy of scaffolding a substantial amount of support and assistance is provided to learners during the initial teaching of a new concept. The support is then gradually withdrawn as the learners gain experience through practice (Nel et al., 2013). I asked the question: was scaffolding used by the teachers as a teaching strategy to enable the inclusive teaching and learning of learners in their classrooms?

The teachers provided support for their learners in small steps so that they did not become overwhelmed, but achieved success at each stage, before moving on to the next stage. This was seen in the print and cursive writing lessons given by Mrs Coetzee and Mrs Snyman respectively (5.2.2 Lesson 2; 5.4.1 Lesson 1), in the phonics lesson on "ar" given by Ms Miya (5.3.5 Lesson 5) and in the Mathematics lesson on the number 19 given by Mrs Coetzee (5.2.1 lesson 1). They realised the importance of scaffolding for their learners, allowed for further examples and explanations, and granted extra time, for struggling learners. The strategy of scaffolding used by the teachers enabled the inclusive education of the learners in their classrooms.

o *Cooperative learning*

Cooperative learning is the process of learners working "together as a learning community in which all are interdependent and participate equally toward a common goal" (Pienaar et al., 2013, p. 147). I asked the question when observing the learners in the classroom: was cooperative learning used to enable the inclusive teaching and learning of learners in the classroom?

The teachers encouraged their learners to work together in groups or pairs, supporting each other to achieve a common goal, such as in Ms Miya's classroom when working in groups or pairs with the Lego blocks to establish the difference between the two stacks of blocks (5.3.3

Lesson 3). The learners were engaged, enjoyed working with their peers, and together manipulated the blocks to visualise the concept being taught.

The teachers also had learners read in pairs or groups, allowing for the learners each to take turns with reading in a relaxed setting (5.3.6 Lesson 6; 5.4.2 Lesson 2). The learners were shown how to support each other when reading, first allowing their peers to attempt to read a word, and only then prompting when they could not read the word correctly. Pienaar and Raymond (2013) note that cooperative learning should provide the teaching of group work skills and having learners help each other and work together effectively.

Mrs Coetzee stated during her interview that she seated some of her academically weaker learners next to academically stronger learners (4.3.3 Other factors, Strategies to assist learners experiencing barriers to learning in the classroom), so that they could provide them with support "at the level that the child understands and on a co-equal basis" (Pienaar and Raymond, 2013, p. 248). These cooperative learning strategies enabled the learners in the classroom to support each other, including the weaker learners who were supported by the stronger learners in the groups.

o *Differentiated teaching and learning*

Differentiated teaching and learning "allows teachers to accommodate the needs of learners with differing abilities in the same class" (Pienaar et al., 2013, p. 140) by structuring their teaching to fit the diverse abilities of learners in the classroom. I asked the question: were the teachers using differentiated teaching and learning strategies in their classrooms to enable the inclusive education of their learners?

The teachers were aware, and conscious, of the fact that their learners did not have the same prior knowledge and skills, did not have the same interests or cultural backgrounds, and did not learn in the same manner, or at the same pace. Ms Miya had been taught at the university she attended about differentiated teaching and learning which allowed for teachers to accommodate the needs of their learners with differing abilities in their classes. She had attempted to introduce this strategy in her class, but had found it too onerous due to the work load, time constraints, and insufficient resources (4.4.3 Other factors, Differentiated teaching and learning). She had resorted to helping the learners who were struggling with their work on

an individual basis. The other teachers informed me during their interviews that they used this same strategy when working with learners experiencing difficulties with their work.

o *Individual support*

Individual support entails one-on-one support by the teacher for a learner experiencing difficulties with the understanding of a concept or a process in his or her work. I asked the question: with what types of support were the teachers providing the learners in their classes who were experiencing difficulties with their work and barriers to learning?

The teachers chose to work on an individual basis with learners who were experiencing difficulties with their work in their classes. They did this while the rest of the class were completing work or at break time. The teachers felt that this was the most effective way to provide them with support, as they could concentrate specifically on the one learner and his or her difficulties.

It was, however, difficult for the teachers to monitor the whole class while they were working with a particular learner, because the other learners became restless and noise levels rose, especially as they completed their work more quickly than those learners experiencing difficulties. Ms Miya told her learners to get a book from the classroom library when they had finished their work as a solution to keeping them occupied (5.3.1 Lesson 1). The teachers felt that a teacher aid would facilitate assistance with the management of learners in their classes.

o *Assessments and early identification and intervention of barriers to learning*

Assessment is "the process of acquiring information for making decisions about learner responses to instruction" (Pienaar et al., 2013, p. 108) and the purpose of assessment is to collect information about a learner's knowledge, skills, capabilities and/or behaviour, and to monitor his or her progress (Beattie et al., 2006 & Pienaar et al., 2013). Assessments help establish whether or not learners show mastery of particular concepts, skills, and processes, providing feedback. Nel et al. (2013) state that when assessing learners experiencing barriers to learning to determine their specific barriers, assessments need to be part of a continuous process involving all stakeholders in the learner's ecosystemic environment. The earlier the

barriers to learning are identified; the sooner interventions and a support plan can be put in place for the learner. An Individual Education Plan (IEP) can be made up to address the needs of the learner. Lerner (2003: 64) describes an IEP "as a written plan for a particular learner that prescribes specific educational objectives for that learner". I asked the question when interviewing the teachers: what forms of identification and intervention were put in place for the learners they perceived to be experiencing barriers to learning in their classes?

