

**EXPLORING TEACHING PRACTICES THAT ARE EFFECTIVE
IN PROMOTING INCLUSION IN SOUTH AFRICAN
SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

A thesis submitted to the University of Manchester for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in the
Faculty of Humanities

2013

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EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT AND INCLUSION/
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

ABSTRACT

Prior to the advent of the new democratic political dispensation in 1994, South African education had laboured under racially motivated discriminatory practices of active exclusion of the majority of learners. The authoritarian system located educational problems in the perceived deficiencies of the learner rather than in the repressive, top-down, non-participative, unreflective and uninclusive practices of the prevailing educational orthodoxy of the time. After 1994, the broader reconceptualisation of South African education sought to redress the imbalances of the past by creating equal opportunities for all learners, irrespective of race or creed. However, the difficult conundrum was how such a complex systemic change could be driven by teachers who had not only been trained in a heavily segregated educational system but formed part of it. Therefore, the aim of the thesis was to determine how teachers conceptualised inclusive teaching, explore the teaching practices that were believed to be effective in promoting inclusion in the South African secondary classrooms, and determine how they could be developed.

The two-dimensional research study firstly took the form of a qualitative collaborative action-research project conducted with a team of fifteen teachers at a single South African secondary school. The project was non-positivistic, critical, emancipatory and allowed the participants jointly to define the constructs of *inclusive education*, *inclusive teaching* and *inclusive class*; to identify practices of inclusion through observation; to adopt other practices in their classes; to determine the effect of such practices on inclusive teaching and learning; and finally to draw conclusions about the specific practices that were clearly effective in the context of their school. Secondly, an inductive analytical framework was used by the researcher to determine the theoretical contribution the study would make to the notion of developing inclusive teaching practices and determining the way this could be achieved within the South African school context. Data were collected through a series of meetings, participant observations, focus-group interviews, and one-on-one semi-structured interviews during the action-research stages of planning, action and reflection. Limitations were the teacher-researchers' lack of experience in conducting research and the limited time the research team had to complete the research tasks.

The findings indicate that, at the time of the research, the conceptualisations of *inclusive teaching* and *inclusive pedagogy* were varied and continued to be influenced by the former special-needs education system. Moreover, the findings show that, while the inclusive practices identified by the teachers in this study are popular in the international literature, they need to be contextualised in and made relevant to the South African situation. However, it is clear that the teachers' experience of participating in the action-research process had raised their awareness of the importance of inclusive teaching, promoted a sense of emancipation, and held out the prospect of successful and possibly lasting change. These findings clearly imply that the reconceptualisation of inclusive pedagogy should always take place within a specific context, and that South African teachers in particular should form communities of inquiry to reflect on and develop their inclusive practices. The study has captured the essence of inclusion within the South African school context and has identified areas that need further research, for example the impact of different cultural beliefs on both teachers and learners in relation to inclusion.

In conclusion, the study has demonstrated the unique contribution of action research in promoting continuous reflection, revision and intervention as indispensable procedures in the process of improving inclusive teaching and learning.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my mother, Ditlhare Evodia Makoelle, for her commitment in raising me and in guiding me to success.

“What the mind of man can conceive and believe, it can achieve” – Napoleon Hill

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I could not have written this thesis without the generous assistance of the following persons

In particular, I would like to acknowledge a large debt of gratitude to:

- Dr Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela for awarding me the scholarship and trusting in my ability to undertake a study of this magnitude.
- My supervisor, Professor Alan Dyson, and co-supervisor, Dr Susie Miles, for their support, guidance, motivation and encouragement during difficult times.
- Professor Sechaba Mahlomaholo, my mentor, for his support during difficult times.
- Dr Macalane Malindi for his critical reading of the thesis during the drafting stages.
- The teachers and learners who participated in this research project without reservation.
- My late father and mother for their generosity of spirit, tireless motivation and guidance.
- My wife, Palesa Makoelle; my daughter, Nthabikie Makoelle; and my son, Mohau Makoelle, for their loving encouragement and support.
- My friends, Mosala Ramabodu and Siyabulela Sabata, for their unwavering moral support.
- Mr Albert Harold for his meticulous editing of the thesis
- The Reverends, Taole Molatoli and Thabo Malunga for their spiritual encouragement.
- The Almighty for the strength, vision and courage He bestowed upon me.

Michael Makoelle 2013

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND AGRONYMS

AIDS	Acquired Immunity Deficiency Syndrome
AR	Action Research
CBI	Computer-based Instruction
DoBE	Department of Basic Education
EEA	Employment Equity Act
EENET	Enabling Education Network
ELRC	Education Labour Relations Council
FET	Further Education and Training
GET	General Education and Training
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HOD	Head of Department
ICT	Information Communication Technology
IE	Instrumental Enrichment
IEP	Individualised Education Programme
INDS	Integrated National Disability Strategy
IQMS	Integrated Quality Management Systems
LO	Life Orientation
LSM	Learning Support Material
NCESS	National Committee on Education Support Services
NCS	National Curriculum Statement
NCSNET	National Committee on Special Needs in Education and Training

OBE	Outcomes-based Education
RCL	Representative Council of Learners
SADTU	South African Democratic Teachers Union
SBST	Site/school-based Support Team
SGB	School Governing Body
STD	Secondary Teacher's Diploma
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
USA	United State of America

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CHAPTER1: INTRODUCTORY ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This thesis explores classroom teaching practices that are effective in promoting inclusion in the South African secondary school context. This was a collaborative action-research project conducted with a team of fifteen teachers at a South African secondary school. The research was qualitative, non-positivistic, critical, emancipatory and allowed the voices of the research participants to be heard. A team of enquiry was established. It conceptualised the study by initiating change within self-planned research activities.

In this chapter, I provide an orientation to the study. I take the reader through the odyssey of my thesis by recounting how my past history as a student and a teacher in South Africa has influenced my current thinking on the notion of inclusion. First, I present a brief background to the history of the current South African inclusive education system, followed by a brief discussion of the research aim and design. Next, I discuss the salient research contributions that led to the development of a conceptual framework for the study, justify the choice of the research site, and familiarise the reader with the school which was the research site by presenting detailed information about its history, current status and composition. I conclude this introductory chapter by discussing the significance of this study, outlining the structure of the thesis, and defining the salient concepts.

1.2 THE PAST DETERMINES CURRENT THINKING: A HISTORY OF EXCLUSION

Since birth and until the advent of democratic rule in South Africa in 1994, I lived through an experience of racial exclusion. From 1978 to 1984, I attended a primary school that was designed exclusively for the black children in the former exclusively black Department of Education and Training during the years of apartheid. The curriculum during those times was characterised by the rote-learning and recitation of poems and foreign history, for example, all of which sought to perpetuate racial inequality and entrench discrimination on the basis of race, skin colour, ethnicity and gender. Boys were compelled to study

Agriculture as a compulsory subject to ensure the production of labour for the white-owned farms, and girls were obliged to do needlework to reinforce the notion that blacks cannot excel at any subjects beyond manual labour. I was compelled to study all the subjects in Afrikaans, the language of the 'white masters' and a third language to me, which made schooling a difficult exercise for me and those who could not understand it. This resulted in many pupils leaving school prematurely.

From 1985 to 1989, I attended an exclusively black high school, but surprisingly there were a few white teachers at the school who earned double what their black counterparts did because of the allowances they received to teach supposedly less intelligent blacks in a 'risky community'. High-school education was meant for the few, and excluded the disabled, blind, deaf, and those who did not belong to the Christian faith. Corporal punishment was the order of the day; learners exhibiting behaviour difficulties were referred to reformatory schools; and those not coping with secondary education were forced to leave to work in firms and industries. The curriculum cared little about the needs of learners. I myself was discouraged from doing Mathematics because it was regarded as a difficult subject – most so-called 'non-whites' were encouraged to do social studies. On completion of high school, I could not go to university because tertiary institutions were deliberately expensive to exclude children from poor black families. I was compelled to attend an exclusively black college of education in the so-called former 'homeland' of QwaQwa, 'reserved' exclusively for Sotho-speaking 'citizens'. The training was based on the Christian dogma.

In 1993, I started my teaching career at an exclusively black high school. Learners at this school came from extremely poor socio-economic backgrounds and most of them lacked a good primary-school foundation and therefore underachieved. In the course of fifteen years of teaching at various high schools, I was confronted with learners who could do their school work with ease, those who struggled to learn, and those who could not stay in the system because their learning needs were not accommodated, sometimes because of what was taught, the way it was taught, overcrowding in classrooms, and lack of resources. The political changes in South Africa saw me appointed as the first black principal of an ex-model C high school (a school that was exclusively for whites) in 2002, the year in which the Department of Education introduced inclusive education as part of the broader transformation of education. Like many teachers who had been trained in a segregated and

uninclusive education system, I had to implement inclusion. The main question was whether my colleagues and I would have a smooth transition from an uninclusive to an inclusive way of teaching.

The commonly held principle of the Freedom Charter (1955) – that the doors of learning and culture shall be opened for all – prompted many other teachers and me to probe our role with regard to the provision of equitable education to all (Suttner and Cronin 1986). The central idea of inclusive education emanates from the political process evolving from the struggle for liberation and freedom for all. Thus the movement towards inclusion is in keeping with the aspirations of the previously disadvantaged to have access to education regardless of individual conditions and circumstances.

1.3 BACKGROUND TO THE SOUTH AFRICAN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION SYSTEM

South African society has undergone several changes since the dawn of its democracy in 1994. The education system, in particular, has undergone radical transformation. In 1997, the National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training (DoE 1997) and the National Committee on Education Support Services (DoE 1997) published a report on the quality of education for all, with special reference to overcoming the barriers to learning and development. The report constituted the first step in transforming the educational needs of all learners (DoE 1997: 1).

Historically, the South African education system has neglected the needs of the majority of learners, with the result that even special needs education has not received the necessary attention (DoE 1997). Consequently, it was crucial for the Department of Education to introduce inclusive education. Based on recommendations in the joint report (DoE 1997), the department of education released the consultative White Paper 6 (DoE 2001) aimed at building an inclusive education and training system, which spelled out the commitment of the Department of Education to providing inclusive education that took into consideration the needs of all learners, especially those disadvantaged by the apartheid education system.

I have observed that some teachers in South Africa have little or no skills in dealing with learners with special educational needs in an inclusive educational environment, and that

there are different ways in which schools implement and conceptualise the notion of inclusion. This is despite the adoption of the ambitious White Paper 6 in 2001.

I have been involved in education in South Africa for more than fifteen years in various capacities as a teacher, head of department for natural sciences, deputy principal, and principal of a secondary school. As the South African education system mostly does not involve teachers in initiating change and designing new structures, but rather in implementing them, this study provided the opportunity for both me as the researcher and for teachers to reflect on our role as agents of change towards inclusive education. Reflecting on practice and determining what could work in a specific context assisted us in being critical of our practice, thereby emancipating ourselves from the indoctrination we had been subjected to in the course of our teacher training during the apartheid years. I believe that the findings of this study will contribute significantly to education and, in particular, serve to

- provide a guideline for inclusive teaching;
- capacitate the education managers and practitioners of inclusive education;
- ensure the success of special needs inclusive teaching in the classroom situation;
- empower educators with classroom practices that are effective in promoting inclusion;
- contribute to the use of action research as a methodology.

This study arose from several contextual issues. In the next section, the context of the study is therefore outlined.

1.4 CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

The study was inspired by several issues; first, as a teacher in the South African context, one found oneself in a position of having to implement inclusive education; however, the policies on inclusion are neither well-articulated nor sufficiently clear about what ought to happen in the classroom. The training that we received as teachers did not prepare us adequately to deal with the challenge of teaching an inclusive class. The notion of

inclusive education symbolises a significant paradigm shift from oppressive and often restrictive mode of curriculum delivery to a more open and less restrictive mode of curriculum delivery, leaving a challenge with regard to the change of beliefs about our teaching philosophy. Furthermore, the varied contextualisations of inclusion in the literature identified a need to interrogate the notions of inclusion and inclusive practices.

For instance, the international literature on classroom teaching practices and strategies that are effective in promoting inclusion has evolved in two divergent directions. First, there are compelling reasons for believing that, in order to promote inclusion in the classroom, teachers have to adopt specific strategies and practices for teaching. According to the findings of the European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education (2003), cooperative learning, collaborative teaching, collaborative problem-solving, heterogeneous grouping, and effective teaching are among the practices that were discovered to be effective in promoting inclusion in European schools. Various authors, however, suggest different strategies and practices in promoting inclusion in the classroom, for example:

- improving learner participation through planning individualised learner education programmes (Lorenz 2002);
- determining learner needs using computerised curriculum-based measurement (Florian 2007);
- using behavioural teaching alongside interactive teaching (Farrell 1997; Nind & Kellett 2003);
- emphasising interactive analysis processes during teaching, fostering teacher cooperation through team and collaborative teaching (Thousand, Nevin & Villa, cited in Lorenz 2002);
- recognising the importance of relationships in the classroom (Gross 2002);
- involving parents in supporting the learners (Florian 2007).

Secondly, while recognising the significance of adopting specific practices proven to promote inclusion, Ainscow (1999: 53) avers that inclusion in the classroom has to be driven by creativity and innovation on the part of the teachers:

Indeed, my experience over the years has led me to believe that in most schools the expertise needed in order to teach all pupils effectively is usually available among the teaching staff.

These strong views continue to influence the way inclusive education is conceptualised throughout the world. There is also an indication that the issue of available resources plays a pivotal role in the choice of whether to adopt existing strategies (with the use of technology) or encourage teachers to be creative in designing an inclusive teaching approach. For example, in developed countries such as the United Kingdom (UK), the United States of America (USA) and the ones in Europe, neither the strategy view nor the creativity view is an issue because of the availability of the resources those countries have. However, in developing and so-called ‘third-world countries’ – for example, South Africa, India, Lesotho, Swaziland, Zambia, and Uganda – inclusion is mostly assumed to evolve from the creativity of the teacher in the absence of resources (Eleweke & Rodda 2000, Stubbs 2008).

Although inclusion is conceptualised internationally to mean that education should respond to the needs of all learners as proclaimed in the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO 1994), various other countries believe inclusive education is influenced by either one of the two positions alluded to earlier. For example, the term *inclusive education* means education that does not discriminate on the grounds of disability, culture, gender or other student- or staff-related aspects that are assigned significance by society. It involves all students in a community without exceptions and irrespective of their intellectual, physical, sensory or other differences. Inclusive education grants equal rights to all students to access the culturally valued curriculum of their society as full-time valued members of the mainstream classrooms. Inclusion emphasises diversity over assimilation, and makes every effort to avoid the colonisation of minority experiences by the dominant modes of thought and action (Dyson & Millward 2000).

South Africa, in its ambitious White Paper 6 (DoE 2001), conceptualises inclusive education among other things as:

- being about changing attitudes, behaviour, teaching methodologies, curricula and the environment to meet the needs of all learners;

- maximising the participation of all learners in the culture and curricula of educational institutions and uncovering and minimising barriers to learning;
- empowering learners by developing their strengths and enabling them to participate critically in the process of learning.

This study, however, views inclusion as a critique to special needs education (SNE) and therefore departs from the premise that inclusion widens the participation of learners regardless of their background. It is an education system that does not find fault with the learner but seeks to change pedagogy and pedagogical conditions to respond to learner diversity.

The implementation of inclusive education in South Africa came amidst the process of phasing in an outcomes-based curriculum (OBE) which is based on the same assumptions as inclusive education; that is, on the belief that all learners can learn and succeed and that they have full control over their learning (Kruger 1998).

In a country such as South Africa – which has comparatively few resources, where the teaching corps are not very highly qualified, and where their training was based on practising exclusion through the separatist philosophy of apartheid – implementing full inclusion will require extraordinary measures before teachers are able to change their beliefs and practices.

According to Engelbrecht and Green (2001), the teachers of South Africa have developed a resistant attitude towards change because of the autocratic style of change implementation by the various education departments during the apartheid era. The main question is, therefore, how teachers can be assisted to change their beliefs and attitudes from traditional (separate education based on classification, e.g. disability or race) methods of teaching to inclusive teaching.

1.5 THE AIMS OF THE STUDY

There is a global movement towards accommodating learners with special educational needs in regular classrooms (UNESCO 2001). Some 10 years ago already, the Department of Education in South Africa made it clear that special education as it existed in the past would be replaced by an inclusive model (DoE 2002: 11). The increase in the number of learners requiring specialised education, and the implementation of inclusive education, led to the following research problem: How can the teaching in the classrooms of South African secondary schools be made inclusive?

This research problem led to the following research questions:

- How do teachers understand the constructs *inclusive education*, *inclusive classroom* and *inclusive teaching* in the South African context?
- Which classroom teaching practices are known to be effective in promoting inclusion internationally?
- Which of those effective classroom teaching practices are applicable to the South African context?
- How can teachers be supported and encouraged to adopt effective classroom teaching practices that are proven to promote inclusion?

1.6 BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH DESIGN AND ROLE OF THE RESEARCHER

The research was a collaborative action-research project studying a single secondary school where the researcher was principal. The study was ethnographic, using participant observation (Pather 2003: 41). The research project explored and developed the teaching practices that the research literature suggests are effective in promoting inclusion in secondary school classrooms. The research process was two-dimensional, firstly, it took the form of collaborative action research in the course of which the teachers concerned and I worked together and supported one another. In the course of the project, the teachers jointly defined the constructs of inclusive education, inclusive teaching and inclusive class; identified practices of inclusion through observation; adopted other practices in their

classes; determined the effect on inclusive teaching and learning; and finally drew conclusions about the specific practices that were clearly effective in the context of their school. Secondly, I conducted a meta-research study whereby I analysed the data collected from the action-research (AR) process to determine the theoretical contribution the study could make to the notion of developing inclusive teaching practices and determining the way this could be achieved within the South African school context. The process was critical in the sense that the teachers questioned and challenged one another in terms of their existing notions of practice, thus leading to the development of their own local theory about what would be effective in promoting inclusion in their context.

Data were collected through a series of meetings, participant observations, focus-group interviews, and one-on-one semi-structured interviews which took place during the action-research stages of planning, action and reflection. The research team analysed the data using a group interpretative analysis strategy. As researcher, I also used an inductive analytical framework to determine the conclusions with regard to the answering of the research questions.

It must be noted that the unequal power relations between the researcher and other participants had the potential to compromise the objectivity and skew the findings of the research. In my position as principal, and as an academically and professionally well-qualified authority figure, I inevitably had to make provision for the effects of the divergent academic standards, teaching experience and general lack of initiative of the teachers who participated in the study. In consequence, I sometimes had to be proactive, take initiative and be instrumental in prompting some of activities for the study to progress. This could have undermined one of the basic principles of collaborative action research which demands that all role players enjoy equal participation. However, great care was taken not to influence the decisions and undermine the rights of the participants as equal partners in the research endeavour.

1.7 JUSTIFICATION FOR THE CHOICE OF THE RESEARCH SITE AND PARTICIPANTS

Clocolan High School was chosen as a research site for the following reasons:

- For developmental reasons, the school was serving a previously disadvantaged community.
- The school was where the researcher was principal, making it easily accessible.
- The school was one of the models of the new South Africa.
- It had the features of both a previously disadvantaged and advantaged school.
- It was highly performing in terms of matriculation results and reflected the demographics of the country.
- Because of the school's relevance to the new educational dispensation, the research results would be easily transferable to other schools.

Fifteen teachers at Clocolan High school voluntarily took part in the project. The sample of 15 teachers was spread as follows: junior teachers (0–10 years of teaching experience); specialist teachers (10–20 years of teaching experience); and senior specialists (20 and more years of teaching experience).

The Representative Council of Learners (RCL) – a body of 20 democratically elected learners representative of all the grades at the school and mandated to look at matters of learner interest – took part from the learners' perspective as a focus group.

1.8 AN OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH SITE

1.8.1 The site

It is standard procedure in research for the name of the research site to be kept confidential for the purposes of research ethics; however, in this study the participants maintained a different position because the study was the first of its kind in that teachers were given the opportunity to reflect on their practice and develop their own local theory about what they thought constituted best practice. The teachers strongly identified with the project and wished it to be known that they had contributed to their own emancipation and development (however, the reader is made aware that the study took place from 2008 to 2009 and that the teachers who were employed subsequently were not part of the

agreement). Consequently, for the purposes of the study, the research team agreed that the actual name of the research site “Clocolan High School” would be used.

1.8.2 Situation

Clocolan High School was established in 1995 after the demise of apartheid, replacing Clocolan Gekombineerde Skool [Clocolan Combined School] established in 1907. The school is situated in Clocolan, one of the rural towns of the Free State province of South Africa, and about one and half kilometres from Hlohloloane Township, within walking distance of the majority of learners who live in the township. The following map shows the location of Clocolan in the Free State Province.



(Source: Google maps)

Figure 1.1: Map of the Free State province of South Africa

The following photograph will give the reader an impression of the township where most of the learners came from.



(Source: Author 2008)

Figure 1.2: A photograph of Hlohloloane Township where most of the learners came from

1.8.3 Historical background of Clocolan High School: 1907–1995

Any study in South Africa that fails to consider the impact of the racialised political history of the country cannot be taken seriously, because the policy of so-called separate development according to race influenced the current educational conditions.

Prior to 1995, the school had been an exclusively white school in terms of its racial composition and served only rich white learners, therefore excluding the black majority. However, the political changes in South Africa saw the school transformed from a racially uninclusive to a racially inclusive centre of education in 1995 when it was re-established.

The school remained under the direction of white principals until 2002. It used to be a combined school that taught all the grades from Sub A (Grade 1) to Standard 10 (Grade 12). When the school was founded, the learners were taught through the medium of Dutch and English. However, the medium of instruction soon changed to Afrikaans and English, and eventually to Afrikaans, with English as one of the other languages that were taught. The subjects that were taught over the years were English, Afrikaans, German, Mathematics, Physical Science, Biology, Accounting, Typing, Woodwork, Physical

Training and Home Economics. The number of learners fluctuated between about 350 to about 250 until the school was re-established in 1995. This meant the numbers in the classes were small, averaged one teacher per twenty learners, and in most circumstances allowing teachers to pay attention to individual learners.

1.8.4 Establishment and status of Clocolan High School since 1995

Clocolan High School was established as a typical South African secondary school for the new political dispensation during the process of political and educational transformation of South African society. I was appointed as its first black principal in 2002. The school was categorised as previously disadvantaged because it served the relatively poor black majority of learners although its racial composition was diverse. As a State-funded Section 21 public school in the Free State province, it managed its own annually allocated funds.

At the time of the research project, Clocolan High was a secondary school offering further education from Grades 8–12. The major streams were natural science, civil technology, commerce and social sciences. It was regarded as one of the highly performing schools and had received several awards from both the provincial and national offices of the South African Education department for outstanding academic performance and achieving a 90–100% pass rate in the matriculation results every year.

a) Physical facilities

The following photograph (Figure 1.3) gives an impression of what the school looked like at the time of the research.



(Source: Author 2008)

Figure 1.3: School buildings since 1907

When Clocolan High School was established after the transition to democracy, it took over the buildings of the former “whites only” school with a learner capacity of 300. However, owing to the non-racial admissions policies of schools in South Africa after the transition to democracy, the enrolment figures soared to 800. In consequence of this, the school’s resources became inadequate. At the time of this research project, the school had only 23 classrooms, which included three poorly resourced Biology/Physiology, Science, and Computer Science laboratories; a school hall, a media centre (library), and a civil technology workshop. There were soccer, netball, and volleyball playgrounds.

b) Staff

At the time of this research project, the school employed 30 teachers, 2 secretaries, 2 gardeners and 1 cleaner. The teachers were not all that highly qualified but compared well with the teachers of the other schools. Most teachers held a secondary teacher’s diploma (STD) and a few had university degrees. Most teachers belonged to the South African Teachers Union (SADTU) and a few to the Suid-Afrikaanse Onderwys Unie (SAOU) [South African Education Union], which made the school representative in terms of the

unions represented in the Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC).

The school management team consisted of the principal, two deputy principals, and four heads of departments.

c) *Learners*

The school comprised 800 learners aged 14–18, drawn from the town and township. While the majority of learners were black, the school was known for its racially diverse learner composition (that is, learners from different racial and socio-economic backgrounds), which made it a typical ethnically and linguistically diverse non-racial South African school. Learners chose their leaders democratically to serve on the Representative Council of Learners (RCL), which was representative of all Grades at the school. The learner-teacher ratio at the time of the research was 1:40.

Figures 1.4 and 1.5 are photographs taken of one of the classrooms and a computer laboratory at the school at the time of the research project. Permission was obtained to use these and other photographs (see Appendix M).



(Source: Author 2008)

Figure 1.4: A typical classroom at the school



(Source: Author 2008)

Figure 1.5: A computer laboratory (using computers to aid instruction in the class)

d) *Parents and governance*

At the time of the research project, the school was governed by a democratically elected school governing body comprising the following 13 members: 2 teachers, 9 parents and 2 support staff. The parents were regarded as partners in the education of their children but they were mostly passive. This passivity was one of the symptoms of the discriminatory racial policies of the past regime.

1.9 STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

This thesis is structured as follows:

Chapter 1 presents the theoretical orientation, background, and aims of the research.

Chapter 2 contains a review of the salient research literature, as well as an international perspective on inclusive education.

Chapter 3 sketches the background to the inclusive nature of the current education policies of South Africa, both from a legislative and theoretical perspective.

Chapter 4 explains the research methodology and outlines the instruments used in the research process.

Chapter 5 discusses the action-research process and presents data according to the different AR stages.

Chapter 6 discusses the results of the group interpretative analysis by the CAR team

Chapter 7 presents a meta-research analysis of the action-research process.

Chapter 8 presents and discusses the findings, conclusions and implications of the study.

1.10 CONCLUSION

The main findings of the study are that the conceptualisation of inclusion in the school context of Clocolan High School was influenced by teacher beliefs (such as their past-political involvement in determining their practice) and knowledge about inclusion. This suggests that the practices of inclusion from the international perspective may not necessarily be applicable to the South African context but will need to be adapted to suit the local context. The conceptualisation of inclusion has to take into account the context of schools, and local theory development about inclusion is inescapable. Unlike internationally, the study suggests that collaboration is not prevalent among teacher and learners in South African schools. Therefore, collaboration of teachers is pivotal and has to be improved to enhance reflective practice and develop practices of inclusion. While collaborative action research is an appropriate strategy for enhancing reflective practice, it presents challenges as far as the substance of participation of teachers is concerned and that plans may not necessarily be successful once put into practice. The form of action research that will be successful in developing inclusive practices will first have to address the issue of improved participation in reflective practices by teachers. The culture of not being reflective and critical about inclusion among South African teachers seemed to be a hindrance to the effective collaborative action-research process. While the findings of the study might not be applicable to other contexts, they do, however, lay a foundation for how change could be implemented towards developing inclusive practices.

This chapter has presented an orientation to the study. It has introduced the reader to the odyssey of my history as a student and a teacher in South Africa, and explained its influence on my current thinking and understanding of the notion of inclusion. The chapter has also sketched the background of the history of the inclusive education system of South

Africa, followed by a brief discussion of the research aim and design of the thesis. It gives a glimpse of my role as researcher. The chapter has further discussed some preliminary literature, explained the conceptual framework of the study, justified the choice of the research site (school), and oriented the reader by presenting detailed information in relation to its history, status and composition at the time of the research. The chapter concludes by discussing the significance of the study, giving an outline of the thesis structure (chapters), and defining the salient concepts. The following chapter reviews the relevant international literature on inclusive education.

CHAPTER 2: INCLUSION: THE INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This study deals with inclusive teaching practices and analyses patterns within the literature about inclusive teaching practices internationally. In this chapter, I discuss some international conceptualisations of inclusion because some of these have had an impact on how inclusion is conceptualised in South Africa. To this end, I present a comprehensive literature review of the complex issue of inclusion within an international context. The chapter is structured as follows. First, the rationale, the scope and methodology used in guiding the process of review are outlined. In particular, the criteria used in selecting the salient studies that inform the review are explained. Furthermore, the philosophical and theoretical positions on inclusion are highlighted. The chapter conceptualises inclusive pedagogy and discusses two dominant views about inclusive pedagogy, namely the traditional strategies-oriented view and the constructivist view. Since the development of inclusive practice often results in teachers having to change their beliefs, this chapter further discusses approaches to educational change, the impact of change on teachers' sense of professionalism, and the impact of all this on changing perceptions about inclusive pedagogy.

2.2 RATIONALE, SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY OF GATHERING LITERATURE

Since the proclamation of the Salamanca statement in 1994, various governments have responded to the call to implement inclusive education systems (Hick, Kershner & Farrell 2009), and a considerable body of research has been assembled on developing inclusive education practices at schools since then. Ainscow and Booth (2002) developed a document called the Index for Inclusion, which is a set of guidelines on the subject. Despite these developments, authors such as Nind et al. (2003) share my concern about whether there is actually a pedagogy of inclusion.

With this question in mind, through this review I attempted to measure the extent to which the philosophical conceptualisation of inclusive pedagogy as a concept has indeed been realised. The different practices of inclusion in the literature show the impact of separatist education on how teachers conceptualise and react towards inclusive education practice. Given the varied contexts of the multitude of countries, school classrooms, and learners, it is clear that providing generalised or global definitions of the concepts *inclusive education*, *inclusive teaching* and *inclusive classroom* is an extremely complicated process (Landsberg, Kruger & Swart 2011). It follows that these concepts are context-bound and therefore understood differently by different people, locally and internationally. Providing a global conceptualisation of the process would be daunting. Therefore, this chapter conceptualises the concept of inclusive pedagogy by attempting to answer the following questions:

- How does the conceptualisation of inclusion influence how inclusive pedagogy is understood internationally?
- What constitutes an inclusive pedagogy?

While there is an extensive body of literature on inclusion internationally in relation to the many aspects of schooling, the focus of this review is on the literature of inclusive pedagogical practices in the classroom. This literature review represents an attempt to synthesise and give an overview of the literature on inclusive teaching practices that have been effective internationally in promoting inclusion in the classrooms. The criteria used to select the literature were guided by the availability of supportive empirical evidence. Speculative literatures were deliberately excluded. While the focus of the literature review was on inclusive practices, some of the reviewed work had inclined towards special needs education as the two disciplines are closely related and as that some researchers seem to have been influenced by the latter.

I consulted a number of databases such as Eric, Scopus, and Google Scholar. Further sources of relevant information were internationally accredited journals such as the International Journal of Inclusive Education. The John Rylands University of Manchester Library was consulted and books, articles and electronic sources were scrutinised for relevant, up-to-date literature on the topic. The website of EENET was also consulted.

2.3 PHILOSOPHICAL AND THEORETICAL POSITIONS TOWARDS INCLUSION

The notion of inclusion from a global perspective seems to be conceptualised differently as countries have varying contexts (Nel et al. 2011), which influences how it is practised and implemented (Dyson 2001; Artiles & Dyson 2005; Florian & Kershner 2009). The concept is so widely regarded as being context-bound that there is confusion about its use and meaning (Clough & Corbett 2000; O'Brien 2001). Ainscow (2010) refers to inclusion as a process of reorganising the school to be responsive to the needs of all its learners, while other researchers conceptualise inclusion as a goal to bring about an inclusive society (Artiles & Kozleski 2007).