The teachers would call in the parents of learners they perceived to have barriers to learning in their classes and then, along with the SBST, attempt to identify the learner's difficulties and needs and to put a support plan in place for them. They advised the parents to approach the psychiatric hospital to have educational, scholastic, and behavioural assessments done with various psychologists there, as well as any necessary counselling. This was done free of charge. They also approached the university counselling centre to have psychologists there help learners needing support, once again free of charge. When medical intervention and medication were required, clinics were approached for assistance. Teachers asked parents to take their children to specialists, such as an eye specialist or physiotherapist. Otherwise teachers attempted to provide additional academic support in the classroom for the learners through one-on-one tuition. They would fill out the SNA forms with the SBST and parents, and send these to the DBST. They stated that because they did not receive any support from the DBST they had to use various initiatives in the Grahamstown community. No formal IEP was written up for any of the learners by the teachers.

They admitted that for certain learners, such as the learner with H.I.V. or those experiencing behavioural problems, they struggled to provide or find the necessary support that they desperately needed in the form of expert personnel from the DBST or in the community. The teachers also had received no in-service professional training for the best practice and support needed for these learners. The inclusive education and support, therefore, of these learners experiencing barriers to learning was constrained by insufficient support from the DBST and from a variety of trained professionals, as well as the lack of professional in-service teacher training in how to address barriers to learning.

o   *Accommodations and modifications*

An accommodation is "the action taken to make something more suitable by adjusting to the individual circumstances of each situation" and a modification is "the act of making something different" (Beattie et al., 2006, p. 178). Accommodations are not designed to make things easier for the learner, but to make possible the proficiency required of them in gaining and demonstrating knowledge and skill (Nel et al., 2013). Examples of accommodations are extra time allowed to complete work, expanded opportunities, additional breaks, the provision of a reader or scribe, the enlarging or changing of the font of typed material, being seated closer to the board, and the use of a computer, calculator, audio-taping or other assistive devices (Nel et al., 2013).

Modifications often result in changes in the content or material of work expected to be done by a learner. The purpose of this is to maximise the ability of each learner in the classroom, enhancing his or her learning, and facilitating his or her development (Beattie et al., 2006). I asked the question: what accommodations and modifications were being used by the teacher to enable the inclusive education of her learners experiencing barriers to learning in her classroom?

Learners experiencing barriers to learning were accommodated by being seated at the front of the class, to accommodate learners with ADHD and learners with visual difficulties; or seated close to the teacher's desk, to accommodate learning difficulties; or placed next to an academically stronger learner, to accommodate weaker learners in the class (5.5 Emergent factors from classroom observations, Accommodations). Additional time was allowed for slower learners (5.2.2 lesson 2; Lesson 5.4.1 Lesson 1) and additional prompting assisted with the understanding of an exercise or the completion of a test, such as during the spelling test with Asanda (5.3.5 Lesson 5). These accommodations enabled the learners experiencing barriers to learning in their learning. I did not observe any modifications being made to any work or exercises to assist the weaker learners.

Modifications could possibly have been made to the work given to the learners experiencing difficulties, either by devising simpler exercises or by reducing the amount of work for them to complete. This is a form of differentiated teaching and learning and could have enabled certain learners in the class with their learning.

6.6 Conclusion

This chapter addressed and discussed in detail the criteria that emerged at a macro and micro level of inclusive education at Baobab School and in the three foundation phase classrooms. In identifying the criteria, using Walton's and Nel's inclusive spiders web framework, I established that it said more to the macro level and little to the micro level. I found that I needed to generate a framework to address the criteria at the micro level of the teacher and learners in the classroom. I developed a micro level web of the classroom with the teacher and learners, as well as inclusive teaching and learning practices, informed by the literature and data acquired in my research, and which I see as being necessary for the inclusive education of the learners.

The final chapter answers the question: What lessons can be learned from the study? I then conclude by making various recommendations before drawing the discussion to a close.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

7.1 Introduction

When I entered the three English medium foundation phase classrooms in Baobab School, I found dedicated teachers and school staff, who were determined to provide an inclusive education for learners at the school and in their classrooms, notwithstanding the many challenges they face on a daily basis. I gained valuable insights into the practices, strategies, skills, and techniques used by the teachers in the classroom to enable the inclusive teaching and learning of their learners, including learners experiencing barriers to learning.

In this final chapter, I reflect on the key elements of the research by providing a synthesis of the study. I respond to the question: "What lessons can be learned from the study?", and follow with recommendations of school and classroom infrastructure, organisation, and practice at the micro level, and teacher support and policy implementation at the macro level. I draw the discussion to a close by examining some of the challenges I faced and then describe some of the critical conclusions reached after careful reflection on my research study.

7.2 Synthesis of the study

This study set out to investigate the engagement of an Eastern Cape, public, primary school with learners in inclusive foundation phase classrooms. I entered three English medium foundation phase classrooms to observe and discover first-hand the inclusive practices being used by teachers in their classes with their learners, including learners experiencing barriers to learning.

The literature review helped to conceptualise an inclusive school and classroom in the South African context (2.3.1 & 2.3.2), where diversity is recognised and accommodated, and includes learners experiencing intrinsic and extrinsic barriers to learning (2.4.1 & 2.4.2). The literature illustrated the challenges facing the implementation of inclusive education in South African schools and classrooms (2.5), including the overcoming of barriers to learning experienced by

learners (2.4.3) and the lack of teacher professional development. It also showed the strategies, skills, and techniques of inclusive education in the school and classroom at the various systemic levels associated with the learners (2.6). Finally, it provided a heuristic, in the form of Walton's and Nel's inclusive spider's web framework of a school, to guide the gathering of evidence regarding inclusive education in the school and classroom (2.8).