There have been attempts to universalise the definition of inclusion. For example UNESCO (2001: 8) states that inclusive education:

- acknowledges that all children can learn and that all need some form of support for learning;
- aims to uncover and minimise barriers to learning;
- is broader than formal schooling and includes the home community and other opportunities for education outside the school;
- is about changing attitudes, behaviour, teaching methods, curriculum and environments to meet the needs of all children;
- is a dynamic process which is constantly evolving according to local cultures and contexts and is part of the world strategy to promote an inclusive society.

The UNESCO understanding of inclusion seems to converge with the elements of definitions summarised above in the sense that, in both instances, prominence is given to aspects such as the notion of equality, access and provision of education to all regardless of background, and a curriculum responsive to the needs of all learners. These aspects seem to transcend the definitions of inclusive education worldwide, despite the varied and diverse contexts alluded to earlier.

The different interpretations have made it impossible to formulate a universal, context-free definition of inclusion. The multiple definitions of inclusion have resulted in different practices of inclusion at pedagogical level, thus prompting questions about the nature of inclusive *pedagogic practice*, a question which is pertinent to this study. For example, there is a perspective by Farrell (1997), Rief and Heimborge (2006) and others that inclusive education involves applying special education strategies within the mainstream schools; however, there is a counter-argument that inclusion is an alternative approach to special education, goes beyond such strategies, and draws on the creativity and novelty of teachers (Ballard 1999: Ainscow 2010).

As a result of the arguments discussed above, five main theoretical positions have been found dominant in the literature. The different perspectives on inclusion have been influenced by the way any given society construes the meaning of inclusion. Over the years, this has been looked at from the following angles, approaches or models, according to Clough & Corbett (2000):

- Curriculum approaches model: This model involves viewing the curriculum as having the potential to act as a barrier to learning by itself, if the curriculum is not inclusive and not targeted towards a diverse learner population (Mara & Mara 2012).
- School improvement strategies model: The way the school is organised could act as a barrier to learning as well. For example, there is a growing tendency to focus on pass rates, ostensibly in the interests of raising standards, and to exclude those whose performance is perceived to be weak (Ainscow et al. 2012).
- Disability model: The physical or psychological attributes of the learner render him/her a victim of exclusion; for example, learners with perceived physical and/or psychological defects (e.g. deaf learners) are deliberately excluded (Walmsley 2001; Barnes & Sheldon 2010).
- Pedagogical model: This approach stems from the medical deficit model, in terms of which teaching and learning are designed to address the learners' medically diagnosed shortcomings. According to this model, the learner is perceived to have a handicap which hampers effective learning.

- **Social ecological model:** This model which developed as a critical response to the medical deficit model, perceives the learner's social context as being at the core of accepting diversity and allowing his/her participation regardless of individual differences (Ainscow & Cesar 2006; Reindal 2008; Landsberg et al. 2011).

The indication in the literature is that there has been a steady shift from the medical to the socio-ecological model. However, despite these developments and paradigm shifts, there remains the highly contested issue of how full participation and inclusion could be achieved, further resulting in debates about the existence of an inclusive pedagogy. These different philosophical positions mentioned above have resulted in different kinds of definitions of inclusive education; for example, Klibthong (2012: 46), quoting Booth et al. and Kalambouka et al., presents a helpful synthesis (quoted verbatim) of the definitions of inclusion from various leading authors in the field of inclusion:

- *Full inclusion:* Typically developing children and children with additional needs to participate fully in a programme or service that caters for all children. This means inclusion focuses on the transformation of school cultures and pedagogy to increase access of *all* children, enhance the acceptance of all students, maximise children's participation in various activities and increase the achievement and development of all children.
- *The cluster model:* A group of children with additional needs participate together in a programme that operates alongside a mainstream programme.
- *Reverse inclusion:* A few typically developing children participate in a programme that caters largely for children with additional needs.
- *Social inclusion:* Children with additional needs are catered for in special settings and come together with typically developing children at times for social experiences.

The different kinds of definitions mentioned above are derived from thought orientations as quoted from Clough & Corbett (2000) earlier in this chapter. However these variations and contestations about what inclusion is and is not have invited a critique of the notion of inclusive education For instance, Thomas and Loxley (2001: 41) echoed by Knight (1999)

provide a critique of inclusion by advancing the following arguments by those against inclusion:

- There is an inconsistency between the principle of inclusion and evidence that it works.
- Inclusion is often directed by political rhetoric and ideology, claiming that it is a reality.
- It is presented as the solution to most educational problems.

These sentiments have lately been echoed by Hornby (2012: 54). Hornby is quoted in O'Brien (2001) and in Cigman's (2007) book, which was written in response to Warnock's report (2005) articulating negative comments about inclusion, and the recent publication by Farrel (2010) critiquing the notion of inclusion. Through this work, doubts and questions are raised about the merits of inclusion as opposed to those of special needs education.

Given these varied definitions of inclusion, and while acknowledging the varied conceptualisations, this thesis focuses mainly on full inclusion. The varied definitions impact on how inclusion is implemented in the classroom. Therefore the next section will deal with the two dominant views about what constitutes an inclusive pedagogy.

2.4 CONCEPTUALISING INCLUSIVE PEDAGOGY

Inclusive pedagogy is defined as an approach intended to promote the culture of accommodating all and ensuring practice based on the use of diverse teaching strategies (Corbett 2001). It is associated with a connective pedagogy – that is, connecting learners with their own learning first, and then connecting their learning to the curriculum (Corbett 2001). Inclusive pedagogy is a process whereby the learners constantly engage with the learning material, drawing on their experiences (Nilholm & Alm 2010). The material is presented as close as possible to reality and the learners are not passive recipients of knowledge but are allowed to attach subjective meaning to it.

In this thesis, *inclusive pedagogy* refers to the totality of aspects of which teaching inclusively is central. It is a totality of teaching methods, approaches, forms and principles

that enhance learner participation. Furthermore, inclusive pedagogy is also assumed to encompass beliefs and conceptions about what constitutes inclusive teaching and learning. However, there is still a debate raging around the question whether there is a pedagogy that is purely inclusive (Florian 2009). Many UK authors such as Farrell (1997), Nind et al. (2003), Rief and Heimborge (2006) and Florian (2007) have written about the inclusive strategies of teaching learners with special educational needs while borrowing strategies from special education discourse. By contrast, Engelbrecht (1999) (Republic of South Africa) and other UK authors such as Dyson (2001), Ainscow and Booth (2002), Ainscow and Howes (2003) and Ainscow (2010), and have sought to propose how inclusive practices could be developed by encouraging participation and collaboration. For example, the Index for Inclusion (Ainscow & Booth 2002) has served as a point of reference in this regard. Owing to these varied positions, it has become crucial to examine and interrogate the meaning of inclusive teaching (as an aspect of inclusive pedagogy) closely in order to shed light on these debates.

Given these two theoretical interpretations of inclusive pedagogy, there are a multitude of conceptualisations of what it means to teach inclusively. Consequently, many questions arise as to the meaning of inclusive teaching. Does it mean adopting special teaching strategies in the mainstream? Or does it mean having two teachers in the classroom: one for the learner with special needs and the other for the rest of the learners? Or does it mean teaching all learners in one classroom by differentiating and adapting the curriculum to suit the needs of all learners? In response to these questions, Hart (1996) argues that inclusion is an exercise of creativity and innovation on part of the teacher, an idea supported by other authors. For example, according to Ainscow and Booth (2002), in the Index for Inclusion (dimension C: 78) the following indicators are important in determining the characteristics of inclusive teaching. Inclusive teaching is described as follows:

- This form of teaching is planned with the learning of all learners in mind.
- The lessons encourage the participation of all students.
- Learners are actively involved in their own learning.
- Learners work collaboratively.
- Assessment contributes to the success of all learners.
- Classroom discipline is based on mutual respect.
- Teachers plan, teach and review in partnership.

- Teaching assistants support the learning and participation of all learners.
- Homework contributes to the learning of all.
- All learners take part in activities outside the classroom.

In all other dimensions, the Index also indicates other aspects of inclusion such as establishing inclusive values, support for diversity and collaboration of staff (Rahaman & Sutherland 2011). The above description points to the cornerstone of inclusive teaching – that is, the way it responds to the needs of all learners, the way all learners are accommodated in the classroom, and how learning material is planned to encourage diversity and differentiation.

Inclusive teaching may also include innovative thinking, which is the way teachers respond to the needs of learners intuitively in the classroom, and interactive pedagogy, which takes place when the teacher interacts with the learners during the teaching process, making connections, which are the building blocks of relationships between both the learner and their teacher, and fostering cooperation on part of the learner (Nind & Sheedy 2004; Florian & Linklater 2010). Conversely, inclusive teaching is associated with pedagogical discourses (Skidmore 2004). Two distinct discourses are differentiated, namely the discourse of deviance and that of inclusion.

Skidmore (2004) seeks to clarify the notion of inclusive teaching. A striking aspect is that the curriculum is responsive to the needs of all learners and the enhancement of all learner participation in the teaching and learning process. It is also noteworthy that the discourse of deviance, which places more emphasis on the learner than on the teaching and support system, is a notion completely contrary to what inclusive education advocates.

Inclusive teaching does not take place in a vacuum; the space and the environment in which it occurs show certain attributes and characteristics. While it is important to understand what inclusive teaching is, it is an equally daunting task to conceptualise an inclusive class. In the past, special classrooms were designed for learners with special educational needs. The main problem is that such learners will not be living in their own world after schooling, so it does not make sense to separate them from their peers. The inclusive classroom is understood to be a place where communities of learners from

different backgrounds are developed (Stainback & Stainback 1992; Volts, Sims & Nelson 2010). For instance, the following characteristics are perceived to be relevant:

- It is heterogeneously organised.
- Support is given to all learners.
- Diversity is valued.
- The teaching and curriculum are responsive to the needs of all learners.
- Learners are encouraged to work together and support one another (Stainback & Stainback 1992).

While it seems as though all the attributes are centred on the need for learners to be supported, and that everyone in the classroom should participate and cooperate, other authors in describing an inclusive classroom are more concerned with the learner composition of the classroom. The following quotation gives a thumbnail sketch of how an inclusive classroom could be perceived:

You are teaching a year 3 class in a regular school. Typical students in your class include two very able students (probably gifted and talented), a group of five students who can easily complete all assigned tasks, a core of fifteen 'average students' who can usually complete assigned tasks with little assistance, six students with learning difficulties who struggle with all tasks and need constant teacher assistance, one student with a learning disability who cannot read but is 'average' in other subjects areas, and one slow-learning student who has a mild intellectual disability who generally needs teacher assistance in all subject areas. Of these students in this 'typical' class, two exhibit behaviour problems such as non-conformity and aggressive behaviour to their peers, three are boisterous to the extent of disrupting the class, three come from homes where English is a second language, and ten are from single-parent homes (Night 1999: 3).

The above quotation sums up how others view an inclusive class from the categorisation of learners according to their perceived needs and traits. While some researchers believe that all learners have educational needs, others believe that an inclusive classroom becomes a

place where both learners and teachers act as their own resources (Ainscow 1999; Miles & Ainscow 2010). Encouraging learner participation is to a large extent influenced by how well resources are managed in the classroom, especially the human resources. It is important for the teachers to draw support from one another by working collaboratively in response to the needs of learners in the classroom. By contrast, the decision to enhance inclusion in the classroom depends to some extent on the teachers' attitudes, opinions, willingness and beliefs to implement inclusion (Tembo & Ainscow 2001).

An inclusive class may again to some extent be conceptualised from the activities taking place in the classroom. For instance, in an inclusive class learner participation is pivotal and therefore it should be emphasised that learners have to be in charge of their own learning, learn at their own pace and style, and should express their feelings about their own learning (Cheminais 2004). The inclusive classroom should be a relatively unrestrictive learning space where learners are free to explore the alternative possibilities in their own learning. The climate in the inclusive classroom should foster emotional discipline in learners, who should be able to analyse their own strengths and weaknesses, engage in proper decision-making, be assertive and be able to resolve conflicts (Cheminais 2004). An inclusive classroom should attempt to enhance the self-concept and self-esteem of learners so that they feel worthy of being members of the class.

Furthermore, an inclusive class can be viewed from the point of reference of socialisation. For example, while teachers are responsible for making sure that an inclusive classroom is indeed a place where all learners are welcomed (Lehohla & Hlalele 2012), there are challenges that teachers face in maintaining an inclusive classroom, especially at secondary-school level (Mastropieri & Scruggs 2001). It is therefore important to consider the socialisation role of the classroom within an inclusive context.

For instance, teachers and learners are social beings who are always in constant interaction and forming relationships. The promotion of inclusion in the classroom makes such relationships pivotal because they are the building blocks of an inclusive culture characterised by the acceptance and tolerance of others. The relationships are usually based on shared values and on recognising diversity in the classroom. Teachers have a responsibility to nurture relationships based on trust – but how?

The relationship between the learner and the teacher should be based on trust and mutuality. To foster caring and supportive relationships in the classroom, teachers have to ensure that they know their learners and that the learners know them, listen actively to the learners, allow them to share their views in the classroom, recognise their successes and ensure that disciplinary measures are in keeping with the maintenance of the learner's dignity and respect (Bartolo et al. 2007). The learners should be taught to be respectful of diversity and a difference of culture or the opinions of others. A decision-making process around activities in the classroom should attempt to include all learners, for example about the classroom rules. The teacher should inculcate an attitude of self-discipline (Lorenz, 2002).

The relationship between the teacher and the learners should be based on the principle of equal treatment for all learners, regardless of their background. It must be a relationship that is fostered by values of respect, genuineness and empathy (Fox 2003).

Teacher-learner relationships are enhanced by effective communication and interaction (Antia 1999). Effective communication is a prerequisite for the development of "social competence", which is the ability to work and interact with others. Language is crucial to communication. However, teachers have to be aware of other forms of communication with the learners; for example, gestures and signs. Language is important for the development of the learner's cognitive, social and cultural development (Brown 2002; Conteh 2003).

Language is a medium through which learners learn. In countries other than South Africa, language is still used by some as a measure of excluding other races, with schools separating learners according to the language of instruction in the classroom, often under pretexts of mother-tongue teaching and the protection of standards (Chick 2000).

The concept of pastoral care, which is the process of establishing genuine relationships of care with the learner, is pivotal in the development of the learner's self-esteem within the culture of inclusion (Farrell & Ainscow 2002). The learners feel emotionally valued if unconditionally accepted by the teacher. Teachers have to orientate the learners towards emotional maturity and apply their attribution styles. The development of the emotional aspects of the learners enhances their emotional intelligence. This form of intelligence is

the process encompassing the learners' self-awareness, mood control, motivation, development of empathy and ability to manage relationships (Bartolo et al. 2007). Learners should learn to use the internal locus of control to attribute their successes or failures appropriately without any unnecessary self-blaming which could have very negative consequences for their identity and self-concept. A positive self-concept is vital for positive self-esteem. Teachers have to inculcate in their learners a spirit of resilience, which is the capacity to survive progress though difficulty and yet cope with life (Rief & Heimburge 2006). Resilience is promoted by the recognition and appreciation of each individual learner's effort, effective communication and, to a greater extent, the involvement of parents by teachers in the self-actualising process of the learner.

Teachers should recognise that learners are different and that every learner brings unique experiences to the classroom. Teachers have to ensure respect for differences and draw strength from diversity. Stimulating critical thinking broadens the horizon for clarifying misconceptions about cultural differences; teachers should ensure that the learning material responds to the needs of diverse cultures. There should be a positive correlation between the home culture and the classroom (school) culture (Brown 2002).

In conclusion, it is evident that there are two opposing views about inclusive pedagogy, which are adopting particular strategies to teach, which is primarily special needs-oriented; and the approach based on creativity of the teacher and embracing values beyond techniques such as change of beliefs and attitudes to learners. To achieve an ideal state of inclusion requires a shift in terms of teacher methodological approaches and strategies. The next section discusses the two dominant views about inclusive pedagogy in the international literatures. A teaching approach is influenced by a number of theoretical paradigms; however, due to spatial constraints in this chapter, only behavioural and interactive teaching approaches are discussed in detail because most of other approaches are either derived or developed from these two.

2.5 TRADITIONAL STRATEGIES-ORIENTED VIEW OF INCLUSIVE PEDAGOGY

In this section, I provide a description of the strategies-oriented view of inclusive pedagogy by explaining behavioural teaching, discussing how it is applied and, finally, by elaborating on strategies that are mostly used in this mode of teaching.

Firstly, the view that inclusion is about adopting certain strategies to teach is based on the traditional teacher-centred approach to teaching informed by the behaviouristic approach to pedagogy. This teaching approach is aimed at changing the behaviour of the learners. Learning is regarded as a change of behaviour (Bekele & Melesse 2011, Merrett & Wheldall 2012). Behavioural teaching is an approach that occurs within the three premises, namely setting conditions, antecedence and the consequences. It is a method that emphasises the objective curriculum and it is often criticised for not being suitable for all areas of the curriculum (Farrell 1997). It denies the learners the right to choose the learning material and regards teachers as more knowledgeable than the learners, a contrast to the notion of “self-advocacy”, which is a critical process in ensuring those learners are all included in the classroom. It does little to encourage interaction between the teacher and the learner.

According to Farrell (1997), to include all learners in the lesson, the behavioural teaching approach could be used. It would be helpful if teachers could use behavioural teaching activities such as prompting, reinforcement and task analysis (Moore 2012). Motivation is one of the phenomena the teachers could employ to manipulate the behaviour of learners. Rewarding learners could ensure that all learners are engaged in a lesson. Learners could be encouraged to take their learning seriously and be in control of it. They should be given the necessary chance to demonstrate how they have learned. The notion of “trial and error” (that is, trying to do things for themselves) is critical in encouraging learners to lead their own learning (Farrell, 1997).

Behaviouristic teaching does not afford learners the opportunities to be involved in the selection of the learning material, although this could have positive effects on learner interest and motivation. Finding the baseline as a process of determining prior knowledge is crucial to the behavioural teaching approach because it confirms already in what way the envisaged behaviour would suit the needs of the learner. Breaking the behaviour down into small manageable units could be fruitful. This process of task analysis is composed of activities such as prompting, which is used to assist the learners in performing complex tasks (Farrell 1997).

Prompting may be a useful strategy to use in responding to the needs of the learners. It is the process by which the teacher is engaged both physically and ideally with the learner. It is important that teachers be cautious not to replace the effort of the learner in doing things for him/her. The relationship between the teacher and the learner should be of a complementary nature where both bring their contribution to the task completion.

Various teaching strategies intended to modify learner behaviour are applied to support learners in the teaching and learning process, for example; the differentiated approach to teaching; reciprocal teaching; scaffolding instruction; the use of technology to aid inclusion; multiple intelligence; multi-level instruction and multi-sensory instruction. Teachers have to vary their teaching according to the needs of the learners. Varying methods provides a good basis for including all the learners in the class. Differentiated instruction is often defined as a general-education classroom that makes use of a wide variety of instructional options aimed at the increasingly diverse learning needs that typically characterise today's inclusive class (Hart 1996; Rief & Heimburge 2006; Bender 2008; D'Amico 2010).

To implement differentiated instruction, the "cubing" method is used. Cubing is a method that helps learners to look at the phenomenon from six different perspectives, differing at the level of difficulty to accommodate learner differences. The teacher should be in a position to vary his/her teaching to accommodate all learners. This would have far-reaching implications for learner interest, motivation and the concentration span. Differentiated teaching is proactive in the sense that it is designed to respond to the needs of all learners. Differentiation may inform the teaching and learning material, flexible groupings and varied teaching methods and approaches (Rief & Heimburge 2006).

While behaviour (direct) instruction emphasises the authority of the teacher, reciprocal teaching focuses on a shared responsibility between the teacher and the learner. Reciprocal teaching is described as rotating the position of an instructional leader between the teacher and the learner (Bender 2008). The instructional leader facilitates the learning discussions. Reciprocal teaching is based on a set of hypotheses to test, while generating questions and clarifying major concepts. Reciprocal teaching gives the learners a chance to be in control of their learning process and may foster good human relations between the teacher and the learners.

Even though the individual learner may be taught how to direct his/her own learning, the teacher may use scaffolding to aid the learning of all learners. Scaffolding is the process of assisting the learner to acquire new knowledge using his/her prior knowledge as a foundation (Bender 2008). The teacher diagnoses the learner's needs in relation to the curriculum content, and then plans together with the learner how to achieve a particular agreed goal. Scaffolding is a method of instruction that ensures that the learner is instructed according to his/her needs. It is advantageous in the sense that problems encountered during learning can be detected at an early stage.

Modern classrooms are equipped with the required technological devices to aid instruction, and teachers have to use such devices to ensure that all learners have access to the teaching material. Technological systems abound; but this section will pay attention to those evidence-based ones that have been fruitful in promoting inclusion in the classroom.

The two technologies that seem dominant in the inclusive literature are computer-based instruction (CBI) and information-communication technology (ICT). The former (CBI) uses computers to conduct lessons, capture learner performances and give feedback about learner progress, while ICTs such as web quests, spreadsheets and graphic presentations are lately being used to support instruction. ICT also includes the constructivist dimensions that focus on problem-solving data analysis to develop critical thinking. The main system currently is what is called *universal design*, which is a framework used to adapt technology to the needs of all learners, for example modified keyboards, speech recognition, text speech, scalable fonts and the virtual environment (Florian, 2007).

Similarly, the use of computer-assisted instruction highlights the significance of this kind of technology in building concept maps and organising study guides. Different software programs are being developed, and the use of multimedia technology in promoting learning is growing. Similarly, the use of the Internet makes it possible for learners to meet 'cyberpals', publish their work, search websites for information, receive online mentoring by experts, and share class projects with others. Most teachers regard technology as a tool to aid their work and not as a replacement for the teacher (Bender 2008).

The use of these technological devices has different results for different types of learners. Technology aids processes of learning such as collaborative learning, collaborative problem-solving and ensures the participation of learners in the learning process (Florian, 2007). Although technology offers some solutions to the challenges of inclusion, it only produces positive results if the use of this technology is carefully planned, takes into consideration the needs of all the learners, and if the learners and teachers are skilful in using it without causing any barriers to learning. However, learners should not depend on these devices to a degree that hinders the learning process (Nind et al. 2003). While it is important for teachers to plan how they would promote participation among the learners in their classrooms, learners also have to bring their side.

There have been debates about what intelligence actually is. There are two competing notions of intelligence, the one describing it as a single general ability while the other holding that it is not general but individually based. Learners could have different forms of intelligence (Bartolo et al. 2007). The theory of multiple intelligence developed by Gardner (1983) holds that intelligence manifests itself in nine different ways, namely verbal-linguistic, mathematical-logical, musical, visual-spatial, bodily-kinaesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, naturalistic and existential (Vayrynen 2003; Bartolo et al. 2007).

Teachers need to analyse of the strengths of each learner in their classes and plan their teaching around the strengths identified. Learners do well in areas where they perceive themselves to be good. It is important that teachers ensure that learners are aware of their abilities and are guided to learn the journey of self-discovery.

Learners are usually not at the same level of the learning experience. Consequently, teachers have to determine the level of the learners' learning experiences in order to adjust and modify their teaching to suit the needs of all the learners. Multi-level instruction is a strategy that teachers may use in responding to the varied levels of the learners' learning experiences. This form of instruction allows the learners to work at their own level of experience (Vayrynen 2003).

Various approaches to multi-level teaching can be applied; however, teachers have to be able to ensure that learners work at the level of their learning experiences. Teachers may establish work stations with varied levels of work complexity in their classrooms in order

to respond to all their learners' needs. Learners should be given the latitude to choose the station that suits their learning experience. Alternatively, teachers could set up learner contracts which spell out what the learner should learn according to the IEP.

The use of the senses is regarded as one of the prominent practices of the teaching process. Multi-sensory instruction is described as teaching that involves all the senses; that is, seeing, hearing, tasting, touching and smelling (Rief & Heimburge 2006). Since learners use different senses to learn, teachers have to ensure that they are given a chance to use the different senses during the learning process. In language teaching, the use of perception and cognition to process information is primarily dependent on the use of the senses by the learner (Combley 2001). The retention of information learned is consolidated through the use of the senses. Teachers therefore have to plan which learning and teaching aids to use to enhance the use of senses by the learners.

Furthermore, Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011) draw attention to two different strategies they purport to be enhancing inclusion: (a) *Work choice* requires the classroom teacher to consult with colleagues in learning support about how to differentiate learning tasks so that specific accommodations for students with special educational needs are made; (b) *Play zone* refers to an area of the classroom where a range of active play choices are provided. Teachers select activities that are matched to individual student needs.

Teaching is a process by which teachers impart knowledge to the learners or facilitate their learning process. Booth (cited in Sebba & Ainscow 1992) believes that traditional teaching styles could be used to enhance inclusion but points out that it requires a measure of flexibility and awareness to switch approaches in such a manner that the needs of all learners are responded to. In the past, teaching was regarded as a one-way process of communication, from the teacher to the learner. Learning was regarded as mere regurgitation and relied on the memory of learners to reproduce content that has been taught. The next section discusses the constructivist view of inclusive pedagogy.

2.6 CONSTRUCTIVIST VIEW OF INCLUSIVE PEDAGOGY

In this section I discuss the Morden constructivist view of inclusive pedagogy by defining interactive teaching, and expatiating on different constructivist approaches to teaching and

constructivist learning styles. Modern constructivist approaches to teaching is learner-centred and emphasise two-way interaction in the sense that learners are not the passive recipients of knowledge but also have to make a contribution to their own learning. Muijs and Reynolds (2001) refer to the former approach as “direct instruction” and the latter as “interactive teaching”.

Constant interactive analysis is an important aspect of curriculum delivery (Brandon 2011). Such an interaction analysis occurs within the framework of an interactive teaching approach. For interaction to be effective in the class, teachers have to acknowledge questioning and elicit responses from the learner (Muijs & Reynolds 2001). Teachers have to ensure that learners are asked questions that are relevant to what they ought to learn, that the learning material is at the learners’ cognitive level of thinking, and that the learners are given a chance to answer the questions from their own perspectives without teachers being prescriptive about answers.

Interactive teaching fosters inclusion because the learners are catered for in the curriculum rather than being compelled to adjust to the curriculum (Nind & Kellett 2003). Intensive interaction focuses on the participation of the learner and places less emphasis on the outcome. Interactive teaching is essentially teaching which is not tightly structured but creates environments which allow the learners to learn through the spontaneous use of language, play and free exploration of their environments. The advantage of interactive teaching is that it is a natural way of learning in the absence of a prescriptive structure (Farrell 1997).

Teachers use different teaching approaches to interact with learners. The choice of a particular teaching approach or strategy is guided by the nature of the learning material, type of learners, and the ability of the teacher to execute such.

Every teacher adopts a particular teaching approach to teach particular subject material to a particular group of learners. Promoting inclusion in the classroom may require that the teacher analyse which of those could best promote inclusion. Ainscow and Sebba (1992) argue that the use of different teaching approaches could enhance inclusion. The next section discusses only evidence-based and effectiveness teaching approaches towards inclusion.

Collaborative teaching is seen as an important prerequisite for inclusion to take place (Loreman, Deppeler and Harvey 2005; Walsh 2012; Boyle et al. 2012). The cornerstone of collaboration is communication, which requires a voluntary, mutual and creative decision-making process on the part of the teacher to occur effectively. The different forms of collaboration are inter alia station teaching, parallel teaching, alternate teaching and team teaching (Loreman et al. 2005). Collaborative teaching is described as teaching by two or more teachers delivering instruction to a diverse class of learners. It may also take place between the teacher and the support staff (Florian 2007). Collaborative teaching is dependent on factors such as the willingness of the teachers to participate, the availability of resources, effective monitoring systems, and the availability of an individualised education plan (IEP) for each learner. Teachers should be willing to establish professional communities of learning with shared goals. They should be prepared to plan and share the responsibility of teaching (Murawski & Dieker 2004). The spirit of trust and mutual relationship may strengthen the ability of teachers to collaborate (Leonard & Leonard 2003). Teachers must have a shared vision and mission to achieve the goals they have set for themselves (Smith 2004).

The advantage of collaboration is that the expertise, knowledge, experiences and the abilities of all teachers can be effectively utilised. It reduces the load of the individual teacher since the work is shared by the team. It also has a positive effect on the esteem and the confidence of the teacher. More experienced teachers assist their less experienced colleagues, improving on the chances of good classroom teaching and management. Different methods of collaboration are used by teachers. The following are examples of collaboration (Florian 2007):

- Supportive teaching: one teacher teaches while the other assists the learners.
- Parallel teaching: teachers rotate to teach learning groups, sometimes with different styles.
- Complementary teaching: the teacher supports his/her colleague by, for example, supplying only notes or learning resources.
- Team teaching: two teachers share the responsibility of teaching a class and work together.

Different methods might work for some teachers but could prove fruitless for others. It is vital that teachers choose the appropriate approach for collaboration based on their specific conditions and context. Teachers constantly have to reflect on and monitor the success of the method of collaboration they use. Co-teaching may be extremely time-consuming if teachers are not well trained and believe in different ways of teaching, which makes it difficult for them to cooperate (Florian 2007).

Although it is important for teachers to collaborate, teachers and learners also have to work together. The notion of promoting partnerships with the learners to foster collaboration between teachers and learners is important because it fosters mutual learning (Jelly, Fuller & Bryers 2000). The partnerships are intended to address the needs of all learners. The partnerships could be enhanced if the cultural norms of the society embrace communality; but if the society cherishes individualistic norms, it will be difficult for teachers to inculcate an ethos of working together in the learners (Leonard & Leonard 2003). The learners are involved through dialogue to take a lead in their own learning process. This dialogue promotes the capacity of learners to think by allowing them to put forward their ideas and opinions.

Collaboration and cooperation between the teacher and the learner may have a profound effect on the thinking ability of the learner (Savolainen et al. 2012). The work of Reuven Feuerstein's instrumental enrichment (IE) – which has a positive influence on aspects such as the self-esteem of learners, improved behaviour in the class and better attainment – is a good example in this regard. The learners are taught to think critically and solve problems, which helps them to reach their learning destinations quickly and saves the teacher a great deal of hard work (Jelly et al. 2000).

It is imperative for learners to be willing to collaborate with their teachers, who have to know all their learners in order to identify all their needs. Effective classroom support may include enhancing the participation of learners, ensuring that learners develop towards independence, and that support will positively raise the standard of all learners in the class. Teachers and assistant teachers have to collaborate and work as a team. The support given to the learners should not necessarily emphasise singling out a specific learner in class, but should be directed to all learners (Balshaw & Farrell 2002). Learners should be taught

communication skills so that they can access support from both the assistant and the teacher (Loreman et al. 2005).

While the abovementioned teaching approaches play a significant role in enhancing inclusion, it is also important to look at how inclusion is influenced by constructivist learning styles. While there are many learning styles, the ones discussed here were found to be popular in the literature on inclusion – especially those with a constructivist orientation. These learning approaches include the use of collaborative learning or group work and peer tutoring or cooperative problem-solving.

Learning is regarded as a process by which learners acquire new knowledge and a process by which they retain knowledge acquired through learning processes. It is facilitated in different ways; therefore, to enhance inclusion during the learning process, teachers have to understand how learners learn. Learning is believed to mean different things to different learners. Therefore the concept has to be analysed because, when defined, it is an unjustive that is context-bound, as said before, and heavily influenced by the learner`s experiences (Watkins, Carnell & Lodge 2007). Learning may occur in three stages: *reception* (acquiring facts or knowledge), *construction* (making meaning out of knowledge), *reconstructing* (‘rebuilding’ meaning through interaction with others) and is influenced by the contact an individual is engaged in with others.

Effective learning, therefore, will be constituted by being able to select relevant information, process it, transfer knowledge, and operate collaboratively with others. Learning is mostly guided by what learners generally know. It is a process which needs constant monitoring and reflection.

Several learning styles are found. For instance, collaborative learning is defined as a type of learning characterised by the identification and sharing of common reference points and models (Murphy 1999). It involves sharing ideas and looking at the learning phenomenon from different perspectives. Although learners are encouraged to share ideas in the learning process, teachers are supposed to give ample support to the learners for them to learn effectively. Collaborative learning is aimed at fostering independent learning; that is, the learner`s emotional and intellectual becoming. Collaborative learning is associated with what is called “classroom talk”, which means the process by which partners share

information and plan together in presenting ideas explicitly and clearly enough to engage in joint reasoning, evaluation and decision-making (Murphy 1999).

A distinction is drawn between collaborative and cooperative learning. Collaborative learning occurs when learners work on shared task to accomplish a shared goal, while cooperative learning refers to when learners work together in a group with the aim of completing individual tasks (Watkins et al. 2007). During both collaborative and cooperative learning, language is important for learning to succeed. Through dialogue learners learn from one another. The nature of the class and the material to be learned often influence the type of collaboration needed.

Collaborative activities give both the learner and the teacher feedback on their role during the learning process (Walton 2012). The learning process has to be learner-centred and learners have to be in control of their own learning. Indeed, learning is meaningful when learners can relate what they have learned to what they already know (prior knowledge).

Cooperative learning is based on the structural interaction of learners in small groups (Loreman et al. 2005) and it is effective when learners work on a face-to-face basis. Learners differ in terms of their ability to comprehend work. Some learners are proficient in certain parts of the work; therefore, if learners work together, they can assist one another or be taught by their peers. Cesar and Santos (2006) developed what they call a “learning community” which fostered inclusion among a selected group of learners through collaborative work. Learning is dependent on the communicative process, whereby meaning is negotiated mutually and knowledge is constructed collectively. Diversity is respected and all learners are recognised participants in the learning process. Vygotsky’s concept of the zone of proximal development, which emphasises the importance of interaction between learners in the learning process, is valuable because learners learn through interacting with knowledgeable others (Cesar & Santos 2006). This is closely related to the notion of “creative learning” as a group system where the success of the learner is dependent on the success of the group (Miles 2007).

Peer tutoring is a system of learning whereby proficient learners in terms of their school work assist their less proficient peers in a mutual academic relationship (Scruggs, Mastropieri & Marshak 2012). Peer support emanates from collaborative team work when

learners share tasks (Blanch et al 2012). Teachers have to encourage learners to establish networks of supporting agents in the classes, drawing on Vygotsky's notion of the zone of proximal development (Lorenz 2002). The significance of cooperative integrated reading, composition groups, team-assisted initialisation groups are examples of peer grouping that promote positive relationships between learners to give them a sense of belonging and trust (Florian 2007).

Peer tutoring seems to be effective in both the cognitive and affective (social-emotional) domains of learner development (Meijer 2003). Learners benefit from their peers and invest heavily in building sound human relationships with their fellow learners, family and teachers (Blanch et al 2012). The notion of twinning (pairing) learners encourages support and reduces isolation from other learners (Miles 2003). Peer tutoring also seems to be effective in the process of cooperative problem-solving in that the learners will assist one another in solving problems. The cooperative-problem solving method may be used by the teacher to give learners projects, assignment and tasks requiring research.

If the atmosphere in the classroom is conducive to learning, teaching is appropriate and learning strategies are carefully chosen to enhance inclusion, it appears that to change teacher beliefs and attitudes towards inclusion is usually a daunting task; hence, it is important to discuss how change within the perspectives of moving towards inclusion could be enhanced. The following section deals with the change and how it could be facilitated.

2.7 EDUCATIONAL CHANGE AS A PREREQUISITE FOR INCLUSION

Because the process of developing practices of inclusion often involves a change in teacher beliefs, attitudes and practices, it was important to review the literature on change. Therefore, in this section I elucidate the significance of change by discussing examples of approaches to change, the prerequisites for change, collaboration as a strategy for change, and developing communities of enquiry.

In the first instance, collaborative action research has been adopted in this study as a change strategy and is therefore imperative to discuss. The purpose of action research is to bring about change and empower the individuals or groups perceived to be disempowered

or oppressed (O'Hanlon 2003). The process of bringing about change is complex and conceptualised differently by different people. The purpose of the action research on which this thesis is based is to empower teachers and bring about change with regard to the inclusive teaching processes in their classrooms. This view is consistent with that of Dyson et al. (2012), who contend that inclusive practices should be developed as close as possible to local communities. This then leads to how teachers in communities conceptualise and understand different ways in which the process of change is initiated and monitored. It is consequently important to place the notion of educational change in perspective within the framework of this action-research project. In the next section, educational change is discussed under the following headings:

- Why change is necessary at schools.
- The approaches that underpin teacher change at schools.
- The prerequisite for effective change in schools.
- Collaboration as a strategy for change.
- Developing communities of enquiry for change.

Inclusive education is the process whereby the school responds to the needs of all learners regardless of their background (Ainscow 1999). Learners should be accommodated by the school in matters of teaching and learning. They should not be expected to adapt to the school; rather, the school should adapt to the learners by ensuring that all their needs are met. The purpose of inclusive education seems to converge at the same point with the purpose of educational change because the ultimate aim of educational change (reform) is to benefit all learners (Fullan 1999).

Change is often regarded as a complex and difficult process to initiate and implement. Because schools are places characterised by a high degree of diversity, and those individuals at school relate to one another according to the school's protocol of authority or responsibility, notions of power and equity cannot be divorced from the change process.

Change is influenced by a number of factors at the school. Increased teacher responsibility and administrative loads are a serious hindrance to the realisation of change in schools. Fullan (2001) postulates that a great deal is expected of teachers, even though they receive

very little support from the education authorities and parents. Teachers experience what could be referred to as “low morale”, the phenomenon associated with low motivation among teachers. Schools are often highly politicised, which only serves to create a barrier to the effective initiation and implementation of change (Fullan 2001).

Change does not occur in a vacuum, but takes place in a particular way and according to certain patterns. Change is known to be influenced by factors such as a need which becomes a priority of the school community; clear sets of objectives and goals which the school wants to achieve. On the other hand, change can be evaluated and its quality can be assessed. Some practical implications are found to be associated with change, for example the availability of resources and time.

It is important that schools guard against politically ambitious change programmes (Fullan 2001). There are instances where the tradition of leadership in countries such as South Africa results in principals and education officials often resorting to autocratic means to impose changes on teachers (Engelbrecht & Green 2001; Weber 2007). The system is characterised by a suppressive political ideology. In such circumstances, change is mostly driven by a political agenda to perpetuate exclusion.

There are many approaches to change; for example, Fullan (1999: 39) distinguishes between the complexity and the evolutionary approach. The complexity approach denotes that change is an interactive rather than a linear process. The link between cause and effect does not exist and change operates in a continuum ranging from the scale of stability to instability. The evolutionary approach, on the other hand, refers to how humans evolve with time in relation to their interaction and cooperative behaviour.

The school is a place where activities take place according to planned routines and time-tabling; however, when policies have to be implemented or changes effected, the school is an unpredictable environment. It is for this reason that the complexity approach becomes important for the process of educational change.

Change is dependent on the capacity of teachers to create knowledge with the purpose of learning new ideas. Change takes place in what Fullan (1999) calls a *social collaboration context*. The process of social collaboration occurs within the framework of a collaboration

culture; that is, the culture where all members of the school community work as a team to achieve a common purpose. Social collaboration respects diversity while building trust among the participants. It may instil anxiety among the participants but also absorb it. Knowledge is created through interactive engagement and connections. Change is an open system, subject to the contributions of the collaborating members (Fullan 1999). The spiritual, political and intellectual aspects are significant during the process of change, which could expand beyond the periphery of the school into the outside world by making connections, which is often referred to as “networking” (Ainscow et al. 2006).

The complexity approach is described by using the analogy of a *systems approach* to define the school’s process of change as a system. Educational change is a complex system, and change is dynamic and metabletic in nature. The dynamic nature of teaching also makes change even more complex, because each class of learners represents a unique educational context drawn from a diverse knowledge, cultural and socio-economic background. Educational change can only materialise as a collective rather than as an individual endeavour (Hoban 2002).

To think about change, Hoban argues, teachers have to apply *systems thinking*, which is seeing the interrelationship between the whole and its parts. Systems thinking is in contrast with the notion of a piecemeal approach to the implementation of change, because, when it is applied, reality could be so complex and dynamic that it refutes the linear cause-effect model of educational change.

According to Hoban (2002), for teachers to understand change, they should establish a *learning community* (a group of persons in pursuit of a common learning objective), which could be very helpful in that teachers may draw strategies together and challenge their beliefs to make change easier. Such a community is based on teacher cooperation and team work. Teachers should be willing to share power and authority, be independent to some extent, and be motivated by the purpose of learning together. The learning community is a collective focused on building the capacity of teachers to reflect on their teaching practices; communicate effectively among themselves and provide the necessary inputs for the process of change.

The notion of how teachers change is a complex issue. Similarly, the way teachers conceptualise the notion of changing from a traditional to an inclusive teaching method is a difficult and on-going process. It is significant for teachers to take the opportunity to reflect on the proposal for change by reviewing their values and beliefs and the manner in which these values affect their daily work. Teachers should allow themselves to think on their own about change rather than having change imposed on them. A platform could be created for teachers to discuss and reflect on how change will be planned, implemented, monitored and controlled (Mittler 2000).

Educational change has to take into consideration teacher beliefs and their missions, if it is to be successful. Recognising teacher beliefs elevates their motivation because they will see themselves as valuable members of the learning community (Goodson 2003).

Educational change has to involve all teachers for it to be accomplished. There must be a balance between the pressure to implement change and the support given to teachers to implement it. The relationship between changes in behaviour and changes in beliefs should be enhanced. All those involved in the process of change should own it and make valuable contributions, which will ensure success (Fullan 2001).

Educational change should be planned around the context and the prevailing local culture. It requires that all involved in the change process should show a high level of commitment, acknowledging diversity and instilling respect for the opinions of others. It is important that the participants in the change process should learn to exercise caution and patience as change takes time to be realised. The notion of change is referred to as a process encompassing concepts such as beliefs, attitudes, knowledge, understanding, self-awareness and teaching practice (Richards, Gallo & Ranandya 2001). Teacher beliefs are important because, together with their context, they shape how they will relate to the change process. The latter process becomes more effective when a bottom-up rather than a top-down approach is used.

Change also works well when not imposed (Richards et al. 2001). However, often education departments implement politically driven systemic changes, ignoring what works and is best for the situation.

Teachers have to be supported in their quest for transformation and change. They have to be motivated in order for them to be committed to the process of change. Haney et al. (2002) conducted a research project on teacher motivation and their will to implement change. They discovered that any reform in education will succeed if it takes the beliefs of teachers into consideration. The research indicated that the belief teachers have about themselves influences how they conceptualise change; for example, if teachers hold the belief that they are capable in their work, this has a profound influence on their motivation and consequently on their self-efficacy, raising their willingness to implement change. The theory of motivation as a system depicts how the teacher's will to implement change is influenced by his/her self-efficacy and situational context.

This implies that, if the teacher regards himself/herself as competent, the school environment is conducive to change, adequate support is given, and the teacher is motivated. Chances are that change will be successfully implemented.

Change cannot take place at the school if the leadership of the school does not support it. Although change is one of the processes that occur at the school, it is often difficult to manage and it cannot be controlled easily (Fullan 2004). What is being stressed is that the leadership of the school should understand change rather than try to control it. Fullan cautions against leaders imposing their own innovative ideas on teachers. Leaders have to inculcate respect for the opinions and ideas of others. Leaders should understand that change is not a smooth process, but that it is characterised by what Fullan calls an *implementation dip*, which is the time when an envisaged plan goes awry. It is the process attributable to resistance that could develop among teachers against the change process. Leaders have to note that addressing resistance has to include defining what resistance is, listening to those opposed to change, trying to find out why they resist change, trying to address their concerns, and incorporating their inputs into the broader change programme. Leadership should embark on what is called *re-culturing*, which is developing a culture in collaboration with teachers. This includes building a network of support, and maintaining good interpersonal relationships based on trust and respect between the leadership of the school and teachers. The teachers and the leadership should engage with one another in shaping and exchanging knowledge and ideas.

Engelbrecht and Green (2001) argue that change in the South African context is hampered by resistance from the teachers because of the oppression of and injustices meted out to teachers by the former apartheid education system. To implement change towards a more inclusive system, Engelbrecht and Green (2001:33) suggest that change should begin with the principal of the school, whose vision must encapsulate what is called an “inclusive tone” – a step in the development of an *inclusive learning community*. Unlike in the past, he/she should drift away from being autocratic to being democratic and allow participatory leadership and inclusive management. The school will change if the vision of the leadership creates an inclusive culture and climate. Such a culture transforms assumptions, beliefs, values, norms, relationships behaviour and practice. The inclusive culture could be accomplished through the collaboration and collegiality of teachers working together to achieve a common purpose.

The leadership of the school should create conditions for the following to take place:

- Collaborative problem-solving – when teachers work together to solve a problem;
- Peer coaching – when teachers coach one another in their work;
- Co-teaching – when teachers teach the same class to assist one another;
- Facilitating cooperative learning – the teachers have to learn to plan and organise cooperative learning.

Most researchers believe that teachers implement change when they are fully involved in initiating, designing, and implementing it. Ainscow et al. (2006) indicate that they have worked with teachers collaboratively and embarked on an action research project which saw teachers become researchers in developing inclusive practices at their schools. Ainscow et al. (2006: 56) had the following to say about collaboration as a strategy to develop inclusive practices in schools:

Rather than handing practitioners a blueprint for action we sought to work collaboratively with them to explore how their context could be understood and what actions might be possible therein.

The process referred to as *collaborative enquiry* began with teachers and experts participating in a workshop to develop a common understanding about how the project should be run. The teachers and experts established a network which all teachers participated in as part of their development plan. Joint meetings involving both practitioners and researchers were held to engage with the evidence collected. Teachers were allowed to investigate their own practice as part of the school's agenda while researchers pursued their own research agenda; however, both worked collaboratively (Ainscow et al. 2011).

Collaboration is often regarded as critical for action research and therefore crucial to the educational change process (Somekh 2006). In the process of collaboration, the process of triangulation becomes prominent as it allows participants to look at concepts from a multiplicity of perspectives. Various methods could be used in this process, including processes such as observations, interviews, statistics, and specimen teaching plans, interview notes, questionnaires, pictures and videos.

Collaborative enquiry fosters mutual relationships between the researcher and teachers. Thus focuses on the significance of the agenda of both the researcher and the teachers. It is from the collected data and evidence that both parties will begin to map out their respective agendas to plan change and transformation. The collected data and evidence become the central core of discussions during the analysis and the interpretation processes.

The discursive engagement is referred to as a *group interpretive process* as all participants are engaged as a collective in the process. The issue of different explanations and interpretations is addressed through dialogue, thus also dealing with the trustworthiness of the process.

The process of collaboration is sometimes equated with what is called *voluntary change*, which means the willingness to cooperate (Richardson 1998). The idea that teachers do not change and that they change all the time seems contradictory. Teachers resist change when change is initiated by others without their prior involvement. Voluntary change process is attributable to teacher involvement. Teachers need to be encouraged to change as a collective rather than as individuals; that is, there should be collective reflection on

teaching practice with the purpose of changing to what works best for them in their context.

Collaboration is characterised by a high level of teacher reflective processes. To manage change, teachers may work collaboratively with what is termed *critical friends*; that is, with colleagues who review the data critically and reflect on the teaching practice of their fellow-colleagues, thus sharing ideas (Mohr et al. 2004).

Reflection is usually employed to monitor the change process (Loreman et al. 2005). This is the process by which teachers reflect on their teaching practice in relation to the objectives they have set for themselves. Reflection could be done daily by the means of a *reflection dairy*, which is a record of every change that has been observed and experienced.

Reflective teaching and research will change teachers' perceptions of themselves and encourage them to try new ideas, methods and approaches (Nind & Sheehy 2004). This collaborative reflection process is known as "mutual adaptation" because all who participate in the reflection process are bound to gain new ideas and therefore change (Richardson 1998). The process is on-going and teachers could engage in it throughout the day. In the course of reflecting, the following conceptual views of steps are considered (Hargreaves & Fullan 2000):

- Experiment with teaching.
- Identify what works better in the class.
- Change perceptions of teaching.

The reflection process described above is sometimes associated with the notion of *the teacher as a learner*, which indicates that, through the reflective process, teachers are engaged in the process of learning about their own practices. The reflection process is also likened to what is called *images of teaching and learning* that teachers construct. Briscoe (1996: 47) defines this concept as "*the knowledge that teachers have about their work and their role is constructed as sensory experiences and is given meaning through reflection*". This process is dominated by the process of brainstorming or meaning-making which is important for teachers to learn from one another.

The quality and effectiveness of change is something complex to measure; indeed, there is a belief that change cannot be managed (Fullan 2001). However, some authors argue that it can be managed and that change should be closely monitored (managed) by means of checklists (McCallion 1998). The checklist will ascertain whether:

- the majority of teachers agree with the idea of change;
- change is supported by the school leadership;
- there is clarity on the objectives and goals of the change process;
- realistic expectations were set for the change process;
- measures are in place to determine the quality and effect of the change process;
- members are coping with the change process;
- new ideas are incorporated into the school culture;
- the change process is practicable.

Because change is viewed as a collective rather than as an individual process, it is necessary to explore how teachers make connections leading to the formation of collaborative groups. The concept of *communities of enquiry* is relevant in this context.

Collaboration is a process whereby teachers through collegiality, interaction and effective communication develop relationships which are mutual in reflecting on their practice and assisting one another to improve their practice. The most powerful aspect of teacher change is embedded in what is called a *professional learning community* (Fullan 2001). The development of a culture of collaboration enables teachers to work together; to develop confidence, a high level of motivation and positive self-efficacy, and the ability to influence the work of the learners positively. Teachers change as a result of motivation and collaboration (Save the Children 2002: 52).

Collaboration among teachers leads to what is known as a *community of enquiry* (Reason & Bradbury 2006). This is a process where individuals become participants in a collective community to enquire about their practice. Through this reflective process, meanings are negotiated as they are usually informed by their historic cultural context. The development

of such a community depends to a larger extent on processes of communication, meaning-making and meaningful interaction between members of the community. The process of collaboration becomes pivotal in the communicative culture of the community and results in the culture of practice.

The notion of communities of enquiry is crucial to the implementation of educational reform in that it offers teachers the opportunity for growth and development (Hargreaves 1997). The notion of *critical friends* (viewing one another's work critically with a purpose of improving practice) is the basis on which teachers build connections as they engage in reflection and meaning-making (McTaggart 1997). The community of enquiry is also referred to as a *learning community* in the sense that the members are involved in a collective learning process which depends to a large extent on how well they interact, share meaning and collaborate with one another (Nind & Sheehy 2004).

Therefore the development of an *inclusive learning community* as a process through which teachers develop an inclusive learning culture through collaboration and cooperation is crucial (Engelbrecht & Green 2001). The theoretical framework for developing collaboration is based on the notion of a historic cultural approach and the belief that peer interaction is fundamental as a mediation tool (Cesar & Santos 2006). Learning is viewed as a communicative process through which those involved in the learning process negotiate meaning, construct knowledge and allow the process of meaning exchange to shape their identity. The relationship between members in a community of practice is a symbiotic one in that members learn from one another.

2.8 CONCLUSION

The analysis of the literature points out that inclusion has different meanings and interpretations internationally, that the concept of inclusive pedagogy has varied conceptualisations and that in practice it depends on the understanding and the philosophical teaching beliefs, attitudes and positions assumed by the practitioner in a teaching and learning situation. What has become vivid in this review is that the varied contexts, philosophical and theoretical stances, as well as different teaching strategies and learning styles by teachers and learners, make inclusion a context-dependent phenomenon. It appears that there are two dominant views about inclusive pedagogy (the traditional

strategies-oriented view and the constructivist view) which influence the practice of inclusion. Moreover, the current state of inclusion is dependent on the change process from past uninclusive practices to more inclusive practices which are to a greater extent dependent on the willingness of teachers to change and embrace change.

In this chapter the rationale, scope and methodology used in guiding the process of review have been outlined. In particular, the criteria used in selecting the salient studies that inform the review have been explained, and the philosophical and theoretical positions on inclusion have been highlighted. The chapter has conceptualised inclusive pedagogy and discussed two dominant views about inclusive pedagogy, namely the traditional strategies-oriented view and the constructivist view. The chapter concluded by focusing on how change is implemented in educational contexts. The next chapter will give a brief discussion of inclusion within the South African context.

CHAPTER 3: INCLUSION: A SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The state of inclusive pedagogy in South African schools remains bleak and teachers are in the dark about what constitutes an inclusive pedagogy in the South African context. This is despite policy changes since the advent of the new educational dispensation in 1994. This chapter therefore attempts to provide an answer to the following question: “What is the state of inclusive pedagogy within the South African classrooms?”

There seems to be a dearth of literature in South Africa about inclusive pedagogy; consequently, the content of this chapter relies mainly on official documents and my experiences as a teacher in South African schools. The chapter sketches the background to inclusive education developments in South Africa, both within historical and policy contexts; it explains the manner in which inclusive education is conceptualised in South Africa; and it discusses the model of inclusive education with particular reference to the role of the level of systems support at a school. It further highlights the way barriers to learning are conceptualised and discusses the notion of inclusive pedagogy within the South African context. The chapter concludes by reviewing the current state of inclusive pedagogic practice in South African classrooms.

3.2 INTERNATIONAL VERSUS NATIONAL LITERATURES ON INCLUSION

Before one can discuss the literature on inclusion from a South African perspective, it is crucial to conduct a comparative analysis of the developments from an international and South African perspective. The literature analysis indicates that the international literature is more extensive and that most of it derives from the USA and the UK. The South African model of inclusion seems to have borrowed several inclusive concepts, practices and models from these countries; for example, the Index of Inclusion was adopted from the UK (Engelbrecht & Oswald 2005). While there have been studies on developing inclusive practices in classrooms, they are limited and demonstrate a serious shortage of literature that addresses the main focus

of inclusion, which is the question, “How do teachers teach in an inclusive way?” This problem has therefore resulted in the borrowing of inclusive practices from countries of the North; hence, it is equally important to interrogate the applicability of such practices to the South African context given the disparities in resources. It appears that South Africa is a developing country with a severe shortage of resources and a high teacher-learner ratio in its classrooms. It therefore requires different strategies of inclusion. This view is expressed by Engelbrecht (2006) who contends that, while South Africa has followed the same trends as the rest of the world in implementing inclusion, its socio-political background makes its context unique.

3.3 BACKGROUND AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The implementation of inclusive education in South Africa came amidst curricular changes instituted by the government led by the African National Congress (ANC) since 1994 (Naiker 2005). According to Engelbrecht (2006) and Nkoane (2006) the broad transformation of South African society towards equality coincided with the initiation of inclusion as promulgated in international documents such as the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO 1994) and the Dakar World Education Forum (2000).

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996, Section 29(1) states:

“Everyone has the right to a basic education, including adult basic education and to further education, which the state through reasonable measures must make progressively available and accessible.”

This statement is fundamental to ensuring that the schooling system will be inclusive (Walton 2011). Before 1994, the schooling system was based on a racial and special needs education approach (Engelbrecht 1999; Engelbrecht, Howell & Basset 2002). After 1994, the segregated system began to be replaced by a unified schooling system (Nkomo 1990; Christie 1995). However, there is a need to acknowledge that, although formal desegregation began after 1994, *de facto* desegregation had already begun during the late 1970s to mid-1980s.

According to King (2001), the notion of an integrated and comprehensive approach to inclusion focused on a critical review of institutional policies, practices and programmes (DoE 2005), which implied adopting a holistic approach to inclusion. The implementation of inclusive education in South Africa became part of the broad social transformation of society (Sayed & Carrim 1998; Waghid & Engelbrecht 2002; Soudien & Sayed 2004). Mitchell (2005) describes this period as a paradigm shift from special and ordinary categories of schooling to a single system. But Swart et al. (2002) and Hay, Smit and Paulsen (2006) found that teachers' frames of thought were informed by the past regime, which made them reluctant to implement inclusion. The South African government drafted policies that sought to ensure the implementation of inclusive education, conceptualised in Vision 2021 as indicated in White Paper 6 (DoE 2001:43). Various guideline documents were published to facilitate the implementation of inclusive education (DoE 2005), and the following can be regarded as a summarised version of developments leading to the implementation of inclusive education in South Africa (Landsberg et al. 2011:18):

The White Paper on Education and Training in a Democratic South Africa (1995); the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996; the White Paper on an Integrated National Disability Strategy (INDS) (1997); the National Commission on Special Education Needs and Training and The National Committee on Education Support Services (1997); the Education White Paper 6: Special Needs Education: building an inclusive education and training system (2001); the Draft National Disability Policy Framework and guidelines for the implementation of National Disability Framework (2008) and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) 2006 ratified by South Africa in 2007.

Since the beginning of the transformation process, a great deal has been said in various official documents and papers. However, whether these documents have translated into action, especially in developing inclusion in classrooms and ensuring that teachers are fully equipped to handle an inclusive class, remains an open question (Makoelle 2012).

Parallel to the process of implementing inclusion, the South African government implemented Curriculum 2005 which underpinned outcomes-based education (OBE), designed to bring about an inclusive culture of teaching and learning. The implementation of the outcomes-based education system through the announcement of the National Curriculum Statements (NCS) for the General Education and Training band (GET: Grades 8–9) and Further Education and Training band (FET: Grades 10–12) became the initial step in the provision of equal opportunities for all (Makoelle 2004). The plan to introduce inclusive education was further highlighted in White Paper 6 (2001), culminating in Vision 2021 which envisages inclusive education implemented at all levels of schooling. The FET sector (secondary schools included) envisaged implementing inclusion from the year 2008. Since then inclusive education has been implemented at primary-school level and the notion of full service schools is being phased in gradually.

The relationship between outcomes-based education and inclusive education derives from the OBE principles that all learners can learn, succeed and that they could be in control of their own learning (Makoelle 2009). It is also important at this stage to place the curriculum changes within the context of the role of the teacher because it has a significant bearing on how teachers in their new role might or might not practise the philosophy of inclusion. It is therefore necessary to clarify and highlight the philosophical changes with respect to the role of the teacher in the pedagogic relationship with the learners, which largely determines how well the notion of inclusion can be practised. The following section will attempt to show how curricular changes have affected past and present teaching practices, and whether these changes have had a positive impact on the implementation of inclusive education.

It is important to sketch the background to what influenced pedagogy and why the traditional approach to pedagogy sought to include some learners and exclude others. The traditional approach to teaching and learning was based on the behaviourist approach which presupposes that, for learning to occur, there has to be a stimulus which can elicit a response from the learner; thus, learning is regarded as a linear process (Eckstein & Henson 2012). Learners are regarded as passive and the teacher is responsible for transmitting knowledge to them. This approach gave the teacher more power to determine the content of the subject and the manner

in which it should be taught; therefore, there was a strong likelihood that some learners could be excluded during both the teaching and learning processes as learners in general had little say in what and how they had to learn. In pre-1994 South Africa, teaching and learning were dominated by this mode of behaviourist teaching (Makoelle 2009).

By contrast, since 1994, the government has advocated a humanistic approach to teaching and learning based on the philosophy of constructivism, which presupposes that the goal of education is to produce creative learners with a high level of critical thinking skills. Learners are now perceived to be active participants in the learning process and with a say in how the learning content should be determined. The role of the teacher is to render support to learners on their journey to discovering the learning content and solving problems. The likelihood that this kind of approach could be inclusive is high as learners are conceptualised as being in partnership with the teacher in the process of determining the learning content and studying at their own pace and according to their own needs (Botha 2002). However, while the paradigm shift was well-intended politically, very little empirical evidence suggests that this shift has been effective in introducing inclusive practices, especially in classrooms (Makoelle 2009).

There appears to be a tension between the enlightened curriculum goals as set out in official policies and the traditional, conservative training teachers received prior to 1994. This has affected the implementation of inclusive education negatively. The new South African approach to inclusion could perhaps be conceptualised with reference to a society that has not only sought to think beyond the integration of learners with special educational needs into mainstream education, but also to broaden the parameters of inclusion to issues of equality, human rights and freedom (Engelbrecht et al 1999). These principles are fundamental to inclusive practice as enshrined in the Constitution of the country, but indications are that this new approach has not yet been realised (Sayed & Carrim 1998; Naiker 2005).

The South African government has, for example, introduced affirmative-action legislation as embodied in the Employment Equity Act (55 of 1998) in which there is a strong move to affirm those that were previously excluded from the economy, for example the disabled. The National Disability Strategy (1997) document elaborates on this matter and indicates whether

persons with disabilities were employable or not. Inclusion is a process of using the available educational facilities to benefit all learners and to improve access of resources to those that were previously disadvantaged (Khothule 2004). However, whether this has been fully achieved is questionable. Furthermore, the transformation of special schools into resource centres and the piecemeal transformation of some mainstream schools into full service schools are evidence enough of the limited-resource approach that the South African government has taken (DoE 2001). However, while there have been efforts to differentiate between mainstreaming and inclusion as spelled out in the White Paper (2001:17), the distinction between the two remains blurred as far as practice in the classrooms is concerned (see Table 3.1 for the theoretical distinction between the two).

Table: 3.1: Mainstreaming and inclusion

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

(Source: White Paper 6, 2001: 9)

White Paper 6 (2001) also highlights the crucial significance of rendering support to all learners, rather than focusing on individual learner support. While there are efforts to move towards full inclusion, various stumbling blocks exist. For example, South Africa has one of

the highest HIV/AIDS statistics in the sub-Saharan region, impacting on classrooms through infected and affected learners. The HIV/AIDS pandemic has devastating consequences for inclusion in the classrooms because of the emotional challenges it brings to the classroom for both learners and teachers (Beyers & Hay 2007). In addition, the stigmatisation of the disease in South Africa has the potential to develop into an exclusionary measure for infected and affected learners despite policy stipulations (DoE 2001; Walton & Lloyd 2011). Demystifying the disease may assist in improving attitudes and reducing the prejudice against the infected and affected learners in the classrooms (Muthukrishna & Ramsuran 2007).