I chose to do a qualitative study within an interpretive paradigm, using the case study method (3.2). This method allowed an examination of a specific school and three English medium foundation phase classrooms to gain a rich experience of the inclusive practices of teaching and learning used by teachers in the classroom, and to establish what enabled and constrained the inclusive education of the learners, including learners experiencing barriers to learning (3.6; 3.7). My questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and my role as a non-participatory observer in the classrooms, helped investigate and refine my research goals (3.9; 3.9.1; 3.9.2; 3.9.3).

I analysed and interpreted the data from the study according to my research goals, and synthesised the factors that emerged from the questionnaires, interviews, and observations. In so doing, I established emergent factors at a macro and micro level (5.6). While working with Walton's and Nel's inclusive spider's web framework of a school to establish the inclusive criteria at a macro and micro level (6.3), I identified a possible weakness in the framework in that the web did not adequately address the micro level, on which the main focus of my research rested. I found I needed to generate my own framework, based on the literature and my research results, using the spider's web analogy, of an inclusive classroom (6.2; Figure 6.1).

I then addressed in detail the criteria which arose from the emergent factors of Baobab School and the three foundation phase classrooms. I used Walton's and Nel's framework at the macro level and my generated framework of an inclusive classroom at the micro level, to help identify and discuss the criteria which enabled or constrained inclusive education in the classroom (6.4; 6.5).

Finally, I established the lessons learned from my study (7.3) and made various recommendations at the macro and micro level (7.4).

7.3 Lessons learned

This study set out to address the following questions:

- What is the contextual background and characterisation of the school in terms of the educational inclusivity of its learners?

- What do the foundation phase teachers' understand of inclusive education in the school and classroom?

- What types of barriers to learning (intrinsic and extrinsic) have teachers identified as being experienced by learners in their classrooms?

- How do teachers engage with their learners, including the learners they identified as experiencing barriers to learning, in ways that promote inclusivity and inclusive learning in the classroom?

- What, if any, are the challenges experienced by the foundation phase teachers in the implementation of inclusive education in their classrooms?

Guided by my research questions, I found that there were a number of important lessons learned at the macro and micro level which were extracted from this study.

7.3.1 Macro Level

The lessons learned from this study at the macro level include the following:

- *Levels of inclusivity at the school*

    o Baobab School's policies of inclusivity and admittance were restrictive at one level, but on another level, they enabled a better quality of inclusive education for the learners who were accepted at the school (6.4.2 Inclusive policies of Baobab School). The setting of school policy required a balance between the inclusiveness and restrictiveness of the admittance criteria of

learners, to enable a better-quality of inclusive learning experience once accepted learners entered the school.

- *Necessary factors of inclusivity at the school*

  o The inclusive culture of respect and acceptance were part of the ethos of the school, emanating from the principal, to the teachers and staff, through to the learners and their parents (4.2 Overview of Baobab School), and enabling the inclusive education of learners.

  o The principal, teachers, and staff were concerned with the well-being of the learners, and required that they should be present, punctual and prepared for their lessons and activities, thereby facilitating the inclusive education of the learners in the school and classrooms (4.2 Overview of Baobab School). Being caring and dependable earned the respect of the teachers' colleagues, as well as that of the learners at the school (Pienaar et al., 2013, p. 233).

  o The SBST was important in enabling that the necessary support was in place to facilitate the inclusive education of learners experiencing barriers to learning (4.6.3 Other factors).

  o Parent involvement in their children's education was considered essential in enabling the inclusive education of learners at the school (4.3.2 Extrinsic factors, Lack of parental recognition/involvement; 4.4.2 Extrinsic factors, Lack of parental recognition/involvement; Challenges experienced). This applied in particular to parents of learners experiencing barriers to learning, and their involvement and collaboration with the school and teachers to enable on-going constructive support of these learners.

  o Parent workshops were necessary and needed to be established, to encourage the parents' involvement with the school and their children's inclusive education (4.3.2 Extrinsic factors, Lack of parental recognition/involvement).

- *The need for professional teacher development*

  o The teachers' pointed out the need for funding for implementation of professional teacher training and development by the Department of Education; this was particularly necessary for the implementation of an inclusive education and the understanding of inclusive educational practices, strategies, techniques and skills needed in the classroom (5.6.2 Extrinsic factors). This would include training in up-to-date models and plans of inclusive teaching and learning strategies (2.7 Teacher professional development). Donohue and Bornman state that "the Department of Education needs to hold itself accountable for the implementation of a policy it created, especially since inclusive policies are of little meaning and use unless they are implemented and enforced" (2014, p. 11).

  o The teachers' pointed out the need for funding and the implementation of professional teacher training and development by the Department of Education in the intrinsic and extrinsic barriers to learning experienced by learners and the best methods of addressing these barriers to support learners, especially learners with challenging and unsuitable behaviour, as well as with health impairments. (4.3.2 Extrinsic factors, Inadequate/inappropriate support services). Engelbrecht et al. stress that "well-skilled professional teachers who have a clear understanding of a variety of barriers to learning, and what their own responsibilities are in addressing these barriers in their own classrooms, are therefore of the utmost importance in the implementation of inclusive education" (2015, p. 8).

- *The use of community support structures*

  o The effective use of community support structures may enhance inclusive practices in schools (4.6.3 Other factors, Support agencies), while support structures that do not function constrain inclusive practices (4.3.3 Extrinsic factors, Inadequate/inappropriate support services). There should be "clear directives for appropriate responsibility and control of implementation" (Engelbrecht et al., 2015, p. 532) of inclusive education by the appropriate authorities, especially where learners experiencing barriers to learning are concerned.

7.3.2 Micro Level

The lessons learned at the micro level were as follows:

- *The need for adequate school and classroom infrastructure, organisation and resources*

  o Adequate school and classroom infrastructure, adequate and correctly placed and organised classroom furniture, and up-to-date and sufficient classroom resources enable the inclusive education of learners (4.2 Overview of Baobab School; 4.4.2 Extrinsic factors, Inaccessible/unsafe learning environment; 6.5.1 Organisation and practices to support inclusion in the classroom). Beattie et al.(2006) and Makoelle et al. (2016) stress the importance of the physical layout and the arrangement of the furniture in the classroom to enable the teaching and learning of learners.

- *Class size: The constraint of a high teacher to learner ratio*

  o The number of 36 learners per class was considered by the teachers to be too large to ensure that all learners receive sufficient attention from the teacher to achieve a quality education (4.4.3 Extrinsic factors, Challenges experienced). "Classrooms that are overcrowded limit the active learning strategies that teachers can employ and the amount of individual attention learners can receive. Both advanced and struggling learners experience barriers to learning in such environments" (Pienaar & Raymond, 2013, p.26).

  o A teacher aid in each classroom may enable a smaller teacher to learner ratio and could provide additional support for learners experiencing barriers to learning (4.3.3 Other factors, Difficulties experienced in implementing inclusive education in the classroom). This would entail an additional cost factor, although student teachers wanting to gain experience contribute to classes as teacher aids at a lower cost than fully qualified teachers would require.

- *Shared sense of responsibility*

  - A shared sense of responsibility and collaboration between all the stakeholders enabled the inclusive education of learners (4.2 Overview of Baobab School). This included the principal, teachers, school staff, the SBST, the DBST, the parents, expert members in the community, and the learners themselves. Okeke et al. (2014, p. 220) reiterate that "each one of these groups brings something to the creation of the inclusive education classroom".

- *Constructing a supportive classroom environment*

  - A comfortable, safe and supportive environment, brought about by the teachers who have a positive attitude enable the inclusive education of learners; these are the teachers who are approachable and interested in their learners, who ensure routine, structure, set boundaries, minimise distractions, and use positive reinforcement in the form of praise, as well as instilling discipline when necessary (5.5 Emergent factors from the classroom observations, Supportive classroom environment). Multilingual teachers benefit learners with differing language backgrounds in the classroom. Pienaar and Raymond note that a supportive classroom environment is very important for the learners as it "fosters a sense of belonging" (2013, p. 30).

- *Lessons that are well planned, organised, and flexibly presented, to generate inclusive learning*

  - Well planned, organised and flexibly presented lessons by teachers enabled the inclusive teaching and learning of learners. This included the reviewing of previous concepts and processes already learnt; short, clear instructions; repetition; the use of a variety of examples; and modelling by the teacher by using think-aloud techniques (5.5 Emergent factors from the classroom observations).
  - The flexible implementation of the curriculum enabled the inclusive teaching and learning of learners, adapting it according to the needs of learners, and allowing for extra time for practising concepts and processes of which the learners were unsure. There was concern expressed, however, that this method of teaching could mean

that the curriculum would not be covered in its entirety by the end of the year (4.4.3 Other factors, Difficulties experienced in implementing inclusive education in the classroom).

- *The importance of reading*

  o The importance of learning to read could not be over-emphasised. The teachers use various strategies in teaching reading, from phonics-based methods, to the decoding and encoding of words, to the use of illustrations and discussions addressing the comprehension of the text, to the learners reading with their peers in groups and pairs (5.5 Emergent factors from the classroom observations, Reading techniques; Working in pairs and groups). These strategies enabled the learners in reading ability. Beattie et al. point out that "reading strategies can help students get the most from their reading no matter what their reading abilities are" (2006, p. 136).

  o The classroom libraries and student volunteers to assist learners with their reading, were important initiatives, enabling reading by the learners (4.2 Overview of Baobab School; 5.4.6 Lesson 6).

  o The shortage of reading resources in the form of differentiated reading books for the different reading levels of the learners in each grade, constrained access to the correct level of reading material for learners (4.3.3 Other factors, Reading). This in turn constrained their ability, motivation and enjoyment of reading.

- *Using a variety of teaching strategies to allow varied engagement and diverse learning styles*

  o The teachers used a variety of teaching and learning strategies in enabling the inclusive education and engagement of their learners. These included: scaffolding; cooperative learning; differentiated teaching and learning strategies; individual, one-on-one support; and accommodations and modifications for learners experiencing barriers to learning (5.5 Emergent factors from the classroom observations).

  o The teachers used diverse teaching and learning styles, from visual, to auditory, to kinaesthetic, and tactile, as well as to a variety of concrete and semi-concrete

resources, to enable the continuous engagement and understanding of concepts by the learners, including the learners experiencing barriers to learning (5.5 Emergent factors from the classroom observations, Accommodating different learning styles; Use of concrete resources). Nel et al. (2013) note that it is important that teachers understand that learners learn in different ways and that their teaching methods should address this.