Furthermore, South Africa is composed of learners from different races, ethnic groups, linguistic entities (11 official languages) and learners from different political, religious, and socio-economic backgrounds. For all learners to be included in the classroom, teachers have to be engaged in raising their awareness about their individual differences and the importance of learning to respect one another. Despite all the policy changes alluded to, it is not clear if the state of inclusion is being realised (Makoelle 2012). The next section therefore discusses the education system and how inclusion is positioned within it.

3.4 INCLUSIVE EDUCATION WITHIN THE SOUTH AFRICAN EDUCATION SYSTEM

The new model of an inclusive South Africa, as mentioned before, is underpinned by the Constitution of the country (Act 108 of 1996). Since the dawn of the new political dispensation, it has sought to transform South African society from an uninclusive to an inclusive one.

The constitutional principles embrace all initiatives for building an inclusive model of education. Section 9 (3, 4, 5) of the Constitution clearly articulates the notions of non-discrimination, and of providing education in the language of the learner's choice (Section 29, 2), which are fundamental to the notion of an inclusive society. Acknowledging the significance of the Constitution, the national education department embarked on a legislative path which sought to ensure the realisation of constitutional modalities to encrypt the philosophy of inclusion. The introduction of the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 (SASA), and, subsequently, the publication of White Paper 6 in 2001, acted as a legislative

and policy framework for the implementation of inclusive education. Section 5 (1) of SASSA states: “A public school must admit learners and serve their educational requirement without unfairly discriminating in any way.”

The legislative process underpinning White Paper 6 (2001) became the roadmap for transforming the education system into an inclusive one. The White Paper outlines a model of inclusive education aimed at responding to learner and teacher needs by establishing institutions and structures of support which will ensure quality education for all. The following organogram (Figure 3.1) illustrates the relationship between the support structures enhancing inclusion:

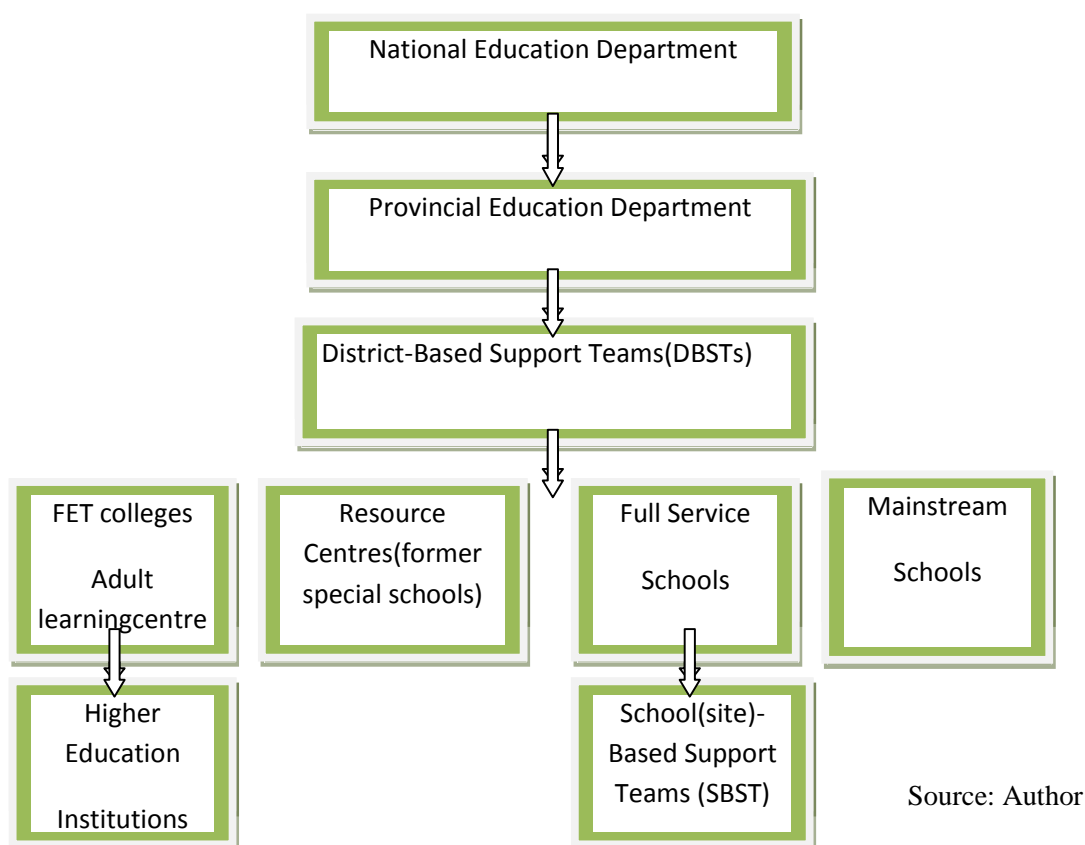


Figure 3.1: Organogram of the South African education system

The model of an inclusive education system as represented above evolved from the previously mentioned constitutional parameters, and its mandate is being carried forward by the national

department of education, provincial departments, education districts schools and institutions of learning, such as adult basic education and training centres (ABET). The principles of expanding access of education to all are crucial for ensuring inclusive policies, changing and upgrading infrastructure, distributing and using educational resources equitably, and enhancing institutional support and development (DoE 2001). While the diagram portrays a structurally integrated all-inclusive system, the focus in this chapter is on the role of inclusive structures within the school *per se* and how this affects inclusive practices.

The school-based support teams (SBSTs), established by all institutions, comprise teachers, special needs teachers, care staff, learners, parent care givers, members of district-based support team, and local community members. An SBST coordinates the institutional support of the institution, identifies institutional needs, collectively develops strategies to address needs and barriers to learning, monitors the availability and use of resources, and assesses the general operation of an institution in terms of inclusion (DoE 2001). These committees are supposed to be central to developing inclusive practices; however, a number of studies have shown that, rather than reflect on practices, the committees are mostly concerned with the identification of learners with special educational needs and referring them to specialists usually based at the district office. This practice is consistent with how barriers to learning are conceptualised in South Africa; that is, the focus is always on identifying individual barriers to learning rather than assessing the relevance of the prevailing educational structures and pedagogic practices. The following section gives a detailed discussion of how barriers to learning are understood within the South African context.

3.5 CONCEPTUALISATION OF BARRIERS TO LEARNING

In South Africa, the development of barriers to learning was traditionally mainly associated with the intrinsic (internal) factors; that is, with the medical and disability models (Walton 2006; Kozleski, et al. 2008). However, theoretically, there has been an attempt to introduce a paradigm shift in the way barriers to learning are conceptualised in South Africa. This is a shift away from the notion that specialised needs stem from the learner, which often results in

the identification and labelling of learners, thus separating them from their peers (Pather 2007). The current understanding is that barriers to learning are caused by a multiplicity of factors, some of which are not necessarily of the learner's making but could be social or lie with the school and curriculum. The following list was adapted from White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001) and attempts to summarise the ways in which barriers to learning are conceptualised:

Socio-economic barriers: The availability of education resources has a profound influence on learners who were formerly deprived of such resources, especially in the rural areas. Tihanyi (2007) argues that racism was the main aspect influencing the implementation of inclusion. Indeed, race is perceived to be one of the main forms of exclusions in South African schools.

Lack of access to basic services: As a developing country, South Africa experiences problems in providing transport, welfare, health services and other basic needs to all its children. Those who cannot access such services are faced with difficulties as there is little support for schooling. Johnson and Lazarus (2003) highlight the significance of the community in enhancing inclusion; however, South African society has not moved to an ecosystemic approach to inclusion whereby the social conditions under which learners grow and develop play a vital role in determining the educational support they need. On the same note, Will (1986) regards the care of learners as the responsibility of all role players, which is a rare phenomenon nowadays.

Poverty and underdevelopment: Most people, especially in rural communities, are facing hardships which often affect their children negatively. The high unemployment rate results in problems of nutrition, shelter and clothing for those with unemployed parents. This affects the learner's ability to concentrate and learn effectively.

HIV/AIDS epidemic: There are a growing number of orphans at schools as a result of the disease. The infected and affected learners show signs of emotional and psychological problems which teachers sometimes find difficult to resolve due to the lack of training, the stigmatisation of the disease, and the negative attitudes of society to those infected with the disease. Beyers and Hay (2007) posit that HIV/AIDS adds to the problems experienced by learners in the classroom. They indicate that the virus affects both the interpersonal and the contextual factors which could influence the full implementation of inclusion as it increases the number of learners with special educational needs. The stigmatisation of the virus could

affect the learners' willingness to participate meaningfully in the teaching and learning activities in the classroom.

Curriculum: What is being taught and the way it is being taught can have far-reaching implications for learners and their learning process. Poorly trained teachers who sometimes cannot teach the learning content in a manner that responds to the needs of learners could be barriers to learning themselves. Learning material that fails to respond to the learners' needs can also act as a barrier to effective learning.

Communication and language: South Africa has eleven official languages, including sign language; however, most teachers who were trained during the apartheid era find themselves in a position where they have to teach through the medium of English, which poses a major of communication challenge to both learners and teachers. Furthermore, few teachers are skilled in Braille and sign language. Some white-dominated former model C schools deliberately cling to Afrikaans as a medium of instruction, making it difficult for the speakers of other languages to access education at those schools (Makoelle 2011).

Physical facilities, attitudes and parental involvement: Many school buildings in South Africa are not compliant with the needs of the disabled, are inaccessible and act as barriers to disabled learners. It appears that when facilities and attitudes do not accommodate diversity, differences, and the individual learning styles of learners, learning could be negatively affected.

The attitudes of teachers and society to the disabled have a profound influence on how well the teachers will respond to their needs. In some instances, negative attitudes towards disability act as a barrier to teaching and learning. Furthermore, the conditions at home and factors such as emotional, sexual and physical abuse could have a negative impact on the learning process.

There seems to be a tendency in South African schools for parents not to take part in the education of their children. This is due to a number of factors such as illiteracy and non-recognition by teachers (Makoelle 2004). The non-involvement of parents places teachers in a difficult position, especially when dealing with learners exhibiting behavioural difficulties.

While the above list holds out the hope that the understanding of inclusion is improving, the analysis of the state of inclusion within classrooms indicates that, despite the articulation of the above issues in White Paper 6 as barriers to learning, the main focus in classrooms is still on the learner. It follows that the above issues are not regarded as significant, hence the retention of the diagnosis, identification and referral system. This poses the question, “What is inclusive pedagogy within South African classrooms?” The following section discusses how inclusive pedagogy is understood within the South African context.

3.6 THE SOUTH AFRICAN VERSION OF INCLUSIVE PEDAGOGY

The understanding of what constitutes an inclusive pedagogy is still confusing as teachers and other stakeholders in education hold varied interpretations of what it means. The influence of special needs education, which was based on the medical-deficit model, is still prevalent in schools (Landsberg et al. 2011). While policies stress that learners have to be taught in accordance with their needs, teachers’ beliefs and practices have not changed significantly.

The question whether there is an inclusive pedagogy is still very debatable in South Africa. There is a paucity of research in this regard, although the notion of inclusive education has dominated educational discourse since the implementation of White Paper 6 referred to earlier.

While there have been efforts to train teachers to understand the notion of inclusive education, they have been resistant to changing their beliefs from the old education system to the new dispensation (Naiker 2000). There have been minimal implementations on the ground despite the major policy shifts towards an inclusive pedagogic discourse (Ntombela 2011). Several studies have been conducted in South Africa in an attempt to provide support to teachers involved in inclusive pedagogic instruction; however, such efforts have not yielded any positive results. Models have been developed to empower teachers to embrace inclusive models of teaching strategies. For example, Prinsloo (2001) mentions models such as the one developed by Weeks, which focuses on assisting teachers in dealing with the behaviour problems of learners; the At-Risk Disk model of determining the extent of intellectual

disabilities developed by Bouwer (2000); and the manual developed by Sethosa in 2001 to assist the learner with mild intellectual disabilities, especially in the foundation phase.

However, a careful study of such models seems to suggest that the learning problems encountered in the teaching and learning situation stem from the learner, and that very little is being said about how the environment, the teaching approach, and the support skills of teachers could affect the learning process. The inclusive solutions currently being developed seem to stem mainly from experts in the field of special needs education, which in my experience is still a dominant discourse in inclusive debates and engagements in South Africa. Teachers are urged to make a paradigm shift towards inclusion, and a number of studies provide hope that the mindset of teachers can actually be altered. Examples are the work of Vayrynen (2003), carried out in conjunction with UNESCO, which involved implementing inclusive teaching activities at 21 schools (10 in Mpumalanga province and 10 in the Northern Cape) using an approach different from that of the special needs approach. Vayrynen's study demonstrated that successful inclusion is clearly related to the curriculum which can create a barrier to the learning process. The curriculum has to be responsive to the educational needs of all learners, and learners should not be blamed for not accessing the curriculum if it is not designed to provide the support they need. According to Vayrynen (2003), inclusion can be realised by developing inclusive cultures, collaboration and cooperation among teachers, and creating learning environments that foster collaborative learning and learner interdependence. This prompts the following question: "What is the state of inclusive pedagogical practices in the South African classroom context?"

The guidelines published in 2010 for the implementation of inclusive teaching strategies by teachers in the full service schools classrooms do not offer a solution to the problem of pedagogic practice in the classroom (DoBE 2010). The guidelines only provide background to the legislative framework for inclusive education as promulgated in Section 12 of the South African Schools Act (84 of 1996) where it is stated that the provincial education department has to make provision for the accommodation of learners with learning problems in ordinary public schools wherever possible. The guidelines furthermore detail the role of the principal and the school governing body (SGB) in putting this legislative requirement into practice.

While the guidelines indicate that inclusion can be attained, among others, by collaboration among teachers, on-going professional development, and by determining the level of need among the learners, the question remains whether the kind of teachers South Africa has are in a position to make such changes in their beliefs about pedagogic practice. This was earlier questioned given the kind of training they had received and the dominant discourse of special education that seemed to have influenced their thinking about inclusive teaching.

The special education influence in South African debates about inclusion is also evident from some of the studies conducted. For example, Pillay and Terlizzi (2009) argue that learners with learning barriers thrive in the so-called special schools. The argument is that the situation in mainstream schools is not yet ideal for inclusion because of factors such as lack of resources and the high level of teacher expertise needed to support learners with learning barriers. Pillay and Terlizzi (2009) believe that, while inclusion is good in theory, the current classrooms will have to be prepared in such a way that the needs of the learners are met. In their study, a learner with learning barriers was moved from the mainstream to a special needs education environment and the various findings were recorded. These included the improved socialisation and improved academic performance of the learner. This study, which was conducted as recently as 2009 after the advent of inclusive education in South Africa, seems to justify the concern about old-versus-new thinking in terms of the inclusive education debate in South Africa.

However, other studies conducted on inclusive teaching practices in South African schools share different insights on the matter. For example, Walton et al. (2009) found that, in independent schools, the inclusive teaching strategies applied were usually cooperative learning, peer tutoring, modification of the assessments tasks to suit the needs of the learners, marking and spelling concessions, and providing extra time for learners with learning barriers. This perhaps accounts for the high academic achievement results in independent schools as compared with the results of the public schools.

Landsberg et al. (2011) support the use of assignments geared towards inclusion; for example, they postulate that early identification of a learning need is important for the kind of support

required by the learner. It is also crucial that information leading to the correct identification of a learning need is gathered from various sources such as assessment results, observations and interviews. However, this view seems to be consistent with the argument that needs can only stem from the learner, while very little is said about what the teacher ought to be doing in class as part of the pedagogic practice.

The significant factors highlighted by Landsberg et al. (2011) are (a) the need for visionary leadership, which could have a positive influence on the beliefs, attitudes and values of teachers; (b) the realisation of inclusion as the result of a whole-school approach, whereby all aspects of the school are assessed for their effectiveness in enhancing inclusion; and (c) the application of an effective strategy utilising all the available resources to ensure the on-going professional development of teachers and their ability to reflect on their practice in particular.

In the studies attempting to conceptualise the notion of inclusive pedagogy, there seem to be isolated cases which cannot be generalised to a national context.

3.7 CONCLUSION

The analysis of the South African literature indicates that very few sources actually address the way inclusive pedagogy is conceptualised, operationalised and implemented within the South African classroom context. The trend is one of importing studies from countries such as the UK and the USA whose contexts differ markedly from that of South Africa. While there have been efforts to implement White Paper 6 and other policies, the review indicates that there is still a gap between what policies envisage and what really happens in the classrooms. It follows that the implementation of White Paper 6 has not been fully realised.

The way inclusive education is conceptualised in South Africa seems to derive from special needs education. The review indicates that there is still serious contestation around the question whether full inclusion could replace the special needs approach. The review shows that pedagogy is still understood to be the utilisation of particular classroom strategies which are often borrowed from the special needs approach. The model of inclusive education as

discussed with reference to the role of all levels of systems support (at the school, district, provincial and national levels of the department of education) continues to reflect the influence of special needs education. For example, most of the special needs structures have been retained or slightly modified. The way barriers to learning are conceptualised seems to indicate a willingness to move away from the medical model of diagnosis; but in reality the opposite is the case because the systems continue to find fault with the learner instead of the school structures.

Several lessons can be drawn from the findings of this review. It is clear that more research is required to conceptualise the notion of inclusion within the South African context. There is a need for a more pragmatic approach towards policy implementation. There is also clearly a need for a paradigm shift from the medically oriented special needs approach to that of altering educational structures to accommodate full inclusion. The intention of policy with regard to conceptualising barriers to learning beyond those that stem from the learner has not really been achieved. Therefore this review clearly shows that the current state of inclusive pedagogic practice in the South African classrooms has not improved despite the implementation of inclusive policies.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter discussed the manner in which the process of inclusion is conceptualised within the South African context, both from a research-literature and legislative perspective. In this chapter, I adopt a critical post-positivist position to research, justify collaborative action research and its manifestations as a medium of change, and give reasons why the study was conducted qualitatively. I also provide a critical perspective on the data-collection instruments and analysis. In conclusion, I give a detailed account of the research method used.

4.2 EPISTEMOLOGICAL VIEW

The epistemological view in this study was inspired by the fact that I was educated in South Africa during the apartheid era and have taught under both traditional and democratic dispensations. I became a teacher in a racially segregated education system based on an ideology of exclusion and white supremacy. Indoctrination was at the order of the day, and the emphasis was on blindly accepting policy and having no other choice but to implement it. Currently, South African society has been undergoing a process of transformation since the democratic elections in 1994. This process of transformation and political change has also affected the prevailing educational ideology and practice, with the result that this research also has political implications.

The move away from a traditional, segregated form of teaching to an inclusive teaching system means that the role of the teacher is being transformed from that of a mere passive implementer of policy to a builder of theories that inform policy and practice. It encourages teachers to think critically rather than just accepting everything they are told. This process of change I regard as the psychological emancipation of teachers from the bondage of past indoctrination which only served to undermine their powers of reasoning. Indeed, Freire and Shor (1987) aver that teachers should be liberated in their teaching, reinvent themselves by challenging tradition and mass culture, and engage in a critical dialogue with regard to educational issues. Consequently, the significance of challenging

teachers to develop theories in order to address the plight of their inclusive pedagogy becomes significant. This emancipatory approach to knowledge culminated in the adoption of a post-positivist stance in this study.

4.2.1 Objections to positivism

Positivist research tends to disguise value biases as objective knowledge and supports the socio-political *status quo*. Positivists assume that objects exist outside of the individual's belief about them and that scientific knowledge consists of universal laws or principles that are value neutral (Hammersley 1995: 1–3). This is contrary to the notion that social reality is essentially subjective, and may even fall short of being universal by reason of being context-bound. According to Hammersley (1995: 4), positivists make the following assumptions:

- What is taken to be the method of natural science is the only rational source of knowledge.
- This method should be applied in social-science research irrespective of any supposedly distinctive features of social reality.
- Quantitative measurements and experimental or statistical manipulations of variables are essential or 'at least' ideal features of scientific research.
- Research can and should be concerned with producing accounts which correspond to an independent reality.
- Scientific knowledge consists of universal laws.
- Research must be objective with subjective biases being overcome through commitment to the principle of value neutrality.

These notions, I believe, are essentially prescriptive in nature and only serve to suppress the power of the subjective mind of those being studied. I therefore reject these positivist assumptions and maintain that, unlike physical objects, human beings are imbued with the power of reason. Reality cannot exist outside of their socio-historical context, and human reason has to be in constant dialogue with itself through reflection. Therefore, because I wanted the subjects to speak for themselves, I decided to approach the study in a qualitative manner. The following

section discusses the reasons why the study was undertaken using a qualitative research method.

4.2.2 The reasons for choosing a qualitative research methodology

Research is usually conducted by using either a qualitative or quantitative approach, or both. What is important is that the approach used should be appropriate to the kind of enquiry that the researcher envisages. While it is important to define and justify the choice of either or both of the approaches mentioned, it is equally important not to downplay the contribution that both approaches have made to the scientific methodology of research.

As qualitative research is subjective in nature, one needs inputs from the subjects of research in order to answer the research questions. My reasons for adopting a qualitative approach are the following:

- It is not based on the assumption that what is under study could best be described using quantifiable measures such as statistics or numerical methods.
- It stresses the socially constructed nature of reality and the close relationship that the researcher has with the persons or objects studied (Denzin & Lincoln 2005).
- It focuses on meaning as constructed through the experiences of those under study – that is, the way research subjects interpret and make sense of the world out of their experiences (Merriam 1998).
- It valorises the notion “Let those under study speak for themselves” as being of the utmost importance in order to accommodate the subjective aspect of the relevant social reality.
- It is based on the belief that there is always a deeper description of the phenomenon under study, which is evident from the detailed data generated by most qualitative research projects.

A qualitative research approach has several other characteristics that make it directly relevant to this study, for example:

- Data are collected directly from the natural setting, which allows first-hand information and details of the activities to emerge.
- The interpersonal involvement between me as the researcher and those under study and their interpretation and meanings are of significance in elucidating the research objectives.
- The different sources of data used are triangulated to give a holistic account of the research process.
- The research process requires an inductive approach and, as the process is emergent, the qualitative research plan is mostly not tightly prescribed because of the dynamic nature of social reality.
- The interpretation of data is mostly reliant on what is seen, heard or understood (Creswell 2007: 38–40). The element of participation by those under study in action research makes such an inquiry more qualitative than quantitative (Greenwood & Levin 1998).

While I have used a qualitative approach in this study, it is also important to clarify the paradigm underlying this study as it has a profound influence on how I view and conceptualise reality. The following section explains the critical stance maintained in this study.

4.2.3 The use of a critical research paradigm

In research, the concept *critical* differs in meaning from that assigned to it in dictionaries; for example, “expressing disapproval of something, involving an assessment of a literary or artistic work, at the point of the danger” (Oxford Dictionary 2006: 190). Within the context of research, I interpret the concept *critical* to denote a process of looking at the research data clinically and analytically to gauge what the facts answer, what they do not answer, and what influences their nature and existence.

I maintain that, in my research approach, the word *critical* had to dominate my view of the acquisition of knowledge. For example, I agree with Hammersley (1995) who postulates that, rather than being based on a hypothesis-verification process, critical research is based on the principle of maintaining a questioning and interrogating stance to the status quo, which is the cornerstone of critical research. Reflexivity, which is the process of probing one's reasoning in relation to current conditions, is vital to the research process.

Hammersley (1995: 30) further states, "Criticism renders transparent what had previously been hidden, and doing so it initiates a process of self-reflection in the individual or group designed to achieve liberation from the domination of past constraints."

I believe that critical research is ethically and politically superior to positivistic modes of research because it deepens the understanding of the structures underlying the historically oppressive practices, challenging the regimes of truths and power (Denzin & Lincoln 2003). The following quotation encapsulates this idea: "The role of the researcher is to lift the barriers which prevent the masses from speaking." (Foucault in Hammersley 2007: 33) Therefore one can argue that in a country with a history of overt oppression, as was the case in South Africa, critical approaches are an essential complement to the political liberation that has taken place.

Similarly, Crotty (1998) asserts that critical research can never be isolated from ideological orientations; that is, certain groups in society are more privileged than others, thus constituting a form of oppression. The role of the social collective is therefore indispensable in critical research processes because, as a collaborative entity, researchers are charged with the responsibility to challenge the beliefs and notions of their practice as a critical collaborative action. Such a critical process can evolve when the researchers collaboratively develop a community within which the critical processes can be initiated. Therefore, in this study a collaborative team of enquiry was established, the purpose, significance and role of which are outlined in the following section.

4.2.4 Establishing communities of enquiry

I proceed from the premise that critical reflection on practice thrives if there is collaboration among practitioners; therefore, the formation of collaborative communities with a shared goal to improve their practice is crucial. Retallick et al. (1999) and Dunlop et al. (2011) describe a community as a social organisation which is characterised by relationships and the sharing of ideas (It is a body that binds people together to a set of values and ideas.

Practitioners are afforded the opportunity to interact with one another, reflect on their practice, and begin to change their attitudes and beliefs towards an inclusive teaching practice (Makoelle 2012). Not all communities are engaged in action learning, which is learning through collaboration by members of a team. The reason is that, for such learning to take place, a community of enquiry must be developed. Such a community is therefore defined as a group of practitioners who share a common practice through a set of agreed values, knowledge, terminology and procedures, which offers scope for problem-solving (Reason & Bradbury 2006; Aubusson, Ewing & Hoban 2012). The purpose of such a community is to create knowledge and clarify their perceptions of reality, goals and strategies for achieving them. Data are collected for the purpose of solving their immediate problems by building local theory, testing it through action by inferring from the observable behaviour in order to institute change. The role of the researcher is to create conditions under which practitioners can test theories of practice for the purpose of learning (Reason & Bradbury 2006). The process by which practitioners probe their practice occurs within a community of enquiry. Retallick et al. (1999) refer to the community of enquiry as a community of learning bearing similar attributes such as collaboration, engagement, reflection and the development of the local theory that addresses a problem as identified by the practitioners. The community of enquiry embarks on the process of testing their local theories. The process of testing local theories as discussed here was borrowed from Reason and Bradbury (2006) because of its direct relevance to this study. Therefore, the following discussion will deal with how theories are tested through the use of questions and the determination of patterns from data during process of analysis.

The manner in which theories are tested

The community of enquiry is a collective intended to probe the prevailing practice by asking the following questions (Reason & Bradbury 2006: 133):

- How do practitioners perceive a situation or problem?
- What results do they wish to achieve?
- What strategies do they intend to use in order to achieve these objectives?
- What were the actual outcomes of these strategies?
- To what extent did the outcomes match the intended results?

The above-mentioned questions are significant for the process of enquiry. The community of enquiry determines patterns from the data through the use of an interpretive process by:

- looking at multiple interpretations of data (inter-subjective testing);
- making comparisons between what teachers say they do (espoused theory) and what has been observed (theory in use);
- reflecting critically, using the “ladder of inference”, which is the interpretation of data from a concrete to a more abstract level of reasoning – that is, if no consensus can be reached, practitioners could descend to a concrete level to identify an area of divergent thinking.

As the interpretive process does not always guarantee consensus, the testing of a theory adopts the principle of the falsifiability of the theory. This process provides alternative solutions by suggesting a change of beliefs, perceptions and practice to inform transformation (Reason & Bradbury 2006). The authors further posit that change will take place at two levels, namely at the level of strategies (single loop) and at the level of conditions (double loop). Change at the level of strategies is often easy whereas change at the level of conditions is complicated because it involves changing assumptions, goals, values and beliefs. When the community of enquiry is probing practice, reflecting on it and drawing conclusions, action learning takes place because the group learn through the experiences of their actions (Brockbank & McGill 2004). The process of learning

collaboratively as a community is important for empowering the practitioners and increasing their participation (Truman, Mertens & Humphries 2000).

I therefore assert that communities of enquiry must engage in some form of action research and, consequently, action learning to improve their practice. In this study, I adopted a two-dimensional approach to the research project: firstly, a critical collaborative form of action research through which the participants critically reflected on their practice in order to enhance an inclusive pedagogy and, secondly, a collaborative action research approach wherein inclusive practices are developed. The next section discusses action research as a method which a community of enquiry applies to probe and develop a local theory for the improvement of their practice, followed by an explanation of the collaborative action research approach I used as a form of meta-action research.

4.3 THE NATURE OF COLLABORATIVE ACTION RESEARCH

According to White (2005), action research was conceptualised by Lewin (1952) and developed further by Kolb (1984), Carr and Kemmis (1986) and other researchers. While there are different forms of action research (Edge 2001), I decided to adopt a collaborative form of action research in the study for the following reasons (Caro-Bruce et al. 2007):

- It is a method which is practical, allowing the participation of subjects.
- It may be oriented to be emancipatory, interpretive and critical in that it interrogates the existing socio-cultural structures, examines power relations in organisations in order to change a given situation and create more favourable circumstances (Carson & Sumara 1997).
- It is a cyclical process of planning, taking action, observing and reflecting on the observed practices (White 2005).
- It may be conceptualised as a reflective enquiry helping professionals to understand the assumptions, values and beliefs about policy and practice in order to review them in their local context and improve conditions.
- It is a method that has evaluative intentions, and it is dominated by processes of collaboration, interaction, observation, reflection and dialogue by teacher researchers (Ainscow et al. 2004). As such, it is

interested in hearing the teacher's voice and invests in the teacher's intellectual and experiential expertise (Caro-Bruce et al. 2007).

- It is equated with teacher research (Pollard 2002) in that it is specific research not aimed at producing new knowledge but intended to improve practice by developing local theory (McNiff & Whitehead 2005). As such, it focuses on elucidating practice rather than justifying generalisation.

Furthermore, collaborative action research has the potential to work well as a change mechanism; for example, Somekh (in Altrichter & Elliott 2003) postulates the theory of the changing nature of action research by drawing on her experiences. She defines collaborative action research as a vehicle for managing changes in the classroom and, therefore, a medium through which change can be implemented. Similarly, Mohr et al. (2004) view collaborative action research as a change strategy led by teachers and argue that teacher collaboration is important during the research process. Somekh (2006) concurs that collaborative action research is a methodology for change in schools. Change results from a process through which teachers embark on partnership, reflection and recognition of the ethical sensitivity of the research investigation process. Change is enhanced through good human relationships, effective communication and active participation (Stringer 2008).

The nature of collaborative action research is relevant to this study because it was easy to adapt its nature towards a cyclical method that integrates processes – namely, data collection, investigation, analysis and interpretation – which all are conducted in collaboration with the teachers; thus, it focuses on transformation and equity for all (Makoelle in Francis, Mahlomaholo & Nkoane 2010).

However, while these are the reasons why the nature of the collaborative action-research process became significant for the purposes of conducting this study, its limitations were also noted; for example, it is criticised for

- the lack of generalisability of its findings;
- the fact that it is isolated from the social context (O'Hanlon 2003).

To improve the generalisability of the findings, I had to ensure that the study was highly systematic and that the choice of the research site was similar to most of the school contexts within the larger population of schools. The fact that I conducted the study with teachers from different social contexts made the study socially integrated and positioned. We conducted the study to respond to the wider socio-political context by challenging and critically probing our agency within the school and wider inclusive structure. Furthermore, it must be noted that this study involved power relations issues. As principal, I was in a position of authority, academically well-qualified, and perceived to be very knowledgeable. This had a potentially profound influence on the way the study was conducted. The nature of collaborative action research is such that equal participation is required for all participants. However, given the characteristics of the teachers who took part in the study, it was necessary for me as the researcher to be proactive, take initiative and be instrumental in organising some of the activities for the study to progress. The next section explains how the collaborative action research process was operationalised in this study.