- *Early identification and intervention of learners experiencing barriers to learning*

  o The importance of early identification and intervention of learners experiencing barriers to learning was stressed by the teachers in order to avoid the development of later and extensive developmental problems in learners (Landsberg, Krüger & Nel, 2005, p. 87). This process, however, was made challenging sometimes due to the non-involvement of parents, the lack of response from the DBST once the SNA forms were sent to them, limited access to professional personnel who could provide voluntary support, and limited resources. No formal written Individual Education Plan (IEP) was established for the learners experiencing barriers to learning; this would map out individual learning needs and prescribe specific educational objectives. The lack of IEPs constrained the effective management of the educational process of learners experiencing barriers to learning.

7.4 Recommendations

This research study has come to similar conclusions as have other studies in South Africa (Engelbrecht et al., 2006; Geldenhuys et al., 2013; McConnachie, 2013; Donohue et al., 2014; Engelbrecht et al., (2015), and Babić et al., (2018). It does, however, give a different perspective on the implementation of inclusive education by entering the classroom at the micro level and observing the engagement of the teacher with her learners to promote inclusivity. The following recommendations are made at both the micro and macro level:

7.4.1 Micro level

From the lessons learned above at the micro level, in enabling an inclusive classroom, we would need to pay careful attention to school and classroom infrastructure, organisation and practice. This would include:

- o An inclusive school infrastructure to accommodate learners with additional needs, to enable easy access around the school for learners.
- o The creation of more classrooms of sufficient size to accommodate comfortably the teacher, the learners, and the classroom furniture, allowing for a free flow of movement in the class.
- o A smaller class size in terms of learner numbers to enable a better teacher to learner ratio.
- o The possibility of a teacher aid per classroom to assist the classroom teacher.
- o The possibility of teachers being fluent in more than one language of teaching and learning to assist learners with differing language backgrounds.
- o The seating arrangement of learners needs to be compatible with classroom diversity, allowing for interaction and collaboration between learners, cooperative learning and an atmosphere of inclusivity.
- o The need for up-to-date classroom resources and assistive devices. Professional teacher training in the use of these resources, to enable inclusive teaching and learning practices, would also need to be provided.
- o The importance of enabling the collaboration and a shared sense of responsibility between all the stakeholders in the inclusive education of learners, especially concerning learners experiencing barriers to learning.
- o A supportive learning environment is needed so that learners feel appreciated, comfortable, and safe, with teachers who have a positive attitude, are interested in and engaged with their learners. Professional teacher training in the management of behavioural problems would need to be made available.
- o Structure and routine need to be established in the classroom, with well-planned, organised, and presented lessons, which begin punctually. Teachers need to allow for the flexible implementation of the curriculum, reteaching, and reviewing of core content before commencing with new content, clear examples, and skill modelling

for new content, as well as sufficient practice by learners to be able to perform at an acceptable level. Feedback and correction need to be provided by the teacher, undertaking the periodic review of content and skills.

o Instructions given by the teachers at the foundation phase level need to be short and clear, with the use of repetition and a variety of examples. Distractions need to be kept to a minimum.

o The importance of learning to read and of exposing learners to reading on an ongoing basis in the formative years at primary schools is essential, by making books available and accessible in the classroom. The books need to be in the various home languages of the learners and relevant to the age group and life-world of the learners in the class. Reading programmes and initiatives from the community could provide additional opportunities for learners to read.

o The need for up-to-date reading resources catering for the different reading levels of learners. Professional teacher training in reading strategies would need to be provided.

o The examples in the Mathematics text books would need to be revised to help clarify concepts being taught.

o Parent workshops informing parents of the significance of reading in the lives of their children, and guidance on how and where to access books.

o The importance of accommodating the diverse learning styles of learners by providing multiple and flexible teaching and learning styles in the classroom, as well as adopting concrete and semi-concrete resources.

o The use of a variety of inclusive teaching and learning strategies by the teachers, such as scaffolding, cooperative learning, differentiated teaching and learning, individual learner support, accommodations, and modifications.

o The importance of early identification and intervention of barriers to learning experienced by learners in the foundation phase, through continuous formative assessments, collaboration with all the stakeholders to put a formal written IEP in place and to access the necessary medical intervention, expert support personnel and assistive devices and resources.

7.4.2 Macro level

From the lessons learned above at the macro level, in enabling inclusive education at schools, policy makers and the Department of Education would need to look critically at the following:

- *Teacher support*

  o The professional in-service training and development of teachers in up-to-date inclusive educational practices, strategies, skills and techniques to respond to the increasing diversity of needs and abilities of learners in their classrooms.
  o The professional in-service training and development of teachers in what constitutes intrinsic and extrinsic barriers to learning, how to recognise and address them by providing the necessary support to learners experiencing barriers to learning.
  o Professional training in inclusive educational models and plans should be made available to schools and their teachers, as well as hands-on training in practical skills.
  o The effects of professional teacher training and development needs to be monitored and feedback provided. Makoelle et al. (2016, p. 65) points out that teachers need to be "taught how to be critical and reflective about their practice and to rely heavily on evidence-based teaching".

- *Policy implementation*

  o The DBSTs need to follow through and provide the necessary feedback and support required once receiving the SNA forms from schools and parents by making available the expert support personnel, assistive devices, and resources needed by learners.
  o The establishment of public awareness programmes in the community and among parents of learners at schools to promote inclusive education, especially concerning barriers to learning, such as health impairments and behavioural difficulties.
  o The provision of clear directives and steps that schools need to take to encourage parental involvement in their children's schools.

Future research could aim at providing a comprehensive picture of the factors enabling and constraining the successful delivery of inclusive education in the classroom on the basis of larger samples than are offered here. The focus could be extended to include not only other primary schools in other areas in South Africa, but also preschool institutions and secondary schools.

7.5 Critical reflections on the study

Arguably one of the main contentions of this study is the sample size of a single no-fee-paying primary school and its three foundation phase classrooms, and the generalisability and transferability of its findings and recommendations. Bassey (1999, p. 12), however, points out that "fuzzy generalisation arises from studies of singularities and typically claims that *it is possible, or likely or unlikely* that what was found in the singularity will be found in similar situations elsewhere". Stake (1995) noted that the real business of a case study is particularisation and not generalisation, with the emphasis on a particular case and getting to know it well "through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information that are rich in context" (de Vos et al, 2011, p. 321). The research was "strengthened by 'vicarious experiences' so well constructed through 'thick description' that a person feels a sense of being there, as if it happened to themselves" (following Wilmot, 2005, p. 153, who draws on Stake, 2000a, p. 430).

The complexity of my study topic, the depth of data needing to be collected from the classroom, and the time factor, all dictated that I enter only three foundation phase classrooms at the school. Moreover, I was restricted to those classrooms where English was the language of teaching and learning, not being sufficiently proficient in the other two languages taught at the school, namely isiXhosa and Afrikaans, to benefit from the observation. I, however, noted that in observing the three English medium foundation phase classrooms, I would be able to observe the possible challenges learners faced when not learning in their home language.

A difficulty I experienced when analysing my research data, was being unable to audio record the Grade 3 teacher's interview or video record the one-day observations of the three classrooms. I had to rely on my hand-written notes and reflections thereafter, which I wrote up in my journal on the same day. I found that the audio and video recordings provided a more

accurate and detailed rendition of the interviews and the week-long classroom observations in which teachers were comfortable with recordings.

In reflecting back on the study, I was faced with a research dilemma when analysing my data using Walton's and Nel's inclusive spider's web analogy of a school as a heuristic to establish the inclusivity of Baobab School and the foundation phase classrooms. I found that their framework was useful at a macro level, however, it did not adequately address the micro level of an inclusive classroom. Based on literature and my research results, I decided to generate a framework at the micro level, using the spiders web analogy, of an inclusive classroom. This research dilemma enabled me to develop new knowledge through the creation of a micro level framework of an inclusive classroom.

7.6 Conclusion

This research study responded to the need for a deeper understanding of the engagement of teachers with learners, including learners experiencing barriers to learning, in our ordinary, public, primary school classrooms in South Africa, as well as the extent to which classroom practices are inclusive (Walton, 2006, p. 181; Engelbrecht, Nel, Nel & Tlale, 2015, p. 3).

On entering a no-fees paying, public, primary school in the Eastern Cape and three of its English medium foundation phase classrooms, it was heartening to observe the extent to which inclusive education and practices were carried out at the school and in the classrooms. I found that, as Walton et al (2011, p. 244) aptly put it, "learning about the inclusive culture and practices at these schools is instructive as it provides examples of what can work in the South African context". Various lessons were learned and recommendations made of classroom practice at the micro level, and teacher support and policy implementation in inclusive education at the macro level.

There remain numerous challenges that are faced by schools, teachers and the South African Department of Basic Education in enabling the implementation of an inclusive education. At the macro level, further provincial and national support is needed for providing "clear directives for appropriate responsibility and control of implementation" (Engelbrecht et al., 2015, p. 532) of inclusive education by the appropriate authorities, as well as well-structured professional teacher training and development programmes, and external funding for school

and classroom infrastructure and resources. At the micro level, the successful implementation of inclusive teaching and learning practices is needed by teachers who would benefit from supportive assistance by expert personnel, resources, and assistive devices for learners experiencing barriers to learning.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Formal Letter of Permission to the Principal

Dear

Permission to initiate a research project at your school

The purpose of this letter is to request your permission to initiate a Master of Education research project with the foundation phase teachers, whose language of teaching and learning is in English, at your school.

Teachers in South Africa have been attempting to practice inclusive education in ordinary schools for over 16 years, since the introduction of an inclusive system and Education White Paper 6: Special Needs Education by the South African Department of Basic Education in 2001. Education White Paper 6: Special Needs Education (South Africa, Department of Education [DoE], 2001) defines inclusive education as acknowledging that all children can learn and need support, and that learner diversity should be recognized and respected. An inclusive school has the responsibility to accommodate the diverse learning needs of all its learners (Nel, Nel, & Hugo, 2013). This refers not only to disabilities, but to differences in age, gender, ethnicity, language, class, HIV and other infectious diseases (DoE, 2001, p. 6). White Paper 6 states that teachers should be enabled to address the learning needs of all their learners, including those experiencing barriers to learning, in their classrooms (Engelbrecht et al., 2015). Ultimately, it is at the level of the classroom that inclusive education is put into practice. An inclusive classroom, therefore, ensures "the participation of all learners within an effective learning environment in the classroom" (Rose &Howley, 2007). Inclusive education in schools and in the classroom is not only about access to education by all learners, but also about the "belonging, nurturing and educating all students, regardless of their differences in ability, culture, gender, language, class and ethnicity" (Engelbrecht et al., 2015, p. 1).

As a learning support teacher for children in the foundation and intermediate phase, I am interested in finding out more about the engagement of foundation phase teachers with all learners, including learners displaying barriers to learning, in their classrooms. I am especially interested in the teachers' perceptions of inclusive education in the classroom, what types of barriers to learning they experience in the classroom, how they engage with learners in ways that promote inclusivity in the classroom, and the challenges, if any, they encounter of the implementation of inclusive education in the classroom.