4.4 THE PROCESS OF COLLABORATIVE ACTION RESEARCH

Collaborative action research is a complex process that recognises the role of the teacher as researcher, but differs in terms of the form of the involvement and participation of subjects. The form of action research that was adopted in this study was one led by the subjects of research (teachers) collaborating with me as the researcher. For example, Mohr et al. (2004) acknowledge that this kind of action research is a method of research managed by teachers who elect their own research group, which contributes to the planning and monitoring processes (Makoelle in Francis et al. 2010). It is transformative in nature and offers teachers the opportunity to collaborate (Aldridge et al. 2012). Teachers taking part in a collaborative action research should have certain characteristics and behave in a particular manner; for example, Pollard (2002) postulates that teachers should have the following characteristics in mapping the development through action research:

- the systematic questioning of their own practice as a basis for development (Greenwood & Levin 1998);
- commitment to study their own practice;
- the ability to test a theory in practice (which happens when teachers have a strong network).

The network between teachers manifests itself in what is called a “research forum”, which is a platform created to deal with conclusions, critique and test new ideas (Pollard 2002). Research is mostly public in that stakeholders reflect on their practices publicly through the analysis of data and evidence collected – what Ainscow et al. (2006) refer to as group interpretive process (Makoelle 2012). Through evidence-based data, teachers begin to improve on their practice – a phenomenon referred to as “evidence-based teaching” (Hammersley 2007).

On the same note, Altrichter and Elliott (2003) mention that during the collaborative action-research process teachers assume what is called a “double task”; that is, the role of teacher and researcher. Teachers practise and reflect on their practice using collaborative action research either with themselves or with colleagues through a process that Posch (1999) calls “dynamic networking”. The process of collaborative action research is characterised by the process of linking theory with practice, maintaining the conceptual and perceptual knowledge, value objectivity and subjectivity of the research and focusing on the individual or group (Altrichter & Elliott 2003).

The process is thus teacher-driven and school management should not dominate the process. Hence Fullan (2001) and Somekh (2006) caution against management-led whole-school action research, which is intent on disguising teacher involvement while imposing ideas on teachers. In this study, my position as principal posed this dilemma; however, the organisation of the process of inquiry was such that teachers took initiative in probing their practice, although there were instances when the teachers requested my input and guidance.

Unlike in management-led whole-school action research, teachers negotiate and agree on the research questions and the means to finding answers to them. Collaborative action

research adopts an emancipatory approach by looking critically at power relations and engaging with the broader political structures to ensure social justice (Tinning 2012). Somekh (2006) – drawing on Habermas’s concept of “communicative action”, Marx’s concept of “false consciousness” and Foucault’s “deconstruction of the regimes of truths” – supports the argument that collaborative action research attempts to emancipate the socially oppressed through the deconstruction of meaning through the participation and involvement of teachers as researchers. In order to achieve this objective, we challenged our beliefs and thoughts and also where these were coming from, for example, our past experiences and how they were influencing our current thinking and practice. It follows that the process of collaborative action research is dominated by teachers forming networks and contributing through collaboration to learn more about their practices. However, Ainscow et al (2006) caution against regarding the contribution of practitioners as being above critique. They suggest that the collaborative action research process should not lose its element of being reflective and critical, and that to strengthen the outcomes of the process, the voices of the practitioners must be supported by providing research training as well as different theoretical perspectives to clarify the views of the practitioner.

Collaborative action research has high triangulation potential as different sources of data are collected during the process; for example, Ainscow et al. (2006) describe this form of research as a process whereby teacher researchers engage in processes of triangulation such as observation, interviews, pictures and videos. The process of data analysis and interpretation varies according to the interests of the researchers. The notion of a group-interpretive process, which is the process of teachers collaboratively embarking on reflection and meaning-making, becomes crucial in the interpretation of data (Somekh 2006). The process is illustrated by Kemmis and McTaggart (1988), for example, by means of a four-phase model:

- **The plan:** a flexible, unpredictable anticipation of what will occur in the future;
- **The action:** a deliberate and controlled activity process often defined by putting ideas into action, as influenced by past practices and critical reflection on the changes between past and new practices;

- **Observation:** documenting and recording the effects of action in an open way in addition to recording the unexpected, using mostly research diaries;
- **Reflection:** recall of action as observed, active engagement with data to make sense of it by giving meaning to it and interpreting the data, which is evaluative in nature.

The above model stages were adopted in this study. The following section discusses the reasons why collaborative action research was relevant to the study.

4.5 THE REASONS WHY COLLABORATIVE ACTION RESEARCH WAS RELEVANT TO THIS STUDY

Most of the literature on teacher change and change implementation points to the fact that teachers embrace and implement change when they are involved in or have had a chance to participate in the initiation, planning, designing and implementation of processes. Most literature on initiating change in schools to develop inclusive practices also points to the significance of teacher collaboration as an appropriate approach (Fullan 1999; Engelbrecht & Green 2001; Ainscow et al 2006; Cesar & Santos 20006; Savolainen et al. 2012; Morton et al. 2012).

The South African context provides evidence that teacher involvement is a prerequisite for change; for example, Engelbrecht and Green (2001) note that teachers in South Africa have developed a resistant attitude towards change because change was often imposed on them during the era of apartheid education. It is therefore crucial that any process of change, as Fullan (1999) maintains, take the beliefs of teachers into consideration and acknowledge that they are active participants in the process, if it is to be realised. It is for this reason that this study about exploring the classroom practices that are effective in promoting inclusion and the participation and involvement of teachers is very important.

Teachers in South African schools find themselves in a position where they have had to implement inclusive education since its introduction in 2001 (DoE : 2001). The process of change from the traditional uninclusive way of teaching to an inclusive approach prompts teachers to reflect critically on their practices. The process of reflection on teaching

practice was not a common practice in South African schools. Consequently, the opportunity to be action researchers provided the participating teachers with a chance to emancipate themselves from the bondage of indoctrination and the injustices of the past apartheid education ideology. This was achieved by creating an atmosphere conducive to allowing teachers to initiate processes of observation and reflection and consequently determine what was applicable in their context. This was emancipatory in the sense that none of the solutions to their problems was imposed on them.

4.6 META-RESEARCH WITHIN COLLABORATIVE ACTION RESEARCH

In this study, apart from the collaborative action-research project designed to enable the participating teachers to address the shortcomings of their pedagogy with respect to inclusion, I decided to conduct a qualitative investigation within the theoretical schema of collaborative action research. This was a meta-research investigation of 15 teachers and 20 learners in a South African school. Fifteen teachers at Clocolan High school voluntarily took part in the project. The sample of 15 teachers was spread as follows: junior teachers (0–10 years of teaching experience); specialist teachers (10–20 years of teaching experience); and senior specialists (20 and more years of teaching experience). The Representative Council of Learners (RCL) – a body of 20 democratically elected learners representative of all the grades at the school and mandated to look at matters of learner interest – took part from the learners’ perspective as a focus group.

The reader is made aware that teachers at the school felt that the actual name of the school should be mentioned in the report as this project was seen as an attempt to emancipate both teachers and learners from the oppressive practices of the past. Clocolan High School was chosen for the following reasons:

- For developmental reasons, the school was serving a previously disadvantaged community.
- The school was where the researcher was principal, which made it easily accessible.
- The school was one of the models of the new South Africa.

- It had the features of both a previously disadvantaged and advantaged school.
- It was highly performing in terms of matriculation results and reflected the demographics of the country.
- Because of the school's relevance to the new educational dispensation, the research results would be easily transferable to other schools.

4.7 DATA-COLLECTION METHODS

Data were collected during the collaborative action-research process. (The reader is made aware that data were collected for the two research processes, namely collaborative action research (with teachers) and qualitative meta-research (researcher). While there are many ways of collecting qualitative data, during our collaborative action-research process we regarded the following methods as relevant and appropriate: participant observation, interviews and focus-group interviews, and diaries. Because data were collected for the collaborative action research process and for my meta-research, it was important to provide details of who did what before data-collection techniques could be discussed. The following table therefore summarises the data-collection techniques used in this research.

Table 4.1: Summary of research techniques

Data collection technique	Who
Participant observation	Both the teachers and I engaged in observations
Interviews	I interviewed the teachers
Focus-group interviews	I interviewed the learners
Diaries	Both the teachers and I kept reflection diaries

Next, the relevance of these techniques in the collection of data is discussed.

4.7.1 Participant observation

I chose participant observation as one of the tools with which to collect data. Participant observation takes place when the researcher assumes an insider role in the group being studied (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2007). The presence of the researcher in the field

where the research is being conducted is pivotal. Bryman and Burgess (1994), Rosnow and Rosenthal (1996) and Cohen et al. (2007) mention three roles that the researcher may assume during field work: that is, the role of complete participant, participant-as-observer, or observer-as-participant. In this study, the third role seemed more appropriate since, if one becomes a complete participant, there is a risk of becoming too subjective, which could blur one's objectivity; and if the participant is just an observer, there is a danger of becoming biased. However, the observer-as-participant role affords the researcher the opportunity to observe while engaging, learning and reflecting on the activities together with the participants. Close contact with the participants is maintained and the role of the researcher is a constant reflection of his or her involvement both as observer and participant. Therefore, the teachers participated in the action research in order to emancipate themselves from past practices and to improve current practice while, on the other hand, being the subjects of my meta-research process.

The role of the participant observer, according to Spradley (1980), is characterised by duality (observing while participating), maintaining increased awareness and vigilance, keeping proper records, applying both insider and outsider views, and constantly reflecting on his/her role as both participant and observer. In applying these views or perspectives to the process, the researcher should exercise to ensure that he/she does not become partial to the research group, thus losing his/her sense of objectivity.

Participant observation had the following advantages in this study (Bryman & Teevan 2005: 207; Cohen et al. 2007: 404):

- seeing through the eyes of the participants;
- learning the native language of the participants;
- observing that which would otherwise be taken for granted;
- maintaining a sensitive awareness of context and flexibility;
- focusing on what was natural (naturalistic emphasis on lived experience);
- building rapport with participants.

Despite the above-mentioned advantages, there were limitations to the method of participant observation, such as the difficulty of analysing the data, the lack of

generalisability of the results, and the susceptibility to bias due to relationships with the participants. Zeni (2001) highlights the significance of the researcher locating him/herself within the practitioner research because he/she brings to the process issues of gender, race, class, role and power, which could have far-reaching ethical implications. In my case as principal of the school, I brought with me power that was embedded in my position. To deal with this, we had to clarify my role and indicate to the research team that my participation in the project was that of an equal partner (as discussed in Chapter 5).

4.7.2 Interviews

The second data-collection technique I decided to use was interviews. This qualitative method was fully justified within the context of the current research since it afforded me the opportunity to gather and record information emanating from the series of questions that were put to the subjects (Watts & Ebbutt 1987). I used interviews because they allowed me to gain a deeper insight into people's experiences (Laws et al. 2003) and perceptions (Powney & Watts 1987).

The process of seeking more insight into the perceptions of those under study is achieved by asking both close-ended and open-ended questions. According to Foddy (1993: 128), open-ended questions (which were mostly used in this study) are used in both encounters of interviews for the following reasons:

- They allow respondents to use their own words in answering questions.
- Respondents are not led to the model answer but use their discretion.
- Interviews avoid the format effect.
- They allow complex motivational influences and frame the reference to be identified.

Interviews are known to extract more in-depth information from the subjects by giving them an opportunity to tell their own stories in their own words. Thus the voices of the subjects can be heard. The major disadvantages of interviews are that they are costly, difficult to analyse, do not allow the interviewer's effect to be controlled, are intrusive, and may cause respondents to give false information (Laws et al. 2003).

While there are many types of interviews, two types were deemed to be the most appropriate for this study, namely the unstructured interview and the semi-structured interview. Unstructured interviews afforded the respondent freely to give details of the information elicited by the questions (Denzin & Lincoln 2005; Bryman & Teevan 2005). Semi-structured interviews, on the other hand, were conducted using a pre-planned structure to guide the respondents. Prompts and probes were used with either open-ended or closed-ended questions. During a semi-structured interview, the respondents were given a fair amount of latitude (but not unlimited freedom) to provide a detailed response. Drever (1995) believes that semi-structured interviews are effective as follow-up methods of observation as more details about specific aspects can be investigated. This was the case in this study.

4.7.3 Focus-group interviews

In order to deconstruct the notion of a power relationship between the researcher and subjects, focus-group interviews were used. A focus group is defined by Krueger (1994), Wilson (1997), Kelly (1998), Laws et al. (2003), and Babbie (2004) as a gathering of 12 to 15 people brought together to shed light on a guided discussion. The group should be as homogeneous as possible.

Essentially, a focus group was used to explore the opinions, perceptions and views of the participants without putting any pressure on them (Krueger 1994). Focus groups were used in this study because they are known to stimulate high levels of involvement among participants when there is a need to generate ideas from the individuals in a collective. They were used to minimise the impact of the power relationship between the researcher and the participants. In the case of this study, the focus group was used to deal with power relations between the learners and their teachers. Focus groups had the following advantages and disadvantages for this study (Laws et al. 2003: 300; Babbie 2004: 369):

- Real-life data were captured.
- They were flexibly applied.
- They generated rapid results.

- They had low operating costs.
- Group interaction produced valuable data.
- They were effective in generating ideas for change.
- Group relations reduced the researcher's effect.

While recognising the advantages of focus groups, one should be aware that the following limitations were evident:

- I had relatively little control over the proceedings.
- Data were difficult to analyse
- The group intimidated the shy and gave the platform to the dominating talkative.

However, through careful planning, focus groups were effective in generating valuable qualitative data.

4.7.4 Research diaries

A research diary is defined as a document created by an individual who has maintained a regular, personal and contemporaneous record (Alaszewski 2006:2). A diary is therefore regarded as an up-to-date, personal and a contemporary record. While the diary is used to record several things, for the purposes of this study, a diary was used to record dates and events related to the study. The main function of diaries in this study was to record both the research team's observations and my own observations, guided by our pre-planned observation schedules (Appendix F). I also used a diary to record observations of the action-research process whereby my feelings, reactions and the behaviour of teachers and learners were observed to gather data on the progress of the study. However, the disadvantages of diaries were noted; for example, that it was difficult to analyse their data.

4.7.5 Sampling

I used purposeful sampling to identify the participants in the study. Purposeful sampling is defined by Sanders and Pinhey (1983) as a selection of those participants with first-hand experience of the phenomenon under study. The importance of purposeful sampling is that diverse perspectives of participants are accommodated (Stringer 2008).

Fifteen teachers at Clocolan High School voluntarily took part in the project. The sample of 15 teachers comprised the following members: junior teachers (0–10 years of teaching experience), specialist teachers (10–20 years of teaching experience), and senior specialists (20 and more years of teaching experience). The Representative Council of Learners (RCL) – a body of 20 learners democratically elected by their peers to be representative of all the grades at school and look at matters of learner interest – took part from the learners’ perspective as a focus group.

4.7.6 Data-collection process

The research process was a four-stage collaborative action-research study and consisted of the following stages: planning, observation, action and reflection. Whenever necessary, a stage was subdivided into phases. The table below gives a structural outline of each of the stages, followed by a brief summary of what happened during each stage (phase):

Table 4.2: Collaborative action research stages and phases

Stage	Phases	Action
Stage1: Planning	Phase 1: Phase 2:	Preparation Identification (brainstorming)
Stage 2: Observation	Phase 1: Phase 2:	Observation of current practice Focus-group interviews with learners Participant observation on how inclusive practices were used
Stage 3: Action	Phase 1:	Adopting practices in the class to develop teachers’ skills in using them to enhance full inclusion
Stage 4: Reflection	Phase 1: Phase 2:	Evaluating action research as a methodology Writing a report and making recommendations

(Source: Author)

i. Preparations (two weeks)

The initial preparation began firstly by obtaining permission from the Free State Education Department to carry out the research project, which included writing an official letter to request such permission (see Appendix E). Once the permission was granted (Appendix M), I then asked for the volunteers among the teachers to establish the research task team for the project. To compensate for the major disadvantage of action research, which is the lack of research skills of the volunteer researchers, I conducted a one-day mini-workshop to familiarise the research task team with their roles and duties. To minimise my influence on the process as principal of the school, I jointly drew up a duty list with the teachers to explain how the meetings would be conducted, who would chair them, who would take minutes, and how decisions would be taken.

ii. Identification of classroom teaching practices that are effective in promoting inclusion (two months)

We convened meetings to brainstorm the concepts *inclusive education*, *inclusive teaching* and *inclusive class* in order to establish a common understanding of what they meant in our context and to determine how inclusive we thought our teaching was. The discussion questions were the following:

- What do we understand by *inclusive education*, *inclusive teaching* and *inclusive class*?
- How inclusive do we think our teaching has been?

Teachers were allowed to engage in an open discussion for them to air their views. At the request of the teachers, I presented some literature on inclusive practices so that we could compare our understanding and that in the literature.

iii. Focus-group interview with learners

To elucidate the notion of inclusion from the perspective of learners, I held an open focus-group interview session with the (RCL) Learner Representative Council (a body of 20 democratically elected committee by learners and which was representative of all grades at school to look at matters of learner interest) to discuss questions such as the following:

- Do you think all learners are catered for by the teaching in your classrooms?
- Which activities and teacher practices in your opinion help you to learn effectively or fully take part in the class?
- What would you like changed for you to be academically well-catered for in your classes?

iv. Observations

Observations were used on two accounts: firstly, to determine how inclusive our current practice was and, secondly, during the action stage when practices were adopted in the class to develop their inclusive application in our school context.

During the first phase of observations, we made notes mainly from memory. The observations were systematised by the use of a pre-planned observation schedule which addressed the research questions. Teachers suggested that it would be appropriate to keep daily reflection diaries (Appendix F). Observations in classrooms were integrated into the school routine, a move which was aimed at minimising disruptions of normal teaching periods. The following topics (as determined by us) guided the observations in relation to inclusion. (see Appendix B):

- **Curriculum-related aspects of the class** (planning, presentation and assessment of lesson, interaction, participation, and seating arrangements during the lesson).

- **Teaching (pedagogic) aspects of the class** (teaching approach and strategies, maintenance of discipline and motivation, the role of assistant teachers and the use of technology in the class).
- **Learning aspects of the class** (use of learning approaches, e.g. cooperative learning, group work, peer tutoring and collaborative problem-solving).
- **Social aspects of the class** (communication, diversity, relationships and values in the class).

During the second phase of observations, we first agreed on the criteria for inclusion (see Appendix D), then paired with one another according to curriculum relevancy, and did observations for six months.

v. Interviews

Once the observations had been done, in-depth interviews were conducted with teachers to reflect on what had been observed and to gather more data on themes that might have emerged from the observations. Interview schedules with open-ended questions were used. Open questions allowed the teachers to recount and reflect on their practices and broadly agree on the meaning of effective classroom teaching practices that promoted inclusion in their context (see Appendix D).

vi. Action to adopt effective classroom practices in classes (six months)

Having identified and agreed on classroom practices that were regarded as effective in promoting inclusion, I collaborated with the research task team to draw up an action plan (Appendix L). The action plan was a detailed implementation programme to adopt effective classroom practices identified in the classes and evaluate how they promoted inclusive teaching and learning. The following were the proposed indicators of the classroom teaching practices that were effective; however, the proposed indicators were negotiated with the teachers themselves. I only offered guidance in this regard (adapted from the *Index of Inclusion*, Ainscow & Booth 2002):

- High level of participation of all learners, interaction and effective communication between all learners and the teacher, and cooperation among all learners.
- High level of inclusive and differentiated instruction (catering for all learner needs), an atmosphere that fostered a high level of good human relations, and a high level of discipline in the class.
- High level of tolerance of diversity, motivation of all learners, and achievement of expected outcomes by all learners

During the action phase in the classrooms, the teachers were expected to record their experiences in the daily reflection diary (see Appendix F).

At the end of the action phase, I conducted follow-up interviews with open questions with teachers to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching practices that we had implemented in our classes over a given period (see Appendix D). Reflecting on practice is very rarely practised by teachers in South Africa. Group interpretive processes were used by the volunteer research team and me to analyse and interpret the data.

vii. Reflecting on the research process, reporting and making recommendations (three months)

Together with the research task team during this phase, I drafted a summary of conclusions and findings. The following questions were asked in an attempt to build a local theory: What was our understanding of inclusive education, inclusive teaching and inclusive class? What did the literature say about the concepts and how inclusive did we think our teaching was? What was the research telling us? What have we learned from the project?

viii. My role as researcher

While my role was to be part of the research team as an equal partner, I however had to provide purpose and direction to the study for it to start because teachers were conducting this kind of research for the first time. At the start, I dealt with ethical issues. During the first stage of our research, the teachers requested that I give them a presentation on the

current research literature on inclusion. While I thought it would be easy for teachers to engage freely about their practices during our discussions, that was not the case. From time to time, I had to initiate the discussions. As requested by the teachers, I kept records of our proceedings and allowed the teachers access to them whenever it was needed. The objective of being critical in this study was to challenge power and hierarchical issues in curriculum delivery and decision-making; however, the contradiction was that my being the principal and arguably the most qualified teacher among the teachers posed a serious challenge as they regarded me as an authority figure. While the teachers in their reflections acknowledged that the process had been one of challenging power in terms of their role in taking decisions about their practice, the extent to which my status had an impact on their freedom to do this cannot be underestimated.

4.7.7 Data recording

This section deals with how data were recorded and processed during field work.

a) Field notes/records

We used research diaries to record the data during all the stages of the research process. During the first phase of observations, the research diaries were guided by the pre-planned observation schedule that we had designed; and during the adoption of practices in the classes, we recorded our observations guided by the criteria we had developed. The significance of keeping notes and dating and timing the data during the research fieldwork stage is emphasised by Campbell et al. (2010). Similarly, Kemmis and McTaggart (1998) and Ainscow (1999) advocate the use of research journals by teacher researchers as a way of reflecting on their practices; hence, the participating teachers used what one would call a reflection diary (research journal) to record all activities relating to their observations and contributions to the study. Minutes of all meetings with the volunteer teachers were taken, typed, read and stored electronically for confirmation at every meeting.

4.7.8 Data analysis

a) Introduction

The data analysis took place at two levels, namely during collaborative action research through group interpretive process, and for the meta-research process. The data were collected, processed and analysed systematically. Data analysis means that, after collection, the data must be processed and meaning must be attached to it. It is therefore critical to look at different ways in which data are qualitatively analysed. The data-analysis process is always preceded by data-management processes as large quantities of data could be generated by means of qualitative research.

b) Data management

As the data were stored and managed by me as the researcher, the data management strategy used was very important. For example, Miles and Huberman (1994: 45) suggest different ways of managing data, provided the data remain highly accessible in a form that is user-friendly. Various data management strategies are preferred by researchers; for example:

1. **Formatting** determines how field notes are written, laid out and structured. Data labels are used to make the field notes easily recognisable.
2. **Cross-referrals** make it possible for the contents of data files to be located from one another.
3. **Indexing** involves defining clearly explicit codes for data to make them more identifiable and recognisable.
4. **Abstracting** involves summarising long stretches of data into short readable versions.
5. **Pagination** involves assigning page numbers to the documents to ensure retrievability.

Data should be stored in an easily retrievable manner. It is always important for the researcher to set aside enough time for the process of analysis, which often takes long if

not carefully planned. So, for this study, a mixture of the above-mentioned data-management systems was used. For example, preventing the irretrievability of data indexing was very important and enhancing the clarity of data formatting was crucial.

c) *Process of analysis*

Two approaches were used to analyse the data: that is, an inductive analytical framework, which is the process of deriving meaning from data; and a group interpretative data-analysis approach, which is a collective interpretative system.

I must indicate that the two processes did not run parallel to each other but were interactive. In practice, the group interpretative analysis would take place at the level of engagements with teachers, but I would go beyond that and embark on a meta-analysis, using an inductive analysis from a theoretical perspective. My data analysis was influenced by the ‘lens’ which I used to look at the data and which derived from my epistemological and ontological stance towards reality and the nature of reality acquisition, as alluded to earlier – the critical emancipatory lens within the framework of collaborative action research, hence group-interpretative data analysis.

I was also guided by the research question as stated in Chapter 1. Research questions are usually significant in choosing the lens through which data are to be looked at. Laws et al. (2003) indicate that this is the time when researchers impose theory on the data. The quality of the data analysis will depend on the researcher's interpretation of the data. Mouton (2001) refers to interpretation as the process of relating the findings of the research to the theoretical framework, either by confirming or falsifying the new interpretation. The two sets of analysis were coordinated: firstly, for teachers, the group interpretative analysis was geared towards addressing our objectives as determined at the beginning of the action research; secondly, my meta-analysis was intended to address the theoretical objectives – that is, making a contribution to knowledge about inclusive practices and contributing to action research as a research methodology.

d) *Triangulation*

Data triangulation is closely related to continuous data analysis. Among others, *triangulation* refers to the analysis of data by means of different sets of theoretical frameworks. The process involves the use of different data sources to support the researcher's conclusions and interpretations (White 2005). In the triangulation of data from interviews, for example, focus-group interviews, participant observation, diaries, and minutes of group interpretive meetings were all used to elucidate the process of analysis.

e) *Group interpretative process of analysis with teachers*

In the analysis of the data, I borrowed the ideas of Mouton (2001:108), who indicates that the aim of data analysis is to understand the components of data and determine the relationship between variables, patterns and themes. The data were analysed using a group interpretive process. Bryman and Burgess (1994: 6) explain the descriptive or interpretive method of data analysis as one which seeks to establish a coherent and inclusive account of a practice from the point of view of those being researched.

In the current study, the data were interpreted in stages as the research progressed. Group interpretative meetings were held after each phase. The meetings took the form of a discussion and the minutes of all the meetings were taken by me as the secretary of the volunteer research committee and afterwards verified by all the other members to check if they were a true reflection of the deliberations. The interpretative discussions were chaired by an elected chair for the meeting. The discussions were facilitated by asking questions to stimulate discussions (see Chapter 5). The group firstly read the data, determined themes, assigned extracts (quotations) to the themes, and then derived interpretations. Agreements on interpretations were reached through consensus. The dissenting views were discussed at length and recorded as such.

f) *Analysis and interpretation by the researcher*

After the group interpretative processes, I also attempted to make sense of all the data from my own point of view, which included observation, interviews, learners' focus-group

interviews, teacher daily reflection diaries, minutes of teachers' analysis and interpretation meetings, and the researcher's diary. I used a systematic set of procedures to develop and arrive inductively at a theory about the phenomenon, a principle borrowed from grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin 1990: 24). I allowed the data to 'talk' by deriving themes, patterns and meanings from them.

g) Analytical induction

Developing theory by using analytical induction is summarised by Evans (2002: 187) in the following statement:

[As a strategy, analytical induction] involves scanning the data for categories of phenomenon and for relationships among such categories, developing working typologies and hypotheses upon an examination of initial cases, then modifying and refining them on the basis of subsequent cases ... negative instances or phenomenon that do not fit the initial function, are consciously sought to expand, adapt or restrict the original construct. In its most extreme application analytical induction is intended to provide universal rather than probabilistic explanation, that is all cases are to be explained, not merely some distribution of cases.

In response to the preceding quotation, I decided to use analytical induction to analyse the data. The following flowchart illustrates the principle of analytical induction for the analysis of data in the meta- research which I conducted.

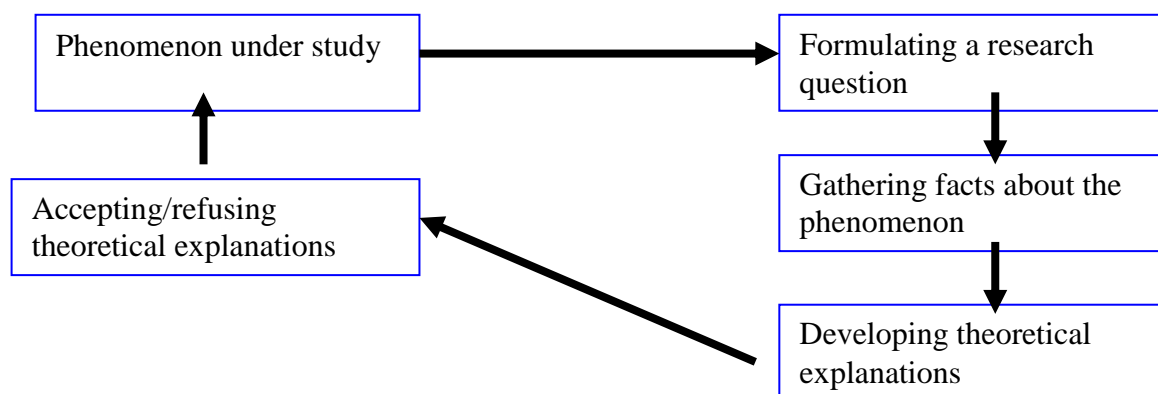


Figure 4.1: The process of analytical induction

The development data analysis was characterised by a series of steps during the process of analysis. The following steps formed the basis of this (Laws *et al.* 2003: 395):

Step 1: Reading and rereading all the collected data.

The purpose of reading the data closely was to ensure that I was fully conversant with it, thus making the process of analysis more manageable.

Step 2: Making a preliminary list of themes arising from the data

The process of categorising the data into themes, also referred to as “coding”, is conceptualised by Miles and Huberman (1994) as labels or texts assigned to units of meaning of data collected. Similarly, Neuman (1997) refers to the process as organising raw data into conceptual categories in order to create themes that will be used to analyse the data. As was the case in step 1, the categorisation of the data made the themes much more manageable.

Step 3: Reading the data again to confirm the themes

By reading the data several times, I was able to verify that the interpretations were correct.

Step 4: Linking the themes to quotations and notes

I then wrote themes alongside the quotations and notes as I went through the data.

Step 5: Looking through the categories of themes to give an interpretation(s)

In the course of analysing the data, I attempted to answer the following questions:

- What was the teachers' understanding of *inclusive education*, *inclusive teaching* and an *inclusive class*? What were the prevailing conditions in the classrooms with regard to inclusion according to both the learners and teachers?
- Which teaching practices proved to be applicable in the context of the teachers' classes and why? (In the course of determining the pattern of teaching practices towards inclusion, I compiled a spreadsheet which summarised all the practices as a basis for analysis.)
- Which data conflicted with the literature? And what evidence could not be supported by the empirical research?
- Did the project assist the teachers in adopting inclusive teaching practices in their classes?
- Which issues were not addressed by the project, and which still needed further research? (This question was based on the importance of considering all possible explanations of data interpretations in order to find the best possible interpretation.)

Step 6: Designing a tool to assist in discerning patterns in the data

In order to triangulate and determine the patterns during data analysis, a spreadsheet was used which gave a summary of the themes. For example, the spreadsheet recorded the title of the theme and quotations from different sets of data.