I have designed the research project to consist of two phases:

Phase 1:

The collection of data from each of the foundation phase teachers, whose language of teaching and learning is in English, through a questionnaire, semi-structured interview and a morning of classroom observations.

Phase 2:

One foundation phase teacher will be selected for a further week of classroom observations.

The data gathered from both phases will be analysed in order to identify patterns and trends and emergent themes. The insights gathered will help the researcher gain a better understanding of the engagement of teachers with all learners, including learners experiencing barriers to learning, at the foundation phase classroom level.

With the best interests of the teachers and your school at heart, I would like to request permission to initiate the aforementioned research project at your school and invite the foundation phase teachers to participate in the research project. I look forward to hearing from you. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or need further explanation or clarification.

Yours sincerely,

Vera Skae

Appendix B

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Research Project Title:	An Eastern Cape, public, primary school's engagement with children in an inclusive foundation phase classroom in the presence of barriers to learning: A case study analysis
Researcher(s):	Vera Skae

Participation Information
- I understand the purpose of the research study and my involvement in it   - I understand the risks and benefits of participating in this research study   - I understand that I may withdraw from the research study at any stage without any penalty   - I understand that participation in this research study is done on a voluntary basis   - I understand that while information gained during the study may be published, I will remain anonymous and no reference will be made to me by name   - I understand that I need to fill in a questionnaire   - I understand that I will be interviewed   - I understand that the interviews will be recorded electronically (audio recorder)   - I understand that I will be observed in the classroom   - I understand and agree that audio and video recording will be used in the classroom   - I understand that I will be given the opportunity to read and comment on the transcribed interview, observation notes, audio and video recordings   - I confirm that I am not participating in this study for financial gain

Information Explanation
The above information was explained to me by: Vera Skae
The above information was explained to me in English and I understand this language:

Voluntary Consent		
I, hereby voluntarily consent to participate in the above-mentioned research.		
Signature:	Date:	/ /

Investigator Declaration		
I, Vera Skae, declare that I have explained all the participant information to the participant and have truthfully answered all questions asked to me by the participant.		
Signature:	Date:	/ /

Appendix C

TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

Questions		Responses			
1.	What grade do you teach?	Grade:			
2.	How many children are in your class?				
3.	What is the main language of teaching and learning in your class?				
4..	How many children in your class are:	Xhosa home language speakers?			
		Afrikaans home language speakers?			
		English home language speakers?			
		Other			
5.	How many children in your class have barriers to learning?				

6.	Which of the following barriers to learning in children have you experienced in your class? Place an **X** in one of the columns below **Yes**, **No** or **Not sure, This year, Past years**:					
	Intrinsic (within the child):	**Yes**	**No**	**Not sure**	**This year**	**Past years**
	Visual impairment/difficulty					
	Hearing impairment/difficulty					
	Physical impairment/difficulty					
	Intellectual impairment/difficulty					
	Emotional/behavioural difficulty					
	Health impairment					
	Epilepsy					
	Cerebral palsy					
	Learning difficulty					
	Dyslexia					
	Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD)					
	Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)					
	Foetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS)					
	Other (please specify)					

7.	Which of the following extrinsic barriers to learning are you experiencing this year?			
	Extrinsic (external to the child):	**Yes**	**No**	**Not sure**
	Inflexible curriculum			
	Inappropriate languages of teaching and learning			
	Inappropriate/inadequate provision of support services			
	Inaccessible/unsafe learning environments			
	Inadequate policies and legislation			

	Limited professional development for teachers			
	Poverty and underdevelopment			
	Lack of parental recognition and involvement			
	Other (please specify)			
8.	What do you think inclusive education means?			
9.	What do you think is an inclusive education school?			
10.	What do you think is an inclusive education classroom?			
11.	Does your school have a School Based Support Team (SBST)?			
12.	Do you use inclusive education teaching and learning strategies in your classroom? Please tell me what they are?			
13.	What difficulties (if any) do you face with trying to bring about inclusive education in your classroom?			
14.	Does your school receive any support for the inclusive teaching and learning of the children in the school and classroom? Who provides this support?			
	Teacher details			
	Name:		**Date:**	
1.	How many years have you been teaching?			
2.	What are your educational and professional qualifications?			
3.	Have you had any in-service professional training in inclusive education? If yes, who did you have the training with?			

Appendix D

CLASS OBSERVATIONS

Class Teacher: ………………………… Date: …………………… Grade: …………..
Number of learners: ……………..

The school environment:	Yes	No	Comment
• Infrastructure/buildings (accessible for learners with disabilities – ramps and space for wheelchairs)			
• Toilet facilities – accessible			
• Transport for learners with disabilities			
• School atmosphere – accepting of all learners – positive			
• School - structure and routine			
• School rules – consistent			
• Collaboration between principal/ teachers/ support personnel/ professionals/ SBST/ DBST			
The classroom teaching and learning environment:	**Yes**	**No**	**Comment**
• Physical spacing – uncluttered			Physical space arrangement:
• Layout of desks and chairs (orderly, all learners catered for)			Desk arrangements:

	Yes	No	Comments
• Display boards, cupboards and storage areas/ lockers – sufficient			
• Positioning of the learners in the classroom – learners needing support are in front (sight, hearing, focus)			
• Reading corner (variety of books)			
• Resources/teaching aids/learning support material in the classroom (blocks, abacus, beads, visual cards, flashcards, posters, games, puzzles, text books)			

Lesson Subject: ………………………… Lesson Topic:..………………….................
Time: …………………………….. Length of lesson: ………………………….