Step 7: Interpreting the data and deriving meaning

During this stage, I read the quotations and derived the meanings they were indicating in relation to each of them. This resulted in my interpretations, which I presented according to each theme.

h) Trustworthiness

Maintaining trustworthiness in qualitative research has become a much-debated topic in the literature between the proponents of the positivist approach, who believe in the quantitative measurement of validity and reliability, and the proponents of the post-positivist stance, who reject the notion of a measurable reality.

Lincoln and Guba (1985: 279) define trustworthiness in qualitative research as follows:

The basic issue in relation to trustworthiness is simple: How can an inquirer persuade his or her audience (including self) that the findings of an inquiry are worth paying attention to, worth taking account of, what arguments can be mounted, what criteria invoked, what questions asked, that would be persuasive on this issue?

This statement provided me with an insight into the aspects which matter in the issue of trustworthiness in qualitative research. However, other authors such as Bryman and Teevan (2005) continue to see value in using concepts such as *reliability* and *validity* coined by the positivist movement.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) provide an alternative to determining the validity and reliability or trustworthiness of qualitative research by suggesting the following lexical meanings or interpretations:

- Truth value: the truthfulness of the research findings.
- Applicability: how applicable the findings of the research would be in a different context.
- Consistency: whether, if repeated, the research would yield similar results.
- Neutrality: how far the study controls bias.

For any qualitative research to be regarded as trustworthy, the findings have to be credible. In developing trustworthiness for this study, the researcher adopted the following principles from Lincoln and Guba (1985):

- Prolonged engagement: engaging with the participants, being sufficiently involved at the research site, and building rapport with the participants.
- Persistent observation: providing an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon and sorting out the irrelevant information.
- Triangulation: using data from different sources to check if the data are credible.

To maintain a high level of trustworthiness, in this study the following methods were used. To determine the truthfulness of the findings, we had to record the proceedings and allow everyone in the research group to verify the contents of our records. To determine the applicability and consistency of the study, we enlisted the services of a local research professor to audit our work to determine how systematic we had been in collecting and analysing our data in order to give credence to the findings (Appendix K).

As the researcher, I had to build a rapport with the participants and used my diary to conduct persistent observations and triangulations by using different data to arrive at my conclusions. The collective nature of the action research ensured that the above-mentioned principles were adhered to in this study.

4.8 CONCLUSION

This chapter has given an account of the justification for using qualitative research, adopting a critical non-positivist position in its approach to the research. It has justified collaborative action research and its manifestations as a medium of change, explained and discussed the data collection and analysis instruments, and concluded by giving a detailed account of the research method and instruments used. The next chapter deals with the data collection and analysis process in collaborative action research.

CHAPTER 5: COLLABORATIVE ACTION-RESEARCH PROCESS AND DATA COLLECTION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I explain how the process of collaborative action research (CAR) was carried out during fieldwork. The different stages of the CAR process are discussed, and in each stage the sub-phases and data-collection method(s) are also discussed. Next, the data within each stage of the collaborative action research process are presented to give an overview of the CAR process. The data discussed within each of the stages are preceded by a quotation – that is, an extract from a statement made by the participants.

5.2 COLLABORATIVE ACTION-RESEARCH (CAR) PROCESS

The CAR process was conducted in four stages, namely the *planning stage*, the *observation stage*, *action stage*, and *reflection stage* (Appendix I). Each stage was composed of phases, for example the planning stage (phases 1 & 2); observation stage (phases 1 & 2); action stage (phase 3); and reflection stage (phase 4). The following diagram illustrates the cycle of an action-research process:

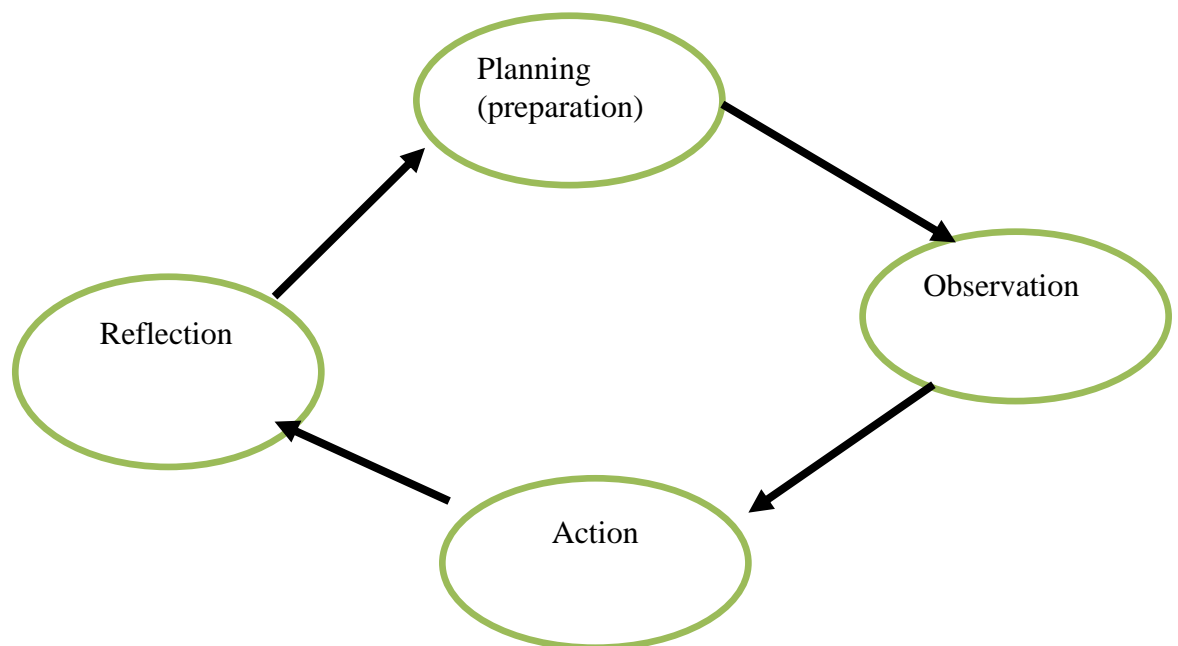


Figure 5.1: Research design

Next, the four stages and phases of the CAR process will be discussed.

5.2.1 Stage 1: Planning (preparing) for action research

During the first phase of preparations, four matters had to be arranged: permission had to be given for me as the researcher to have access to the school; the research team had to be elected; ethical issues had to be discussed (Appendix A); and the role of the researcher during the CAR process had to be clarified. The second phase of this stage dealt with the conceptualisation and definition of concepts.

I started the research process by submitting an application to conduct research at the chosen school. Several conditions had to be met before such permission would be granted. First, approval had to be obtained from the Directorate Quality Assurance of the Free State Education Department. This involved having to submit proof that the university had approved the research proposal, obtaining a letter of confirmation from the university professor supervising the research process, obtaining a letter of permission from the principal of the school where the research was to be conducted, submitting a research plan and explaining the tools that would be used in the collection of data and the commitment to upholding ethical codes. It took the directorate two weeks to grant permission in writing for the research to be conducted. Permission was granted subject to the following conditions:

- Learners and teachers would participate voluntarily in the project.
- The names of the participants would be kept confidential.
- The research project should not interfere with the normal teaching.
- A copy of the findings would be presented to the education department.
- The researcher would agree in writing to accepting the conditions.

I accepted all the conditions as stipulated and was gratified that the process of obtaining permission had gone smoothly in that permission had been granted within the reasonable time span of two weeks. What remained was to elect the research team, deal with ethical matters and clarify the various roles.

Secondly, we held several more meetings. These meetings were announced in the circular book used at the school by ad hoc committees (the reader is made aware that this was the standard procedure of how meetings were called throughout the study – see Appendix I for details of meetings).

Next, we elected the chairperson of the research team and agreed that for every meeting a new chair would be elected so that all participants in the study would have an equal chance to direct the discussions. This posed a challenge as the teachers were not prepared to chair meetings, citing various reasons such as lack of expertise in running research meetings. Two learners from the learners' side were elected as co-ordinators to act as liaisons between the chairperson and the secretary of the research team. The teachers nominated me as the secretary and the custodian of our minutes and research data, because they had a heavy work load and also believed that the confidentiality of the data would be guaranteed with me. We agreed that meetings would be held at a convenient place for everyone to attend in the afternoons.

Fifteen out of the total of 21 teachers who initially indicated that they would want to take part in the research process attended the meeting. The profiles of the teachers were as follows (the reader is alerted to the fact that for ethical purposes pseudonyms were used to refer to the participants):

- **Mrs Leroy**

Mrs Leroy, a white female who had been a teacher for 14 years, held a bachelor's degree in education. She had acted as HOD for languages and had worked under both the previous apartheid dispensation and the new democratic dispensation. She had taught Afrikaans from Grades 8 to 12 and was a relatively experienced teacher.

- **Mr Khumalo**

Mr Khumalo, a black male, had been a teacher for five years and held a national diploma in education. He had taught Business Studies from Grades 8 to 12 and was one of the relatively inexperienced teachers.

- **Mr Mokoena**

Mr Mokoena, who was also black, had been a teacher for two years and held a senior primary teacher's diploma. He had taught Mathematics from Grades 8 to 12. He was a relatively inexperienced teacher.

- **Mr Mosia**

Mr Mosia, a black male, had been a teacher for 12 years and held a secondary teacher's diploma. He had taught Sesotho (one of South Africa's 11 official languages) and History to all Grades, from 8 to 12. He was one of the relatively experienced teachers.

- **Mr Naledi**

Mr Naledi, a black male, had taught for 26 years at a rural primary school, and had only been at the current school for two years. Since his transfer to the current school, he had taught Sesotho in Grades 8 to 9 only. He was one of the relatively experienced teachers, although from a different context.

- **Mr Ramoya**

Mr Ramoya, a black male, had taught for 12 years and had acted as HOD of languages. He held a secondary teacher's diploma and had taught Sesotho in all Grades, from 8 to 12. He was one of the relatively experienced teachers.

- **Mr Letuka**

Mr Letuka, a black male, had taught for 16 years and was HOD for science subjects. He held a bachelor's degree in science and a secondary teacher's diploma. He had taught Mathematics and Physical Science to all Grades, from 8 to 12. He was one of the relatively experienced teachers.

- **Mrs van Tonder**

Mrs van Tonder, a white female, had taught for three years and held a higher primary teacher's diploma. She had taught English in all Grades, from 8 to 12. She was one of the relatively inexperienced teachers.

- **Miss Marumo**

Miss Marumo, a black female, had taught for three years. She held a bachelor's degree in education and had taught Sesotho to Grades 8, 9 and 10. She was one of the relatively inexperienced teachers.

- **Mrs Kruger**

Mrs Kruger, a white female, had taught for nine years and held a bachelor's degree in science and a university diploma in education. She had worked under both the previous apartheid dispensation and the new democratic dispensation. She had taught Mathematics to all Grades, from 8 to 12. She was one of the relatively experienced teachers.

- **Miss Koeberg**

Mrs Koeberg, a white female, had taught for two years and held a bachelor's degree in education (intermediate phase). She had taught Life Sciences to Grades 8, 9 and 12. She was one of the relatively inexperienced teachers.

- **Mrs Morena**

Mrs Morena, a black female teacher, had taught for 14 years and was HOD for commercial subjects at the time. She held a secondary teacher's diploma and a bachelor of technology (commerce) degree. She had worked under both the previous apartheid dispensation and the new democratic dispensation. She had taught Accounting to all Grades, from 8 to 12. She was one of the relatively experienced teachers.

- **Mr Koopman**

Mr Koopman, a white male, had taught for 20 years and was acting deputy principal at the time. He held a higher education diploma. He had worked under both the previous apartheid dispensation and the new democratic dispensation. He had taught Woodwork to all Grades, from 8 to 12. He was one of the relatively experienced teachers.

- **Mr Sello**

Mr Sello, a black male teacher, had taught for five years, held a secondary teacher's diploma and had taught Mathematics in Grades 8, 9, 10 and 12. He was one of the relatively inexperienced teachers.

- **My profile**

While my educational history was provided in Chapter 1, some details are provided here to refresh the reader's memory about my profile. At a time of the research, I was also a black male teacher, had taught for 16 years, and held the rank of principal. I held a bachelor of arts degree, an honours degree in education, a master's degree in education, and was reading for my first doctoral degree in education. I had also worked under the past apartheid dispensation and the new democratic dispensation. I had taught various subjects such as Agricultural Science, Economics, and Life Orientation to all Grades, from 8 to 12.

Some teachers dropped out of the research project. The teachers who did not take part in the study cited high workloads as the reason for their non-participation in the study. However, it seemed that older teachers who were nearing retirement were unwilling to participate in the research project, unlike their enthusiastic young counterparts. Furthermore, teachers on contract also did not find it worthwhile to participate in the study.

The following table summarises the categories of teachers who participated in the research project. In each case, the category lists the number of years of experience the person had at the time. The reader is made aware of the fact that the teachers' previous experience was important as it determined their views on inclusion because of the varied teacher training they had received.

Table 5.1: Summary of categories of teachers

Category	Number	Race
0–10yrs	8	White 3; Black 3
10–20yrs	5	White 1; Black 6
20yrs+	2	White 1; Black 1

Race was used to distinguish teachers as their perspectives on inclusion might have been influenced by the separate backgrounds about past apartheid education systems which

privileged different forms of teacher education for different races.

The 15 learners who participated in the study were drawn from the Representative Council of Learners. These learners were requested to take part as they represented all classes at the school, were mostly learners who could speak their mind, and who were generally more confident than their peers.

Secondly, the principal focus was on the ethical aspects of the study, and on providing a clear introduction to the study. I presented the ethical consent form and the written permission received from the department of education. The teachers and learners read the two documents and then signed the consent form. I had explained to the teachers that participation was entirely voluntary and that all information collected during the study would be kept confidential. I also stressed that, if at any stage anyone felt the need to withdraw, the person would be free to do so.

In introducing the study, I sketched the background to the research and stated the purpose of the study; that is, how the teaching in South African secondary schools could be made inclusive. Next, I explained to the participants that the research problem gave rise to the following research questions:

- What is the meaning of *inclusive education*, *inclusive classroom* and *inclusive teaching* in a South African school context?
- Which classroom teaching practices are known to be effective in promoting inclusion?
- Which of those effective classroom teaching practices are applicable to the South African school context?
- How can teachers be assisted in adopting effective classroom teaching practices which are known to promote inclusion?

I further explained that these research questions were not fixed and that, if the participants wanted to change them, the changes could be discussed and possibly implemented. The teachers, however, unanimously agreed to adopt the research questions without any amendments. We agreed that, to answer the research questions, we would embark on the

action-research process as equal partners.

In clarifying my role in the process, I stressed to the teachers that although they regarded me as a 'knowledgeable other', in this study I would act as a team member or an equal partner so that we could jointly achieve the goals we had set for ourselves. I indicated that I would only be providing guidance and support where they deemed it necessary. While the teachers accepted this, they urged me to provide the necessary guidance since they had had no prior experience of such research. For example, Miss Marumo stated: *We are not qualified to do research; we will do our best because this is going to help us implement inclusive education.*

We concluded by stating our objectives in this project, which were derived from the aim of the study. We agreed to:

- define *inclusive education*, *inclusive classroom* and *inclusive teaching* within a South African school context;
- discuss international classroom teaching practices that were known to be effective in promoting inclusive education;
- explore the classroom teaching practices that were believed to be effective in promoting inclusion in the South African classroom context;
- determine to what extent such practices were indeed inclusive, assist teachers in adopting them in their classes, and evaluate their effect on teaching and learning.

Once we had determined our objectives, it became important to assess our current practice and conceptualise *inclusion*. This was done by embarking on a number of processes, namely a series of brainstorming meetings, participant observations, unstructured interviews (as a follow-up to observations), and focus-interviews with learners.

The focus of the second phase of the preparations stage was to brainstorm the concepts *inclusive education*, *inclusive teaching* and *inclusive class* in order to establish a common understanding of what they meant in the teacher's context (conceptualising *inclusion*) and to determine how inclusive we thought our teaching had been. The teachers engaged in an

open discussion to air their views, which were different from one another's. To provide a perspective from the literature, I was requested to give a presentation on the literature on inclusion so that we could compare our knowledge with that in the literature. This was one of the indications that teachers regarded me as a 'knowledgeable other' among them and that they did not actually regard me as their equal in this project.

I. Defining inclusive education

Firstly, there were different perspectives on what the participants thought inclusive education meant. The teachers cited different definitions of inclusive education. In conceptualising inclusive education, some of us believed that it should address the needs of all the learners in the class, which is evident from the following quotations containing definitions of inclusive education:

Miss Marumo: [It is the] opposite of exclusive education that includes everybody – all children have equal rights to education, life skills, preparing for their future.

Mr Koopman: [It is] education reaching out to all children in South Africa, not only academically but in all aspects of life.

Mr Sello: [Based on the philosophy that all learners can learn] ... inclusive education involves all learners with special needs in our schools and education.

In response to the above, there were those (especially more senior teachers) who remonstrated that including all learners in the class was highly impractical, for example:

Mrs van Tonder: It will be difficult to treat everybody the same as some learners are slow learners.

This view enjoyed the support of most white senior teachers. However, the indication was that there were those who seemed to have been influenced by the experiences they had had with the uninclusive nature of mainstream education, for example:

Mr Naledi: [Inclusive education] is the education of all children in mainstream schools, regardless of [their] strengths or weaknesses in any area.

This view was contested by some of the other participants who agreed that not all learners belong to the mainstream classroom.

Furthermore, deliberations suggested that inclusive education was about redressing the past imbalances of exclusion (non-inclusion) by the past political dispensation in South Africa. Exclusion on the basis of race, culture, colour and socio-economic status had been very dominant; hence, some teachers commented as follows on inclusive education:

Mr Mokoena: It is education which does not discriminate in any term [way].

This view was overwhelmingly supported by most teachers (especially junior black teachers); for example, one teacher echoed:

Mr Sello: Yes, we have been discriminating against some learners because of race or gender; this was not right.

Teachers indicated that previously educational governance had been the responsibility of the relevant authorities, with little involvement on the part of stakeholders. This they thought was most unfortunate since inclusive education was a kind of education which valued *stakeholder participation*. For instance, Mr Ramoya stated:

[Stakeholder participation is] education where all stakeholders are positively involved, SGB, parents, educators and learners.

However, there was a strong indication from senior teachers that such an involvement on the part of stakeholder should not interfere with the work of teachers; for example, one teacher stated:

Miss Marumo: The involvement of stakeholders should not be to tell us how

to teach; we have been trained, but to give support to learners with problems.

The above quotations prove that most teachers valued the involvement of stakeholders in the process of defining inclusion, but some of them still wanted to be in control without outside interference.

Similarly, some teachers regarded the *participation of learners* as important, which is why one of the spokespersons for some of the teachers said:

Mr Naledi: It deals with the diversity of learners and communities. It ensure[s] the full participation and availability of education of all learners, irrespective of their background and ability.

The above quotations highlight the significance of the participation of learners in the teaching and learning process as an important characteristic of inclusive education. However, some of the teachers (mostly senior teachers) were of the opinion that teaching was the sole responsibility of the teacher; for example, one of the teachers said:

Mr Mokoena: learners have to know their role; they can't dictate how teachers teach.

It became apparent that inclusive education was perceived as *education that enhances cooperation among learners*. The teachers reflected on their past teaching approach, which was based on the narrative method. They felt that, since the implementation of the new outcomes-based curriculum in South Africa, learning had to be enhanced not only from the teacher's side but also from among the learners themselves. In this regard, Mr Sello had this to say about the cooperation of learners in the learning process:

Inclusive education is the kind of approach that forces learners to collaborate and learn from one another.

A few of the teachers (mostly senior members of staff) believed that the kinds of

learners at the school made it impossible for them to work with others and felt that it was a skill that could be improved, for example:

Mr Naledi: Our learners are not responsible enough to collaborate; we will have to inculcate such a culture.

It was apparent that junior black teachers showed more understanding of what inclusion meant as compared with their senior, predominantly white, counterparts, which was evidence of the different training they had received. The different views indicated that junior teachers showed a willingness to embrace full inclusion while senior teachers clung to their past, predominantly medical-oriented thoughts about special needs.

II. Defining an inclusive classroom

Secondly, having realised how divergent our understanding of inclusive education was, based on the intense debates we had had, we were faced with the task of defining the meaning and specific attributes of the more pragmatic concept *inclusive class*. It was evident that most of the contributions were influenced by how *inclusive education* was conceptualised. Our discussions around these issues culminated again in a debate from which five different directions that encapsulated our thinking with regard to the nature of an inclusive class emerged.

One of the basic understandings was that an inclusive class had to be a class that was accommodative of all. To teachers, the concept *accommodation* was significant, which the teachers who supported the concept defined as a class:

Mr Koopman: [A class] that can accommodate learners with special needs, e.g. blind learners; a group of learners, including learners with different barriers to learning, taught by an educator in a classroom setup.

Miss Marumo: [A class] that admits physically disabled pupils as well as physically able-bodied ones;

Mrs Morena: [A class] with all the resources needed by physically handicapped as well as physically able-bodied people.

Mrs Kruger: [A class] that also caters for learners with different learning disabilities.

This view of accommodation was contested by mostly senior teachers who indicated that some learners belonged to special schools, for example:

Mrs van Tonder: Some learners belong to special classrooms, they cannot be adequately supported in normal classrooms.

Some of the teachers believed that, thematically, an inclusive class could be said to be one that nurtures and supports. This could be deduced from the following statements made by some of the teachers:

Mr Mokoena: A class of learners with remedial education for learners to achieve what is required of them.

Mrs Leroy: A caring, nurturing and supportive environment where the needs of all learners and teachers are truly met, and where students are able to learn together.

This view was supported by the majority of teachers from all backgrounds. Some of the teachers explained that an inclusive class should provide every learner with an opportunity to learn and that such an opportunity should be accessible to all learners in such a class. The teachers believed that the prior experiences of learners were important in an inclusive class and that these had to be catered for. Thematically, such a class could be said to be composed of learners with different experiences, interests, strengths and barriers to learning. Some of the members of the team stated the following:

Miss Marumo: A class with learners with different experiences, interests, strengths and barriers that need to be accommodated.

Mr Naledi: [It is] a class composed of all types of learners (fast, moderate, slow; the blind, the deaf, disabled; blacks, whites, etc.).

Mr Letuka: It comprises different learners from different backgrounds.

While the teachers felt that the different types of learners could be provided with an opportunity to learn, the majority of senior white teachers cautioned that not all learners would succeed in the mainstream class, for example:

Mrs Leroy: Learners with severe disabilities must be taken to special school classrooms where they can get quality care.

The prior knowledge and past experiences of learners were regarded by the majority of teachers as important in an inclusive class, and teachers averred that an inclusive class should accommodate such experiences. The teachers also went further to posit that an inclusive class should ensure accessibility of resources to all learners. Thematically, this meant that an inclusive class should be defined as a class resourced to teach all learners regardless of their background. The following is one of the statements teachers made in support of this conviction:

Mr Khumalo: A class that recognises that learners bring with them to class all sorts of knowledge or information that must be used to lay a foundation for further learning.

The view expressed above enjoyed the overwhelming support of most teachers from all backgrounds. Such a class could therefore be thematically defined as one that consisted of learners with perceived bad or good behaviour; for example, Mr Naledi said:

[A class] consisting of uncontrollable learners and controllable learners – that is, the fully functional, disabled, cooperative and uncontrollable.

The senior white teachers were against this view. They asserted that learners with severe behaviour problems should be sent to reformatory schools, which were schools that had been established by the past education dispensation to deal with behaviour problems, for instance:

Mrs Kruger: No, learners who are very naughty disturb teaching and

therefore should be dealt with separately at a special school.

The indication was that two camps had formed: those who wanted *all* learners to be admitted to the class, and those who wanted learners with perceived disabilities *not* to be accommodated in mainstream classrooms.

III. Defining inclusive teaching

Thirdly, we focused on defining the concept of inclusive teaching. During these discussions, the teachers were more forthcoming in giving their opinions about what constituted inclusive teaching. The following statements made by teachers supported this understanding by defining inclusive teaching as a form of teaching:

Mr Mosia: [A class]which involves and includes all sorts of learners.

Miss Marumo: [A class that] reaches out to every learner in the class; all needs must be met.

Our discussion suggested that inclusive teaching took place when the teaching approach/method responded to the specialised needs of all learners. Most teachers believed that inclusive teaching had to do with the teaching methods used, as the following quotations suggest:

Mr Naledi: Teachers teach learners of different capabilities in the same class with inclusive methods within the individual situations.

Mrs Leroy: [Inclusive teaching] uses strategies and methods that are suitable for learners with special needs.

Mr Koopman: [It] involves different styles of teaching and includes anything that can be used to teach the learners.

However, most of the senior teachers felt that learners with severe disabilities could be better taught in a special classroom, for example:

Mrs Kruger: [A class of] learners with special educational needs need

special attention, so ordinary methods will not be appropriate.

Most teachers felt that the participation of learners during the teaching and learning process was crucial in defining inclusive teaching. To support this line of thinking, one of them remarked as follows:

Mr Sello: [A class which] includes teaching for all kinds of learners and ensuring they all take part.

This view was echoed by the overwhelming majority of teachers from all backgrounds.

It became clear that policies were important as far as inclusive teaching was concerned; hence Mrs Morena stated:

[Inclusive teaching involves] making sure that teaching policies reject the exclusion of learners for whatever reason; maximizing the participation of all learners in the community; making learning more meaningful and relevant for all.

However, there were differences of opinion about the appropriateness of White Paper 6; for example, some teachers felt it was not assisting them as far as inclusive teaching was concerned:

Miss Marumo: We are in the dark about what is expected of us by White Paper 6; it does not help us to deal with disabled learners.

Some teachers felt teaching should ensure that learners are able to work together with one another. The following remarks capture the essence of this sentiment:

Mrs Leroy: [Inclusive teaching takes place when] learners learn collectively; [it is teaching that] encourages the learners to contribute to their own learning.

Mr Khumalo: [It is] where learners take ~~the~~ initiative ~~of~~ or are largely

involved.

This view was supported by most of the teachers, while a few (mostly senior teachers) felt the type of learners we had made it difficult for them to work together as they still needed guidance from the teachers. In this regard, Mr Letuka pointed out:

We cannot leave this to the learners alone; a teacher has to give guidance on how learners can cooperate.

On the same note, inclusive teaching was thought by some to be a methodology that caters for the learner's social, emotional, physical, intellectual and other needs; for example, Mr Naledi stated:

Teachers need to be aware of the social, emotional, physical and other needs of learners when lessons are planned. Teachers need to consider any barriers in [to] learning and assessments.

This view was popular among all the teachers as they felt it was the role of the teacher to give support in all these aspects.

Next, what remained was for us to examine our understanding of the salient concepts and compare our definitions to those in the literature review. Two teachers requested that I give a short presentation on the relevant research literature from my perspective as a scholar of inclusive education. In the presentation that ensued, I focused on how inclusion was conceptualised. The following is a summarised version of the presentation.

From the perspective of the literature, I highlighted the following research findings in the literature, in South Africa as well as in other parts of the world such as the UK, the USA, and the African countries. Although the Salamanca statement had been signed as long ago as 1994, it was important to discuss the document with teachers as it influenced the definition of inclusion in the countries concerned. I also drew attention to the controversy over whether there was an inclusive pedagogy or inclusive method of teaching. Given the academic contestation of ideas in this regard, I suggested that it was important that we

conceptualise inclusive pedagogy in terms of our own context.

It became crucial to locate our discussion on the definition of concepts within the literature; consequently, I defined inclusive education from the context of the literature reviewed and indicated that in the literature the concept was variously understood in different parts of the world. Context influences how inclusion is conceptualised due to issues such as:

- politics, human rights and policy;
- pedagogy: the art of teaching in different countries;
- emancipatory disability context: that there is a move by disabled people to take full responsibility for their own research;
- economic market-oriented context: inclusion is about access to economic opportunities in various countries;
- limited-resource context: inclusion in other countries is about unfettered educational access for all where there are limited resources.

I highlighted the fact that the definition of inclusive education continued to be influenced by many theoretical underpinnings, such as those contained in the UNESCO (2001: 8) guidelines which suggest that inclusive education:

- acknowledges that all children can learn and all need some form of support for learning;
- aims to uncover and minimise barriers to learning;
- is broader than formal schooling and includes the home community and other educational opportunities outside the school;
- is about changing attitudes, behaviour, teaching methods, curricula and environments to meet the needs of all children;
- is a dynamic process which is constantly evolving according to local cultures and contexts and an integral part of the world strategy to promote an inclusive society.

It was also important to review authoritative definitions in the field of inclusive education, for example the following definition by UNESCO (2001: 8):

[Inclusive education is seen as] a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities, and reducing exclusion from education and from within education. The goal is that the whole education system will facilitate learning environments where teachers and learners embrace and welcome the challenge and benefits of diversity. Within an inclusive education approach, learning environments are fostered where individual needs are met and every student has an opportunity to succeed.

The immediate reaction to my presentation was that junior teachers felt this could be achieved; for instance, Mr Khumalo said: *We need to change the way we look at some learners so that we can teach them.* By contrast, senior teachers remonstrated that there was nothing wrong with special schools as special attention could be given to learners who cannot learn in a normal school. For instance, Mrs Leroy remarked: *While I think accommodating diversity is good, learners with severe mental disorders cannot be accommodated in normal classrooms.*

Next, the definitions had to be located within the South African situation for the purposes of making comparisons. After a discussion of the salient definitions, I discussed the definition of inclusive education within the context of White Paper 6, which is an official document in South Africa conceptualising inclusive education. Most teachers felt White Paper 6 was not clear about how they needed to implement inclusion in the classroom; for example, Mr Mosia stated: *Well, the document is not clear on what we should do in the classroom.*

The next section focuses on the observation stage of the action-research process.

5.2.2 Stage 2: Observation

During this stage, a few things had to take place: Based on the outcome of the previous stage, we had to assess our current practice, conduct interviews to determine how inclusive our teaching was from the perspective of the learners, and then conduct observations to identify practices that we perceived to be inclusive.

Firstly, we had to determine how inclusive our teaching had been, and to identify the different practices that teachers viewed as inclusive in their context. The definitions of *inclusive education*, *inclusive class* and *inclusive teaching* served as guide to determining the level of inclusion by teachers. The evaluation of our current practices was prompted by asking how inclusive we thought our teaching was. Teachers gave mixed responses to the question, with the result that different patterns emerged as suggested by the following quotations:

Mrs van Tonder: [Our current practices are] not very inclusive, since the learners are all in a homogeneous group – not diverse – with [the] same background.

Mr Sello: Since inclusive education in SA has [was] implemented, my teaching has developed and is also effective.

Mrs Morena: It is inclusive because I still use different sources of information and I use that [them as] links to the topic.

Mr Letuka: I have always tried to reach every learner in my class, to stimulate the ones with high potential and to give the slower learners work within their abilities [capabilities].

Miss Koeberg: [Our current practices are] very minimal because of lack of training to deal [with] handicapped learners).