The following was observed during the lesson:	Yes	No	Sometimes	Comments
Lesson planned, organised, presented to diverse learning styles (auditory, visual, tactile, kinaesthetic, concrete, sensory)				
Students actively engaged – motivated, distractions managed, involvement of all learners, asking learners questions, allowing questions from learners				
Management of time spent between learners – extra time spent with learners experiencing difficulties				
Management of behaviour – routine, rules, discipline, interruptions, disruptions				

Explicit/clear instruction – slow, point-by-point, not too long/too many points at one time				
Clear/relevant examples given				
Modelling the process using think-aloud techniques				
Repetition of instructions where necessary/ repeated in another language (Afrikaans/ Xhosa)				
Classroom print media (board, posters, bulletins, signs, cards) in large, clear, bold font – easily readable				
Use of multiple reading materials – Books, magazines, worksheets				
Use of multiple writing materials – pencils, crayons, paint, large and small sizes, types and colour of paper/card/cardboard				
Use of multiple resources – blocks, beads, sand, play dough, water, containers, recyclable paper, plastic, glass containers, bottles, boxes				
Use of buddy system, paired reading, peer support/tutoring				
Use of cooperative learning (small groups where learners work together towards shared goals, supporting each other and learning from each other)				

Use of scaffolding (teaching and learning in small incremental steps)				
Differentiated learning groups/levels – reading, spelling, mathematics				
Use of positive reinforcement (praise, stars, stickers, free time, a reward)				
Use of accommodations and modifications (extra time, reduction of work, conceptual difficulty, reader, scribe, orally)				
Involvement of parents/ community				

Appendix E

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	

Research Project Title:	An Eastern Cape, public, primary school's engagement with children in a foundation phase classroom in the presence of barriers to learning: A case study analysis
Investigator:	Vera Skae

Research Goal:	To describe, with a view to understanding, the engagement of an Eastern Cape, public, primary school with children, including children displaying barriers to learning, in an inclusive foundation phase classroom

Teacher:	
Grade:	
Number of children in class:	
Main language of teaching and learning:	
Home language of learners:	

Interview Questions to Foundation Phase Teachers:	**Prompts:**	**Answer:**
What do you think **inclusive education** means? What do you think is an **inclusive school**? What do you think is an **inclusive classroom**?		**Inclusive education:** **Inclusive school:** **Inclusive classroom:**
Do you think your school is an **inclusive school**? Do you think your classroom is an **inclusive classroom**? Why do you think this?		**School:** **Classroom:**
Do you think the **policies and legislation** for an inclusive education in South Africa are good/adequate/effective? Why do you think this?		
What do you understand to be **barriers to learning** for children at your school?		
What do you understand to be **intrinsic** barriers to learning in children?	- Within the child. - Can you give some examples?	

What do you understand to be **extrinsic** barriers to learning for children?	- Outside factors affecting the child. - Can you give some examples?	
How do the school and teachers **recognise and accommodate learners** with barriers to learning? Do you use the **SIAS policies** and forms to get accommodations etc. for learners with barriers to learning?	- Do the parents know/ understand? - SBST and DBST? - National strategy for Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS) – SIAS school pack – Individual Support Plan (ISP)	
Intrinsic: - noted in questionnaire **visual impairment** - **Emotional/ behavioural difficulty** - **Learning difficulty**	- how many children? - manifestation? - glasses? - diagnosed by a specialist? (clinic, doctor, psychologist) - If yes, what recommendations did they give to help the child – at home and at school? - what do you do to help the child?	
Have you experienced any other forms of **intrinsic barriers** to learning when teaching **in the past**? (ADHD/FAS/ASD/Dyslexia/Cerebral palsy/Epilepsy/Physical/Auditory etc.)		
Extrinsic: **-** Noted in questionnaire **lack of parental recognition and involvement**	- why do you think this is the case? -what do you think can be done to change this?	
Do you think learning in **English** is a **barrier to learning** for your children where their home languages are either Xhosa or Afrikaans? Why do you think this? What do you think can be done to help the learners in this case?		

Do you think your curriculum is flexible enough to accommodate all the children in your class? Why do you think this?		
What do you do/ what **strategies** do you use to ensure an inclusive education in your classroom?	- Accommodations? - Concessions? - Modifications? - Resources?	
How do you assess your learners in your class? - including learners with barriers to learning?	- Observations? - Curriculum-based assessment (C.B.A.) (learner has mastered skill/learning outcome) - Ongoing assessments - Performance assessments - Formal assessments/norm-referenced tests (reading, writing, spelling, maths, behaviour) - SIAS and ISP	
Do you think there are any learners in your class that you feel should repeat the Grade 2 year next year? Why do you think this? What is the procedure you follow for the child to repeat the year?		
Do you think poverty and underdevelopment affects the children's learning in your class? Why do you think this?		
Have you had any **in-service professional training** in inclusive education? If yes, what was it and has it helped you with your inclusive teaching of the children in your class? If No, what type of further training would you like to have – in what areas would you like further training to be able to help the children in your class?	- Short courses? – Rhodes/Gadra - District based support team (DBST)?	
What **challenges** do you face in bringing about an inclusive education to the children in your class?	- Buildings? - Resources? - Materials? - Curriculum?	

	- Language? - Training? - Parents?	
Do you know what and how the **support agencies connected to your school** help to bring about more of an inclusive education for the children at your school?	- Gadra - St Mary's DCC – Wordworks Literacy programme - Rhodes University - Kingswood - Kuyasa	
What more do you think can be done to ensure an inclusive education for the children in your classroom?		