According to the above extracts, there were those who believed that their teaching was minimally inclusive, while others seemed uncertain about whether their teaching was inclusive. It seemed that the difference was brought about by the fact that very few reflective discussions had taken place among the teachers in the past, with the result that their views differed. The others claimed that they had tried to be inclusive in their teaching

but without much success as the result of problems; for example, Mr Ramoya stated:

It is often very challenging to be fully inclusive; the numbers of learners in the class are overwhelming; so, you can't include everyone, although I try my best.

The problems teachers cited were their own lack of training and inability to identify learners with learning barriers. Miss Marumo stated:

It is difficult, but I try. The biggest problem is identifying learners with weaknesses without discriminating against them and keeping them interested and involved.

While there were mixed responses to the question of how inclusive teachers believed their teaching was, several teachers strongly believed that it was inclusive and stated:

Mrs Morena: [It is] very inclusive – helping the weaker learner to reach the goal.

Mr Letuka: Fair [It is fairly inclusive].

Mr Mosia: I am able to teach learners of all races, learners who are [either] slow or gifted.

Further discussions were held to identify the teaching strategies that teachers employed to enhance inclusive teaching at the time of the research. The teaching practices listed were suggested by different teachers, and the reader should note that the teachers did not generally agree on all of them as enhancing inclusion; however, what transpired was that individual teachers gave reasons why they believed the individual practices enhanced inclusion. In the course of the discussion, the teachers reflected on their practice and identified the following teaching strategies, namely:

i. Group work/cooperative learning: learners working in groups

The teachers indicated group work and remarked:

Miss Koeberg: group work, discussions, lectures, role play, pair or peer activities [foster inclusion].

Mr Mokoena: group and practical work, peer tutoring [are useful].

The reasons cited were, among others, that group work fosters collaboration and team work among the learners.

ii. *Peer tutoring: learners with in-depth knowledge of content helping others with subject content*

Mr Ramoya gave the following reasons for identifying this method as fostering inclusion:

Pairing weaker learners with stronger learner s[is good as they] help one another; they work in pairs to help each other, especially for [on] projects.

iii. *Use of games: learners playing together for the purposes of learning*

The teachers who supported this practice remarked as follows:

Miss Marumo: Learners learn more when they engage in a play; they remember everything easily.

Mrs Kruger: Games, solving problems, songs, books, actively participating in activities as far as possible [all promote inclusion].

iv. *Discussion method: when learners discuss the learning content*

Some teachers cited the following reasons for believing that discussion was a tool for inclusion:

Mr Koopman: [It is a] discussion method, a learner-centred method – it encourages learners to get involved in a lesson.

Mrs Leroy: I usually use a learner-centred method because it involves all the learners to take part in whatever we are doing.

v. Remediation (support teaching): conducting remedial classes for learners experiencing learning barriers

Some teachers believed that remediation (support teaching) was an excellent method of enhancing inclusion. One of the teachers stated:

Mrs Morena: I use remediation because I can give individual attention and because of time constraints during normal lessons.

vi. Practicals and demonstrations: allowing learners to do things in practice and conducting demonstrations in the classroom

Some teachers cited practical demonstrations as a method of enhancing inclusion:

Mr Letuka: Demonstration especially in practical content [the practical demonstration of content] gives me an opportunity to give individualised support.

vii. Co-operative teaching: teachers sharing topics of the subject learning content, planning and presenting them in class together.

Some teachers indicated that a method that encourages teachers to work together was pivotal for inclusion, hence the following statement:

Mr Sello: Because of cooperative and collaborative teaching, one can learn from colleagues.

viii. Collaborative/project learning: learners working on a project for the success of the group

Mr Naledi indicated that this method of encouraging learners to work together was pivotal for inclusion, and stated:

A learner-centred approach such as cooperative and collaborative learning ensures that bright learners assist slow learners.

ix. Resource-based teaching: use of varied resources to aid learning

Mrs Leroy stated that inclusion thrived in a situation where learners were provided with adequate resources:

- 1. Provide enough resources for learners to do the tasks because this can support all the learners.*
- 2. Learning and teaching material/assessment – support Sesotho culture (text part of learner's life).*
- 3. Economic background is taken into consideration – when tasks are done, only recycled materials are used.*
- 4. Lessons are mostly taught in a way that accommodates stronger and weaker learners (revision);*
- 5. Difficult words (language) are translated (if possible) into the home language;*
- 6. Learners with hearing problems should ask one of their friends to translate;*
- 7. Eyesight problems – sit in front of the class.*

However, several issues were problematic. For instance, teachers cited a number of issues that hampered the use of these practices in an inclusive way. For example, with regard to group work, there was a problem of respect for others, with the result that learning could not thrive due to disruptions, as one of the teachers stated:

Mrs van Tonder: group work has a major shortcoming in that the class can be chaotic if learners do not have a sense of respect for others in a group.

The group discussions also raised a concern around learner participation as talkative learners dominated the discussions to such an extent that the participation of others was hampered. For example, Mr Khumalo said:

Well, sometimes it is a challenge to get some to respond to questions and participate in the lesson.

It also became apparent that the use of games resulted in disciplinary challenges, as Mrs Morena pointed out:

Of course, [because of the use of games] discipline [~~because~~][becomes] the [an] issue as some might not want to cooperate with others. Competition between children usually result[s] in some conduct problems, but I can deal with it [by] just being firm.

As regards remediation, teachers experienced problems in identifying learners with a need for remediation; for instance, Mr Letuka said:

Yes, sometimes learners pretend to have understood work during lessons but it's only during remedial lessons that one will realise that there are gaps in their understanding. It's quite a challenge if [the] gaps are too many.

It was also challenging to give clear instructions during the practical-demonstration lessons, as Mr Koopman indicated:

The problem is, when learners do not understand the instruction, you could be [get] stuck at the initial stages and never get a chance to finish the rest of the work.

The dominance of some learners by others during the collaborative learning process presented the challenge of how equal participation could be enhanced, as Mr Mosia confirmed:

Yes, some learners might not contribute as they should in the process of completing their projects, resulting in others having to work more than others.

Although peer tutoring provided a platform for assisting other learners, the challenge was that its success relied on the level of cooperation between the paired learners; for example, Miss Marumo pointed out:

Well, the only snack [snag] is when learners can't for some reason or another co-operate, it creates tension and affects learning negatively or when learners engage in an unhealthy competition, they usually cannot learn together.

Next, we then agreed that learners should be interviewed to determine if our teaching was indeed inclusive. I suggested the questions to be used in the focus-group interview with learners, and they were unanimously accepted.

To elucidate the notion of inclusion from the perspective of learners, we held an open-interview session with the Learner Representative Council (RCL) – a body of 20 democratically learners representative of all Grades at the school responsible for protecting the learners' interests – to discuss questions such as the following:

- Do you think all learners are catered for by the teaching in your classrooms?
- Which activities and teacher practices, in your opinion, help you to learn effectively or fully take part in the class?
- What would you like changed for you to be academically well-catered for in your classes?

Learners were called by the chairperson of the research team to meet in one of the classrooms for interviews. I then explained to the learners that questions would be asked and that they had to share their honest opinions. There were concerns about the confidentiality of the information provided; therefore, I assured them that the information provided would not be disclosed to anyone.

I had given the learners the questions for the focus group in advance for them to think about. The questions were then put to the learners, who responded to them at random, if they so wished. This section therefore presents the views of the learners with quotations to substantiate the learners' responses. The learners' responses to the questions follow:

a) *Do you think that teachers include all learners in their teaching in your class, If yes, why and if not, why?*

Responses from the focus group suggest that teachers seemed to be excluding learners, expelling learners from class, favouring others, and taking sides during disciplinary hearings, as the following quotations suggest:

- *No, because there are sometimes naughty learners who like doing funny things; instead [consequently] teachers chase them out and [they] miss work for the day. The teachers don't ask them about life at home.*
- *Teachers sometimes take sides and they don't listen to other learners what they have to say about everything. Teachers are unfair towards learners.*
- *Teachers at my school choose the children they like and they pay more attention to them. They don't take [regard] us as equal as learners.*

b) *In what way are teachers including all learners in their teaching (list or explain what teachers do)?*

The responses from learners seemed to suggest that teachers used question-and-answer methods, discussions, projects, and group work to accommodate all the learners in the class. This is borne out by the following statements made by the learners:

- *They teach us and as [when] they have finished, they ask us to whether we understand or not, if not where [what we] didn't understand.*
- *They first explain the lesson of the day, then they often for discussion sometimes in classes like LO, they open [a] debate for [on the] lesson of the day*

- *[They do so] by allowing learners to work in groups or in pairs ... and they encourage discussions, open debates, and allow learners to work in groups or in pairs.*
- *[They allow them] by giving out investigations and projects.*

However, it emerged that sending learners out as a disciplinary measure was viewed as exclusion; for example, one learner said:

Stop chasing students outside and let them in the class and also when they are free and they see students outside they should tell them to come in their classroom and also stop closing gates for the people who come late because sometimes there were problems at home for that particular person.

c) *If you feel teachers do not include everyone in their teaching, what would you like them to do in order to include all the learners in the class?*

The learners indicated that, to them, being included in class meant that teachers recognised their diverse home backgrounds and problems, treated everyone equally, assisted where English served as a learning barrier, and stopped the habit of sending learners out of class as a punishment. The following quotations substantiate these points:

- *Ask them about life at home because some other learners feel happy when they are at school, and when they arrive at home they feel like they can go somewhere else to get peace.*
- *I would like them to treat learners [as] equal[s] and stop using favouritism because we are living in a free country. I would also like them to listen to [the] learner's side of story before they can judge them.*

d) *Are you able to participate fully in all the lessons?*

It appeared that the learners' participation in the lesson was influenced by the behaviour of other learners, the structure of the lesson and the understanding of

subject content, as the following statements suggest:

- *No, because some learners will laugh at you if you can do/make a little mistake [and because] teachers bring their personal life to school.*
- *No, I struggle very much in Accounting, because from the beginning I couldn't manage to understand the basics because of my teacher in Grade 11 last year.*
- *Yes, but other lessons can be too formal and usually I don't feel comfortable or free to ask questions.*

e) What helps you to feel part of the lesson?

It became evident that what made learners feel part of the lesson included, among other things, getting support from others, understanding the work, and being able to ask the teacher questions. The following quotations support this:

- *First of all, I should help myself and, secondly, to get support from the learners and, lastly, teachers should guide me to feel part for [of] the lesson.*
- *Understanding the lesson, by being able to make [carry out] the activity on my own [made me feel part of the lesson].*
- *If I get a chance to ask where I don't understand [I feel part of the lesson].*

It was also revealed that the teacher's preparation for the lesson could determine how well the learners would be involved in the lesson, as the following quotation shows:

Some teachers approach lessons very prepared, so [whereas] others really they are not prepared at all; it's really embarrassing.

Learners also indicated that the larger the number of learners in the class, the more difficult it is to include everyone in the lesson. The following quotation supports this contention:

If the class is full of students, it's hard for learners to concentrate and I guess it's hard for teachers too.

Learners were in favour of sitting in groups during the lesson and indicated that no discrimination should be practised when planning the seating arrangement. Some of the learners stated:

- *We must seat [sit] with learners who have a fast understanding of [quickly grasp the] work.*
- *We should sit with those who we think we can work together [with].*
- *The mix of girls and boys helps because we learn from each other.*

Lastly, having examined the teacher's and the learners' views on the state of inclusion within the classrooms, the researcher focused his attention on inclusive teaching by examining the existing literature at the request of the teachers. The following section deals with the literature that the teachers were introduced to and their reaction to it.

The argument whether there is an inclusive way of teaching was highlighted. I indicated that two trends influence the inclusive teaching approach; that is, the belief in specific strategies for teaching usually influenced by special needs education, and the belief in the teacher's creativity and intuition in articulating and designing learning and teaching programmes. The Index of Inclusion developed by Ainscow and Booth (2002) was cited as one of the tools developed to enhance inclusive teaching. The reaction of teachers was varied. Senior teachers, especially whites, supported the idea of using specific methods from special needs strategies to enhance inclusion, for example diagnosis, referral and remediation. Mrs Kruger stated: *I think we can just do what special schools are doing to respond to learners with special needs; the difference is that we just do this in the mainstream.*" By contrast, junior teachers felt it was more important to be creative; for example, Mr Khumalo said: *Learners are different, so you can't use the same approach to [with] everyone.*

However, it was stressed that worldwide there are differences with regard to how a curriculum is planned and designed to enhance inclusion. I also went on to indicate that in the literature several factors are cited as having a profound influence on curriculum and therefore on how inclusion is practised, for example:

- A classroom environment conducive to inclusion should be created.
- Planning is crucial if teaching has to respond to the needs of learners.

- All learners have to participate in the learning process.
- Teaching should take learner differences into account.
- Learning should reflect the will of both the teacher and the learner.
- Both the teacher and the learners have to reflect on their activities for both teaching and learning.
- Responding to the needs of learners is important in the interaction between teacher and the learners.

While most teachers concurred with most of the abovementioned aspects, many felt that an environment conducive to inclusion would be difficult to create due to the high learner-teacher ratio in the classroom.

I also made mention of the fact that some of the conditions in the classroom seemed crucial to accommodating diversity in the classroom, for example:

- Seating arrangements can be manipulated to arrange learners in a variety of ways to accommodate differences.
- Assessments should be designed to accommodate all learner needs.
- A variety of teaching approaches could be adopted to accommodate the needs of all learners; for example, behavioural teaching (which refers to modifying the behaviour of learners) and interactive teaching (interacting with learners to enhance learning).

The reaction to this part of the presentation, especially from the senior white teachers, was that the traditional seating arrangement was better because it instilled discipline in the learners. For example, Mrs Leroy argued, *No, we cannot allow learners to sit as they wish [as] it has an impact on classroom discipline.* By contrast, most junior teachers were flexible and willing to accommodate different seating arrangements. In support of this point of view, Mr Sello said: *When learners are seated comfortably, they will work well.*

I also touched on the role of teaching strategies to stimulate learning, such as:

- teacher collaboration (teachers working together in the same class);
- motivation (encouraging all learners to give of their best);
- maintenance of discipline in the class through various ways;

- differentiation (adapting teaching to suit the needs of all the individual learners); reciprocal teaching (sharing or rotating the instructional responsibility with the learner); scaffolding (building learning by using prior learning);
- using technological devices such as computer-aided instruction to enhance learning;
- recognising the existence of ‘multiple intelligences’ and adapting the teaching to suit the level of intelligence of each learner in the class;
- multi-sensory instruction (allowing learners to learn through their senses);
- collaborative learning (learners working together on the learning content);
- peer tutoring/cooperative problem-solving (learners assisting their peers to learn or solve problems);
- group work (learners working as a group to learn new work).

Here senior teachers supported the use of strategies such as multi-sensory instruction and multiple intelligence. For example, Mrs Kruger said: *We have been using multi-sensory instruction and multiple intelligence for all these years and [it] is helping learners with special educational needs.* However, the junior teachers were more inclined to favour methods such as the use of technology, peer tutoring and collaborative learning. For example, Mr Sello stated: *“When all learners have a computer, you can assist everyone online and the computer can correct their answers.*

I also drew attention to the importance of the social aspects of classroom instruction and learning – for example, maintaining supportive communication which enhances learning; building learner esteem through motivation; and managing diversity by inculcating tolerance and appreciation – and how they impact on the process of widening participation. Most teachers concurred that the above aspects I had mentioned indeed created an environment where most learners could succeed in the learning process.

The above section dealt with how teachers and learners perceived the state of inclusiveness at their school. It became important to carry out some observations in order to compare the theoretical responses to the reality in the classroom.

Evaluating how inclusive teaching is in classrooms

The next section discusses the data harvested from the observations, reflections on the

observations, and unstructured interviews that were conducted after the observations with the observed teachers.

We used observation to determine practices that were inclusive in our current teaching situation. During the observations, we made notes mainly from memory. The observations were systematised with the use of a pre-planned observation schedule which addressed our research questions. We kept daily reflection diaries to record our experiences and observations (see Appendix F). Our classroom observations were integrated into the school time-table so that there would be minimal disruptions. The following topics guided the observations in relation to inclusion (see Appendix B):

- curriculum-related aspects of the class (planning, presentation and assessment of the lesson; interaction, participation, and seating arrangements during the lesson);
- teaching (pedagogic) aspects of the class (teaching approach and strategies, maintenance of discipline and motivation, the role of assistant teachers and the use of technology in the class);
- learning aspects of the class (the use of learning approaches such as co-operative learning, group work, peer tutoring, and collaborative problem-solving);
- social aspects of the class (communication, diversity, relationships and values in the class).

As part of our process of inquiry, we jointly determined the interview questions, and I was tasked by the research team to conduct follow-up in-depth interviews with teachers to reflect on what had been observed and to gather more data on themes that might have emerged from the observations. Interview schedules with open-ended questions were used as such questions allowed teachers to reflect on, account for their practices, and broadly agree on what they perceived to be effective classroom teaching practices that promoted inclusion (see Appendix C). Appointments were made with teachers at their convenience and the interviews were usually held in the library in the afternoons when there were no learners (see Appendix I). The interview questions were provided to the teachers the day before for them to study and go through. As mentioned in the previous section, several challenges were detected (Table 5.2 overleaf presents the challenges identified with reference to the substantiating quotations.):

Table 5.2: Identified challenges of teaching practices

<i>Practice</i>	<i>Challenges</i>	<i>Evidence</i>
Group work	Some learners may depend on others and not participate in a group. If not well planned and organised, group work may not be effective.	See Section 5.2.2, Subsection i.
	Unhealthy competition among group members may hamper learning progress.	
Peer tutoring	Lack of cooperation among the peers	See Section 5.2.2, Subsection ii.
Use of games	Poor discipline during games is a challenge. Highly competitive spirit may strain relations between learners.	See Section 5.2.2, Subsection iii.
Discussion method	Participation of all learners in a discussion is a challenge.	See section 5.2.2, Subsection iv.
Remediation	Identification of learners who need remediation is a challenge Prior knowledge of learners shows serious gaps.	See section 5.2.2, Subsection v.
Practical and demonstrations	When learners do not understand the instruction, learning is slower.	See section 5.2.2, Subsection vi.
Collaborative teaching	Teachers did not teach collaboratively.	<i>No evidence of co teaching was found.</i>
Collaborative/ project-learning	When other learners are passive and share an equal load in task completion	See Section 5.2.2, Subsection viii.

After the process of identifying the challenges of the practices, it became important to have a programme through which these practices could be developed towards full inclusion in our context. The next section reports on the action stage during which such a process was embarked upon to develop these practices.

5.2.3 Stage 3: Action

The action stage was a process of adopting processes in the class over a period of six months. During this stage, several reflection meetings were held and evidence was gathered in relation to practices adopted in the class to develop their inclusivity.

Firstly, before the practices could be adopted in the classes, we had to discuss ways and mechanisms of dealing with the challenges identified earlier. The process of generating solutions was an open one. The teachers gave their own opinions about what needed to be done to solve the problems. The opinions would be debated by all members of the research group and a consensus would be reached. Consensus was reached if the majority of the group members approved; however, in cases where there was no clear agreement, solutions would be modified to accommodate the dissenting views. Table 5.3 overleaf provides a list of challenges and suggested solutions to teaching practices in each case.

Once the above solutions had been discussed and agreed upon by everyone, we decided to adopt the practices in the classroom. The practices were adopted for six months, during which time teachers evaluated how they were enhancing inclusion in the classrooms. The following section provides details in this regard.

In collaboration with the research task team, we drew up an action plan. The action plan was a detailed implementation programme to adopt classroom practices identified in the classes and evaluate how they promoted inclusive teaching and learning (see Appendix L for the programme for adopting practices in the class). The following were the proposed indicators of the classroom teaching practices that were effective in promoting inclusion,

Table 5.3: Identified challenges and solutions to teaching practices

<i>Practice</i>	<i>Challenges</i>	<i>Possible solution</i>	<i>Quotes</i>
Group work	Some learners may depend on others and not participate in a group. If not well planned and organised, group work may not be effective. Unhealthy competition between group members may hamper learning progress.	Learners need close supervision during group work. Group work needs careful planning and organisation. Competition should be discouraged.	<i>Mrs Kruger: "I always monitor closely how each contributes in a group. In the case of one not partaking enough I work with the group and try to involve him/her myself".</i> <i>Mr Mokoena: "Well, I ensure through motivation that learners do not compete unnecessarily. I verbally discourage them to do that."</i> <i>Miss Koeberg: "I do think that if well planned, organised and monitored, group work can be very effective in enhancing learning of all learners in a class."</i>
Peer tutoring	Lack of cooperation among the peers.	Pairing of learners should take into consideration the personalities of learners.	
Use of games	Poor discipline during games is a challenge. Highly competitive spirit may strain relations between learners.	Learners are encouraged to focus on team success rather than individual success.	<i>Mr Letuka: "You talk to them, make them realise that it is not about individuals, but it is about the success of the whole class."</i>
Discussion method	Participation of all learners in a discussion is a challenge.	Teachers should assist those who are not very fluent by providing prompts.	<i>Mrs Kruger: "I try to rephrase my questions or allow them to ask me questions so that they can at least talk and share their thoughts with me."</i>

Remediation	Identification of learners who need remediation is a challenge. Prior knowledge of learners shows serious gaps.	Using formative questioning to assess learners knowledge. Planning more remedial classes to deal with knowledge gap.	<i>Mr Naledi: "Well, you can only organise more remediation for you to be able to close the learning gaps they have."</i>
Practicals and demonstrations	When learners do not understand the instruction, learning is slower.	Giving learners individualised attention.	<i>Mr Mosia: "I will have to give individual attention to the learners with the need for more help."</i>
Collaborative teaching	Teachers did not teach collaboratively	Teachers have to share subject content, plan and teach together.	No evidence of co teaching was found
Collaborative/ project-learning	When other learners are passive and share unequal load in task completion.	Close monitoring by the teacher and provision of support to those who might need it	<i>Mr Khumalo: "I usually intervene to assist those with such a problem, by working alongside those who struggle to provide guidance and support."</i>

and which had been negotiated with the teachers themselves. I only offered guidance in this regard (adapted from the Index of Inclusion, Ainscow & Booth (2002). Appendix J gives the descriptors of measurement to determine how high or low the practice was in respect of each criterion:

- High level of participation of all learners;
- High level of interaction and effective communication between the all learners and the teacher:
- High level of cooperation among all learners;
- High level of inclusive and differentiated instruction (caters for all learner needs);
- Atmosphere that strongly promotes good human relations;
- High levels of discipline in the class;
- High level of tolerance of diversity;
- High level of motivation of all learners;
- Achievement of expected outcomes by all learners.

During the action phase in the classrooms, the teachers recorded their experiences in the daily reflection diary (see Appendix F).

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with teachers after the action phase. Data were collected using a tape recorder. A *Yes* or *No* answer was followed by a substantiating explanation. The purpose of the semi-structured interviews with open questions was to enable teachers to evaluate the effectiveness of the teaching practices that they had implemented in their classes over a given period (see Appendix D). This reflection on practice is a very rare exercise by teachers in South Africa and it elicited an enormous interest in the project.

In the first three months, we called a meeting to reflect on the practices adopted to determine the outcome of the evaluation. To do this, teachers had to rate the performance of each of the classroom practices adopted in terms of our evaluation criteria during the first three months, using the descriptors in Appendix J. For example, a teacher would rate a practice high in learner participation if more than 70% of the class answered the teacher's

questions or were willing to comment or share ideas with the rest of the class, whereas, the teacher would rate a practice low when less than 49% of the class did not do so. The ratings were then summarised and recorded in Table 5.4 overleaf by the research team. It was clear that the shortcomings of the practices as cited earlier were still prevalent in terms of the evaluation.

In dealing with the problem, we decided to assist one another again in the classes by pairing ourselves up to look at our practice then share the feedback every second week of the month.

During these meetings we often met and discussed feedback from visits that we had conducted to assist one another in dealing with the challenges of the practices in the classroom. During these visits, a teacher would visit a participating colleague and remain in the class for the duration of the period, then afterwards share some hints on how practices could be improved in order to enhance inclusion. Feedback from these visits was shared by the teachers during the joint feedback meetings. The feedback was mainly based on how the practices met our criteria and how well we had mitigated the challenges of the practices we had adopted in the classrooms.

These visits were regarded as fruitful by the teachers; for example, when we reflected on this kind of visit, we asked the question: *How would you describe the significance of visits by your colleagues?*

In answering the question, Mrs Leroy had this to say:

**Table 5.4: Summary of teacher's ratings of teaching practices adopted by them in their classes:
first three months**

Practices	When adopted	Learner participation	Learner-teacher Interaction & Communication	Cooperation of Learners	Atmosphere & Relations	Class discipline	Learner motivation	Learner achievement
Group work	February 2009–April 2009	High	High	High	High	Low	High	High
Peer tutoring		High	High	Low	High	High	High	High
Use of games		High	High	Low	Low	Low	High	High
Discussion method		High	High	High	High	Low	High	High
Remediation		High	High	Low	High	High	Low	High
Practicals and demonstrations		High	High	High	High	High	High	High
Collaborative teaching		Low	Low	High	High	High	High	High
Collaborative/ project learning		High	High	High	High	High	High	High

These visits have provided me with the moral and strategic support to focus on my teaching and improve my ability to be inclusive.

It appeared that teachers increasingly felt that teaching was not an individual effort but could be enhanced through collaboration and teamwork. The visits were viewed as a foundation for teamwork; hence, Mr Naledi said:

We need to work together often because this help us because if you know that someone is looking at what you do wrong or right you work even smarter to prove a point.

Given the teachers' reflections on these visits and their impact on their teaching, it seemed that teachers were beginning to believe that cooperative teaching was paramount for their improved teaching.

After the second three months of the action phase, we met to evaluate the practices, again using our evaluation tool.

Table 5.5 overleaf gives a summary of how the practices were rated in terms of the criteria that had been adopted six months previously (the reader is made aware that the rating were reviewed and endorsed by the research group):

The results of the evaluation after the second six months of the adoption of the mentioned practices in the classroom revealed that all the practices, if used appropriately, could have a positive impact on broadening participation and enhancing inclusion. The practices were rated high on all the aspects of our criteria for inclusion.

In view of the above, it became significant for us to reflect on what the process had achieved in response to the challenges, and our conclusions drawn from the collaborative action-research process. The next action research step was that of reflection.

Table 5.5: The summary of teacher's ratings of teaching practices adopted by them in their classes: second three months

Practices	When adopted	Learner participation	Learner-teacher Interaction & Communication	Cooperation of Learners	Atmosphere & Relations	Class discipline	Learner motivation	Learner achievement
Group work	5/2009 - 6/2009	High	High	High	High	High	High	High
Peer tutoring		High	High	High	High	High	High	High
Use of games		High	High	High	High	High	High	High
Discussion method		High	High	High	High	High	High	High
Remediation		High	High	Low	High	High	Low	High
Practical & demonstrations		High	High	High	High	High	High	High
Collaborative teaching		High	High	High	high	high	high	high
Collaborative project learning		High	High	High	High	High	High	High

5.2.4 Stage 4 reflection

During this stage we reflected on the process that we had embarked upon and arrived at a number of conclusions, several of which could assist in the use of action research as a methodology while others exposed some of the weaknesses of action research as a research method.

Firstly, this section presents some reflective responses by teachers. In each case, a question is posed followed by a reflective response.

What have we learned from the following processes and what could have been done differently?

The teachers seemed satisfied with the level of discussion and engagement during this process. They indicated that they had learned from colleagues; for example Mr Ramoya averred:

I have learned to listen and share ideas with my colleagues.

Mr Khumalo stressed the value of the experience by saying:

I have discovered that there could be alternative ways of doing things.

Teachers regarded this kind of visit to their colleagues as informative; however, most of them felt it should have been done more frequently; for example, Miss Koeberg said:

I could learn a lot from colleagues but I think we should have done it more frequently.

Teachers indicated that these interviews were well conducted. For example, Mr Mosia said:

I think our conversations were open and allowed me to say what I wanted to say freely.

The teachers thought it was good to listen to the voices of the learners. Mrs Van tonder remarked:

I think learners' remarks helps [help] us to have a better understanding of their expectations.

With regard to the process of adopting practices in the classes, some teachers thought the process had gone smoothly; for example, Mr Naledi said:

I had an opportunity to start a new way of teaching successfully.

But there seemed to be a strong indication that a sudden change of approach affected both the teacher and the learner. Teachers indicated that the time for adopting practices was short and did not allow learners to adjust appropriately. Mr Letuka said:

I think the time we got was short for me and the learners to adjust fully to the newly introduced way of teaching and learning.

With regard to how meetings were run, the teachers seemed satisfied; for example, Miss Marumo stated:

I think our meeting[s] were well run and were mostly fruitful.

However, some teachers indicated that the meetings were often short and did not allow them to expatiate on an issue, as Mr Sello pointed out:

Meetings were too short – we could not sometimes say all things[everything] we wanted to say.

With regard to how the records of the discussions were kept confidential and safe, the teachers indicated that the records were properly kept because they had access to them and had been assured that the records did not reflect the names of the participants; for example, Mrs Morena said:

I am satisfied that our names are kept confidential on our records.

With regard to participation, the teachers complained that school-related work sometimes prevented them from participating fully; for example, Mrs Kruger said:

I am overloaded with marking work; sometimes it was difficult to attend all [the] meetings.

With regard to reflecting on practice, the teachers indicated that they had learned a great deal from the process and that it had been valuable; for example, Mr Koopman stated:

I think it is good to look at what you are doing, reflect on it and do [make] some improvement.

To sustain the process over the next academic year, the teachers cited the importance of collaboration; for example, Mr Naledi said:

We must plan together a programme that will enhance collaboration among us.

Therefore, the teachers decided to establish a permanent structure that would continue with this process of inquiry into their practice even after the study. To do this, the teachers had to write a letter to the principal requesting permission to establish such a committee. The functions of the committee as suggested by the teachers would be the following:

- Call a meeting to review practice;
- Develop a programme to adopt practices to be used in the classroom;
- Call a meeting to share the experiences about the practices;

- Reflect, challenge one another's positions and provide support to colleagues;
- Assist in collaborative planning and ensuring support through class visits and joint teaching.

Asked to reflect on the project, the learners felt the project had made a difference in that their contributions were valued by the teachers. For instance, one of them said:

It was good doing things together with the teachers and being part of how classroom activities are planned.

The learners also felt that they had been empowered by the project to contribute towards their learning and how they should be taught. One of the learners remarked:

I felt empowered during the project and freed from some of the classroom restrictions.

5.3 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I firstly explained how the collaborative action-research process was carried out during field work. However, the rate of teacher participation in the project presented a challenge. The four different stages in the process of CAR were discussed and the sub-processes and data-collection methods during each phase were discussed. Ironically, what the teachers said during the discussions was not necessarily what they had observed in the classes. Then data within each stage of the action-research process were presented; a basic group-interpretative analysis was done; and the conclusions reached by the research team were discussed. It was also evident that developing teaching practices needed a considerable amount of time and the indication was that time constraints posed a challenge in this regard.

The next chapter discusses the in-depth analysis of data from a group-interpretative perspective to arrive local theoretical interpretations of the complex notion of inclusion in our school context.

CHAPTER 6: AN ANALYSIS OF THE RESEARCH DATA: A GROUP INTERPRETATIVE PERSPECTIVE

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I report on the analysis of the data as it was carried out by us as the research group. The analytic conclusions drawn from the themes identified by the research group after a close study of the data are presented in a manner that addresses the aims of the collaborative action-research process as planned and envisaged by the research team. The analysis is therefore presented according to the different collaborative action-research stages. Cross-references are made to Chapter 5 in which the data were presented, and statements by the participants are quoted in support of the analytic claims made.

6.2 THE PROCESS OF ANALYSIS

It should be pointed out that, although the group interpretative analysis is presented separately from the data collection as recorded in Chapter 5, data analysis was done concomitantly with data collection during the collaborative action-research process. Firstly, we carried out the activities as planned for the action-research process and thereafter called meetings to discuss the planned data-analysis process. Data from observations, focus-group interviews, interviews and our reflection diaries were first transcribed and then read to the research group in the course of the meetings. Secondly, themes were determined from the data by using the aim of the collaborative action-research stage as our guiding framework. Thirdly, quotations were assigned to the themes and meanings derived by critical discussions. Finally, in the other stages, our analyses were less thematic but inductively interpretative in the sense that we made analytic comparisons of meanings to arrive at our interpretative conclusions.

6.3 STAGE 1: PLANNING (PREPARING) FOR COLLABORATIVE ACTION RESEARCH

The aim of this stage was to define the salient terms and conceptualise the construct *inclusion*. We read the transcripts, highlighted key words from the quotations, and deduced themes from them. This procedure was followed throughout the group interpretive process. Our analysis of the data from this CAR stage generated various themes with regard to our understanding of the concepts of inclusive education, inclusive class and inclusive teaching.

I. Conceptualising ‘inclusive education’

Firstly, in analysing our definitions of the concept of inclusive education after intense discussion, we identified the following five themes (see Chapter 5, section 5.2.1): education that includes all; education that integrates disabled learners into the mainstream; education that is non-discriminatory on the basis of race, colour, gender, culture and economic status; education that involves all stakeholders, including learners; and education that enhances co-operation among learners.

Theme 1: Education that reaches out to all learners

The analysis indicated that most definitions, suggested mainly by junior black teachers, referred to all learners as a focal point for defining how inclusive education should be conceptualised. For example, phrases such as *involving all*, *includes everybody*, *accommodates everyone*, *reaching out to all* were commonly used in all our definitions. However, there appeared to be a dissenting view that not every learner could be accommodated in the mainstream classrooms, with most senior teachers strongly advocating that learners with perceived severe disabilities should be accommodated in special schools classrooms (see Chapter 5, section 5.2.1, subsection I).

Theme 2: Education which includes all learners in the mainstream class, regardless of physical disability

The analysis pointed out that the use of words such as *mainstream* and *disability* were instrumental in the past special needs education approach in South Africa, and that these concepts continued to shape our understanding of what inclusion entailed, especially among the minority of senior teachers who seemed to believe that learners presenting with any form of disability needed to be separated from mainstream classrooms. By contrast, most junior black teachers expressed a strong conviction that any form of segregation constituted exclusion and therefore needed to change (see Chapter 5, section 5.2.1, subsection I).

Theme 3: Education which is non-discriminatory on the basis of colour, gender, race, culture and socio-economic status

The data seemed to suggest that any form of discrimination was viewed by most teachers as preventing inclusive education from becoming a reality. Consequently, the teachers alluded to notions of race, gender, culture and social class as potential barriers to inclusion. This aspect received overwhelming support from most teachers regardless of their background (see Chapter 5, section 5.2.1, subsection I).

Theme 4: Stakeholder involvement (including learners)

The indication was that, in inclusive education, the involvement of stakeholders was highly valued and that the involvement of learners as stakeholders in teaching and learning was significant. However, there was a contrasting view, expressed mainly by senior teachers, that such an involvement should not interfere with the work of the teacher, which suggested that the teacher's authority needed to be protected (see Chapter 5, section 5.2.1, subsection I).

Theme 5: Education that enhances co-operation among learners

The analysis suggested that the junior teachers in particular believed that inclusive education

fostered co-operation among learners. The instruction learners received from their peers or group members seemed to be highly valued, although the senior teachers were sceptical in that they believed that the kind of learners they had in their classrooms militated against achieving this envisaged collaboration (see Chapter 5, section 5.2.1, subsection I).

After the discussions, although we did not agree on all the themes, the analysis of how the above-mentioned themes emerged suggested that they summarised what teachers felt constituted inclusion. It appeared that there were two camps: one that favoured change and another that wanted to maintain the status quo.

II. Inclusive class

Next, our analysis aimed at conceptualising the notion of an inclusive class identified the following themes:

Theme 1: A class accommodating all learners, including those with barriers and special educational needs

While some teachers understood the notion of inclusion to mean accommodation and regarded the inclusion all learners as an important characteristic of an inclusive class, most senior teachers were not in favour of accommodating every learner without first classifying them as being either able-bodied or disabled. Some of the participants considered the accommodation of learners important in defining an inclusive class; however, it also became apparent that most teachers perceived the manner in which learners were treated or dealt with in class to play a pivotal role in describing what an inclusive class should be (see Chapter 5, section 5.2.1, subsection II); therefore, the following theme became apparent.

Theme 2: A class with a caring, nurturing and supportive environment to cater for all learner needs

It was evident from the analysis that most teachers believed an inclusive class should reflect a

caring and a nurturing approach towards the learners. However, some of the teachers indicated that the qualities mentioned should be considered within the context of the following theme (see Chapter 5, section 5.2.1, subsection II).

Theme 3: A class that gives equal opportunity to all learners

While most teachers believed that equal opportunities for all learners were crucial, the senior teachers believed that some learners could not be treated like others as they might not be successful given their disabilities. The recognition of learner past experiences and knowledge also came into the picture, leading to the fourth theme (see Chapter 5, section 5.2.1, subsection II).

Theme 4: A class that recognises learners' prior knowledge and experiences and ensures the accessibility of resources

The analysis indicated that teachers unanimously believed that resources should be used to enhance the learning of every learner in the class (see Chapter 5, section, 5.2.1 subsection II).

Theme 5: A class that accommodates all and deals with deviant behaviour

Although we seemed to disagree on the common definition of an inclusive class, our statements showed the significance of dealing with all sorts of behaviours inclusively and appropriately. However, most senior teachers were sceptical about learners with severe deviant behaviour, suggesting that they needed to be separated from others for corrective measures (see Chapter 5, section 5.2.1, subsection II).

In conclusion, it became evident that, according to the teachers, the definitions of an inclusive class reflected two opposing views. The views seemed to be influenced by the experiences teachers had gone through and probably the training they had received in dealing with whom they perceived to be special learners. It was evident that the concept of inclusive teaching should be defined next as it was related to the two other defined concepts.

III. Inclusive teaching

As in the discussions of the other concepts, our explanations were centred on the themes that seemed to emerge from our analytic interpretative processes. In the first instance, according to the teachers, the following theme emerged:

Theme 1: *Inclusive teaching responds to all learner needs*

While teachers felt that teaching was inclusive when the needs of learners were responded to and catered for, there seemed to be two views as to where this should take place. Most junior teachers felt it should all be in mainstream classrooms, whereas most senior teachers believed that not all learner needs could be catered for in the mainstream classroom. While responding to the needs of learners was central, the methods used in responding to the needs also became important, leading to the following theme (see Chapter 5, section 5.2.1, subsection III).

Theme 2: *Teaching approach/method responding to the specialised needs of all learners*

It appeared that there was consensus that to teach in an inclusive way had to do with adopting appropriate strategies and methodologies which would accommodate learners from diverse backgrounds (see Chapter 5, section 5.2.1, subsection III). Given the history of racial discrimination which characterised the education system of South Africa prior to 1994, the teachers also regarded the following theme as pivotal.

Theme 3: *Teaching which is not exclusive but encourages the participation of all learners*

It was evident from the analysis that the majority of teachers understood inclusive teaching to mean that learners should not be discriminated against and that all learners should participate in the learning process. However, this view was not consistent with the view of most senior teachers alluded to earlier, namely that not all learners would be able to participate in the mainstream classrooms – the notion of special teaching for those perceived to be disabled (see

Chapter 5, section 5.2.1, subsection III). The teachers also felt that inclusive teaching would have to be supported by educational policies and curriculum statements, given the implementation of the outcomes-based curriculum since 1994.

Theme 4: *Inclusive teaching is guided by inclusive policies:*

The significance of this theme is that it places more emphasis on ensuring that policy guidelines regulating pedagogic practice create an environment conducive to teaching inclusively. However, there was an overwhelming perception that the current inclusive policies were not providing adequate guidance as to how teachers should teach in an inclusive way. Teachers regarded the policy as vague (see Chapter 5, section 5.2.1, subsection III). While the teachers felt that they had a responsibility to ensure inclusion, some of them suggested that learners also had to take responsibility for their own learning, hence the next theme.

Theme 5: *Teaching that fosters learner cooperation:*

Despite most senior teachers' doubts about the learners' ability to co-operate, it became clear that most junior teachers believed that inclusive teaching might to some extent be influenced by how well the learners co-operated with others in the learning process. According to the teachers, this could foster participation and involvement, which are crucial to an inclusive teaching and learning process (see Chapter 5, section 5.2.1, subsection III). It was also evident from our discussions that the involvement of learners should take into consideration their cognitive and emotional state; therefore, the definition of inclusive teaching gave rise to the next theme.

Theme 6: *Inclusive teaching takes into consideration the learner's social, emotional, physical, intellectual and other needs*

The above theme suggests that inclusive teaching must respond to both the internal and external needs of the learners. This view was supported by most teachers and there seemed to

be a consensus about the need to support learners in the abovementioned aspects.

In conclusion, while our understanding of inclusive teaching was different, it became clear at the end of our discussions that the definition of inclusive teaching in our own context was influenced to a great extent by our past experiences and training which defined our understanding of inclusive teaching.

6.4 STAGE 2: OBSERVATION

During this stage, our analysis was more interpretative and comparative as we derived our conclusions from what the data was telling us. Firstly, the analysis of data from observations indicated that, although some of us believed that our teaching was inclusive, it appeared that an emphasis on inclusiveness depended on the particular context and understanding of the term – hence the different responses. But it was clear that our teaching was not fully inclusive (see Chapter 5 section 5.2.2).

Secondly, it was therefore significant to reflect on the practices current at the time in order to identify the different teaching practices that we thought were inclusive in our school context. However, the identification of practices seemed to have been influenced by various aspects such as the subjects teachers taught, their experience and the number of learners in the class. This was evident from our spreadsheet when we compared our responses (see Chapter 5, Section 5.2.2 I, paras. I–IX). For instance, the analysis of the responses clearly indicated that some teachers believed that learners working in groups had a positive impact on inclusion. Group work was suggested mostly by experienced teachers. Generally, they argued that, if learners helped one another, it could assist in including others in the learning process. This practice seemed popular also among the experienced teachers.

According to the teachers, with reference to the use of games, play was significant in enhancing the participation of learners. The teachers believed that learners learned best when playing. This practice was mainly defended by junior, inexperienced teachers.

It was furthermore believed that discussion led to communicative interaction, which to a great extent created a platform for increased participation of learners in the learning process.

Remediation (support teaching) was seen by some (mostly senior) teachers as a method of ensuring that the learners received more individual attention. The feeling was that remediation provided an opportunity for the teacher to assist all the learners who were experiencing learning barriers. However, there were a significant number of junior teachers who cited this as causing an extra work load for the teacher, indicating that due to the high number of learners in the classrooms, it was sometimes difficult to plan for such extra support teaching.

Some teachers seemed convinced that demonstrating content to the learners, especially in practical subjects, enhanced and widened participation in the learning process. Teachers offering practical subjects such as life sciences felt very strongly about this practice.

There seemed to be a sense that, if the learners and teacher worked together, participation would be enhanced and the learners clearly advantaged. However, some senior teachers expressed reservations about co-teaching, while others (mostly white teachers) remonstrated that different levels of subject mastery make it difficult to co-teach with less experienced teachers.

The analysis indicated that, although we felt that these practices enhanced inclusion, they had shortcomings and could not be implemented in their current form in the classroom. Furthermore, the observations and the unstructured interviews with the teachers revealed that the practices as used by teachers in their current form did not address inclusion fully and that teachers were able to generate solutions to the shortcomings of the practices by themselves (see Chapter 5, Table 5.2).

Subsequently, while teachers were painting a very positive picture of the state of inclusion in their teaching, citing some of the strategies they applied to enhance inclusion, data from the

focus group of learners contradicted what the teachers were saying. For example:

- Teachers were not including learners in their teaching; there were excluding tendencies (see Chapter 5, section 5.2.2, par. (a)).
- Teachers used different methods to accommodate learners in the class (see Chapter 5, section 5.2.2, par (b)).
- Learners valued equal treatment, recognition of their diverse backgrounds and linguistic support as crucial for their inclusion (see Chapter 5, section 5.2.2, par. (c)).
- Learners felt they were not able to participate fully in class, citing various reasons (see Chapter 5, section 5.2.2, par. (d)).
- Learners valued support and interaction from the teacher as significant for their inclusion (see Chapter 5, section 5.2.2, par. (e)).

6.5 STAGE 3: ACTION

The analysis of data from this stage was more evaluative as we reflected on the action of adopting practices in our classes. The analysis of our reflections during this stage was driven by the following question:

How did the adoption process improve the capacity of practices to enhance inclusion?

The analysis indicated that teachers were very positive about how the process had improved the capacity of the practices to enhance inclusion (see Chapter 5, section 5.2.3). However, teachers arrived at some analytic conclusions with regard to the practices and jointly determined some guidelines for the use of the practices. Here are some of the suggestions of the teachers (see Chapter 5, section 5.2.3):

(a) Group work

Group work could be used in the classroom; however, clear rules and control measures should be put in place to control group activities. Groups should also not be too big as this would limit the participation of other learners.

(b) Peer tutoring

While peer tutoring was seen to enhance the participation of peers in the learning process, the suggestion was that teachers should first do an analysis of the personalities of the peers. Some pairing combinations could be detrimental rather than advantageous.

(c) Use of games

Games were regarded as a good way through which learners learn. Teachers first needed to establish rules before the game and ensure that the learners understood that it was not about winning but about being part of the game and learning from others. All the learners should be rewarded for their positive contribution during the games. The teachers suggested that learners should be taught the values of good sportsmanship and to accept results, whether a win or a lose.

(d) Discussion

Discussion among learners could allow learners to learn from one another. It was important that the number of learners be kept small. Teachers should create a talking environment where learners can express themselves freely. The teachers suggested that classroom rules be put in place and all learners be taught to speak when given a chance and to respect differences of opinion.

(e) Remediation (support teaching)

While remedial classes are often arranged for those who are slow to learn in the class, the suggestion was that all learners should be accommodated for remediation as it also appeared to be a good revision and learning consolidation for others. Moreover, other learners could reduce the stigmatisation of slow learning.

(f) Collaborative/project learning

Teachers must ensure that, when learners are given projects, there should be constant monitoring to diagnose problems and plan intervention strategies to help struggling learners. Learners should be allowed to tackle projects in their own unique way to stimulate creativity and originality.

(g) Practical demonstrations

Doing practical demonstrations was believed to enhance all aspects of inclusion during the lessons.

(h) Resource-based learning

While teachers lamented the shortage of resources, it became clear during the research process that the teachers' inability to integrate resources into their teaching was the main problem – some relied exclusively on the textbook, even though there were other resources that could be used.

The analysis of data from this stage yielded some lessons, indicating that practices identified as inclusive had shortcomings and could not be implemented in their current form (see Chapter 5, Table 5.1); that we were able to generate solutions towards developing the identified practices by ourselves (see Chapter 5, Table 5.2); that the longer the use of a practice lasted in the class, the better it could be used to facilitate inclusion (see Chapter 5, Table 5.5); that class visits were important for developing inclusive practices as teachers could

learn from one another – for example, Miss Marumo remarked: *With class visit you are able to copy best inclusive practices from your fellow colleagues.*

6.6 STAGE 4: REFLECTION

The analysis of this stage was also evaluative and comparative as we sought to determine how far we had achieved our aims. The analysis indicated that as a research group we had learned several valuable lessons, such as the following.

We were able to collaborate to promote inclusion (see Chapter 5, section 5.2.4). We were able to generate ideas, which could be useful if the learners were given a platform to talk (see Chapter 5, section 5.2.4). Classroom observation and reflective discussions about the practices observed culminated in a valuable exercise for teachers to reflect on their practice (see Chapter 5, section 5.2.4). Teachers needed to take the opinions and expectations of learners into account when planning their teaching strategies (see Chapter 5, section 5.2.4).

In conclusion, the analysis of our reflections indicated that action research had enhanced communication among us, that it could be useful in implementing change and altering our beliefs, and that it fostered cooperation and collaboration among ourselves. However, for it to be successful, having enough time, doing planning and establishing permanent research committees were of the essence (see Chapter 5, section 5.2.4).

6.7 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have presented the group interpretative analytic discussions of the research team. Data from the different CAR stages were analysed thematically and, in the other stages, an interpretative and comparative inductive analysis was carried out to determine the meanings and arrive at some conclusions. I believe that the action-research process created an appropriate space for us to interrogate our practice, identify those that we perceived to be inclusive, evaluate their inclusive effectiveness, and derive ways of making them more

inclusive in our classes. The findings indicated that our views were different due to our experiences, and that our beliefs about most aspects were varied. The next chapter will focus on my meta-research analysis in order to determine how far the study has contributed to the theory of inclusion.

CHAPTER 7: AN ANALYSIS OF DATA: A META-RESEARCH PERSPECTIVE

7.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I provide a discussion of the inductive analysis of the data collected in the course of the entire collaborative action-research (CAR) process. I carried out this analysis as a researcher at a level beyond that of a group, using a theoretical lens to arrive at justifiable theoretical conclusions. That is, I analysed all the sets of data in order to determine what the empirical study had or had not achieved in relation to the notion of inclusion, and in terms of the processes of developing inclusive teaching practices in particular. Firstly, in the analysis, triangulations were privileged because the outcome of the analysis depended on how different sets of data supported or refuted the theoretical arguments. The sets of data that were analysed included the minutes of meetings, unstructured interviews, observations, focus-group interviews and research diaries. Finally, this chapter discusses the outcomes of the analysis by presenting the themes identified during the analytical process and providing evidence to support the interpretations.

7.2 ANALYSIS

The central aim of this section is to discuss the themes that were derived during the analysis of the empirical data. Firstly, let me give a schematic and a holistic overview of how the triangulation of data from all the collaborative action-research processes was carried out. Data were triangulated with the use of a spreadsheet to compare the different sets of data in terms of their differences, similarities and patterns. The following figure illustrates how the relevant sets of data harvested from data-collection processes were triangulated to arrive at the conclusions:

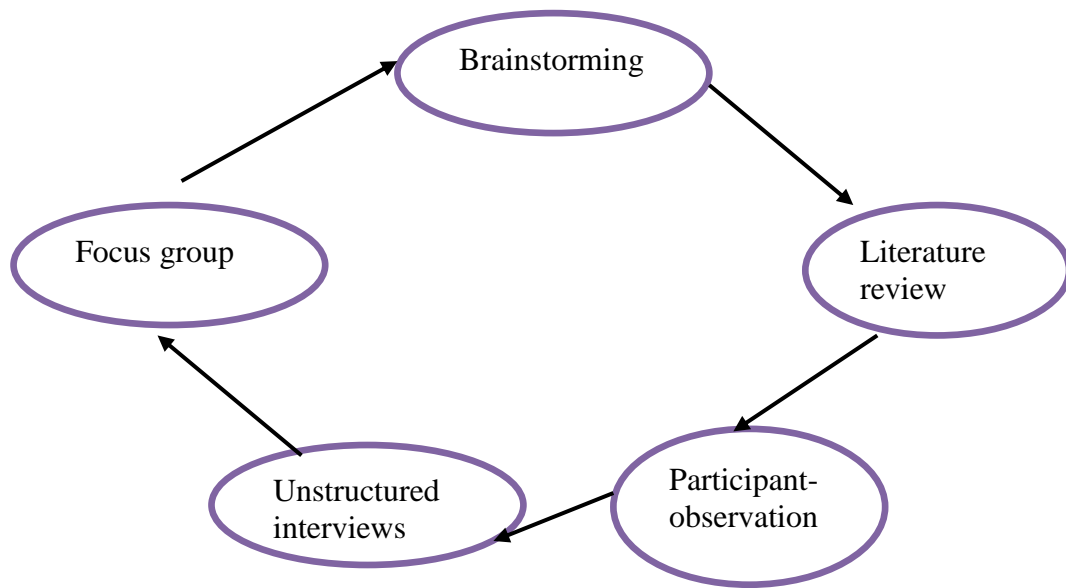


Figure 7.1: Data triangulation

While the steps of analysis were described in Chapter 4, it is important for this chapter to explain how the steps were carried out in practice during the analysis of the data. Essentially, the data were closely read several times to ensure that I was fully conversant with the facts, thus making the process of analysis more manageable. I then derived themes guided by the intention of each stage of collaborative action research and aligned them to the research questions. The following themes emerged:

- Teachers' knowledge of *inclusive education*;
- Teachers' knowledge of inclusive teaching and a class (group of learners);
- The identification of inclusive practices in the classroom;
- Adopting practices in the class to develop their skilful use by the teacher to enhance inclusion;
- Evaluating action research as a methodology. This theme was divided into the following sub-themes: planning action research; action research as a strategy for change; action research and the role of the researcher; action research and teacher collaboration; and the critical stance adopted in the study.

During this step, I read the data again to verify that the themes were appropriate. I then went through all the sets of data and wrote themes and notes alongside the quotations. In the course of analysing the data, I had in mind the aim of the study and I constantly asked myself whether the part of the data I was analysing answered the research questions.

In order to triangulate and determine the patterns during data analysis, I made use of a spreadsheet to summarise the themes. For example, the spreadsheet listed the title of each theme and quotations from the different sets of data.

Next, I read the quotations and deduced the meanings they were indicating in relation to each of them. This resulted in my interpretations, which I presented according to each theme. In the following section, each theme is discussed.

7.2.1 Teachers' knowledge of *inclusive education*

This theme probed the teachers' understanding of the concept of inclusive education and the specific factors influencing their understanding. Firstly, defining *inclusive education* was the culmination of the analysis of brainstorming meetings during which the members of the research team exchanged ideas. The analysis also took cognisance of my presentation on the reviewed literature.

The conceptualisations of *inclusive education* by the teachers seemed to have much in common with the views expressed in the literature. For example, in defining inclusive education, Mr Mosia said:

Inclusive education [is] reaching out to all children in South Africa, not only academically but in all aspects of life.

The teachers appeared to be familiar with the main principles underlying the definitions of inclusion as espoused in the literature. Indeed, after my critical presentation on the relevant research literature, the teachers appeared to have realised how much their knowledge of inclusion had in common with some of the understandings of inclusion espoused in the literature. For example, Mrs Leroy said:

Well, I am surprised that our understanding of inclusive education seems not far [removed] from what is written in books, despite the fact that we have not been adequately trained.

In their deliberations on inclusion, teachers had not made any reference to White Paper 6 DoE 2001), which was the legislative framework conceptualising inclusion within the South African context. In my presentation, I had drawn their attention to this document, which they evidently had very little knowledge of. For example, Mr Letuka said:

We have not been workshopped or trained according to the document.

From the above statement, it was clear that what teachers had said initially was based on what they themselves regarded as inclusion, rather than what the literature or policy was referring to. It could be that their knowledge derived from the public discourse on the subject since the notion of inclusion had been highly prioritised in the public domain and non-governmental forums in South Africa.

What was similarly striking was that the terminology the teachers used in defining the salient concepts was often borrowed from the discourse of special education. For example, concepts such as *disabled* and *disability* had repeatedly been used in the teachers' responses, which indicated that most of their knowledge about inclusion emanated from their previous training which had centred on identifying learners' shortcomings. For instance, Mrs Morena said:

[Inclusion] refers to education where the learners with physical disabilities are accommodated in the mainstream classrooms.

The interpretation of the data referred to above suggests the teachers

- knew what inclusive education meant, although their understanding seemed varied;

- realised that their knowledge compared well with some of the theoretical conceptualisations in the literature;
- had little knowledge of White Paper 6 which, as pointed out previously, is the legislative framework conceptualising inclusion within the South African context;
- recognised that their understanding was informed by their knowledge of special education.

The next section reports on the analysis of the data to show how teachers operationalised the notion of inclusive education in their teaching methodologies.

7.2.3 Teachers' knowledge of inclusive teaching and classrooms

The teachers' understanding of what constituted inclusive teaching was very clear from their answers; for example, two of them stated:

Mr Naledi: Teaching involving and including all sorts of learners.

Mrs van Tonder: [It] is a kind of teaching that is inclusive of all learners.

However, what was lacking in the conceptualisation of inclusive teaching was how the processes of inclusion were actually operationalised in the classroom. While the teachers claimed to have been inclusive in their approach, it was not clear from their statements how this was being done in an actual pedagogical situation. It also became clear from the teachers' use of concepts such as *handicapped*, *slow learners*, and *disabled* that their understanding of what constituted an inclusive practice (pedagogy) was actually borrowed from the background of special education. For instance, Mr Sello said:

It is a kind of teaching which includes the needs of disabled people.

It also seemed as though inclusion meant having diverse learners in the class, and that there was no explicit indication as to how pedagogy was designed to be inclusive. Indeed, the focus was more on accommodating others than on what constituted pedagogic practice; for example, Mr Mosia stated:

Teaching which will include teaching, to all suitable kind of learners in front of teacher, everybody being accommodated.

After my literature-review presentation, the teachers seemed more inclined to apply a special education approach to inclusion rather than look at how they could creatively apply different methods in their pedagogical practice. The facts contained in my presentation, which focused on how curriculum and social aspects could have a bearing on the practice of inclusion, were unfamiliar to the teachers who thought that inclusion was only concerned with teaching methods rather than with adapting aspects of their teaching such as widening participation and recognising diversity and differences in responding to the needs of learners.

The teachers' understanding of what constituted an inclusive teaching strategy seemed to resonate with the influence of the kind of education in which the locus of the problem is always associated with the learner. For example, the emphasis was on how to diagnose problems by focussing on the shortcomings of learners in the class rather than on how the learners should be included within the pedagogic practice, as is evident from the following extract:

Miss Koeberg: Teachers teach learners of different capabilities; we must firstly diagnose the learner's problem and refer the learner to a specialist.

Furthermore, the data from the learner-focus group presented a different picture with regard to how inclusive the teaching in the classroom actually was. Although the teachers had painted a positive picture, data from the learner-focus groups indicated that the teachers' theoretical knowledge of inclusion did not necessarily translate into practice. For example, one of the learners gave the following reason for claiming that teaching was not very inclusive:

Teachers of my school choose the children they like and they pay more attention on teaching them. They don't take [regard] us as equal as learners.

On the other hand, the teachers' conceptualisation of an inclusive class was centred on the accommodation of learners that were perceived to have special educational needs. For instance, Miss Marumo stated:

In an inclusive class, we accommodate learners that were supposed to have been at the special school.

While the aforementioned definitions of inclusive education suggest that the teachers' understanding of inclusion perhaps went beyond mere accommodation, this statement suggests the opposite because of the strong emphasis on merely accommodating learners without reference to other aspects of inclusion such as changing attitudes to differences, embracing diversity, and altering beliefs about teaching practice.

In summary, the analysis supports the following interpretations:

- Teaching inclusively was understood to mean different things to the teachers (see Chapter 5, section 5.2.1, par. I).
- It appeared that the special education approach still influenced the teachers' understanding of inclusive teaching (see the statement by Mr Sello in Chapter 5, section 5.2.1, par. 1.).
- Inclusive teaching referred to the accommodation of learners with special educational needs in the mainstream class (see the statement by Mr Naledi in Chapter 5, section 5.2.1, par. 1.).
- While the teachers regarded their teaching as being inclusive, their learners thought it was not (see Chapter 5, section 5.2.2, par. a).

The analysis indicated that the understanding of what constituted inclusive teaching was varied among teachers and learners. Therefore, the next section will present the results of the analysis of how teachers identified and considered certain practices to be inclusive.

7.2.4 The identification of inclusive practices in the classroom

Teachers had identified and defined several practices as being inclusive (see Chapter 5).

According to the analyses in my research diary, the identification seemed to have been influenced by a number of factors. The following excerpts from the research diary provided the analytic framework of how teachers identified different practices as being inclusive:

(Excerpts from research diary)

Teachers in social science subjects were inclined to identify group work and collaborative/project learning; experienced teachers mostly identified group work and discussion, while inexperienced teachers favoured the use of games; compared with their black counterparts, white teachers were less willing to co-teach.

Many learners in the class avoided using group work and discussion and favoured peer tutoring.

While support teaching (remediation) was identified, it seemed as though teachers thought it was an extra job and therefore a burden; teachers teaching senior classes preferred practices of co-operation and collaboration as compared with the use of games by those teaching lower classes.

Although it was to be expected, I interpreted the above to mean that the teachers identified practices that could be relevant to their teaching situation, the subject they taught, and the level at which they taught it. This suggests that not all practices would work under all circumstances.

By contrast, the analysis of the data from the focus-group of learners indicated that they preferred peer tutoring and group discussion as inclusion-enhancing practices. This conclusion is supported by the following statements made by the learners:

- *We must sit with [other] learners who have a fast understanding of work [find the work easy to understand].*
- *We should sit with those who we think we can work together [with].*
- *[They do so] by allowing learners to work in groups or in pairs ... and they encourage discussions, open debates.*

Furthermore, the learners indicated that being acknowledged and accepted by the teacher would make them feel more included in the class; for instance, one learner said:

By stop chasing students outside and let them in the class and also when they are free and they see students outside they should tell them to come in their classroom...

Besides the practices referred to, my analysis indicated that there were issues raised by learners that hampered inclusion in the classroom; for example, learners resented being chased out of the class as a form of punishment. As one of the learners remarked, *I would like them to treat learners equal.*

It appeared that some learners regarded the disciplinary and social conditions in the class as uncondusive to inclusion, for example being laughed at by other learners when attempting to answer questions (*No, because some learners will laugh at you if you can do/make a little mistake.*).

In summary, the analysis of the above shows that the identified practices had shortcomings and could not be used in their current form, that peer tutoring and group discussions were popular among both teachers and learners, and that the learners seemed to have identified aspects they regarded as excluding them from full participation (e.g. being chased out of class, and being rejected by teachers and fellow-learners).

7.2.5 Adopting practices in the classroom

This section presents an analysis of the process whereby teachers firstly determined the criteria for inclusion, and then used them as a yardstick to apply the practices identified as promoting inclusion.

The analysis indicates that, at the start of adopting the practices in the classroom, the teachers seemed to find it hard to use them inclusively (see Chapter 5, Table 5.2). It was therefore important for teachers to generate solutions to the problem of how to develop and

apply the practices inclusively. The analysis of the data from this stage indicated that the following aspects were considered significant in developing these practices:

- **Collaboration**

At first, the teachers had to determine a *modus operandi* for implementing, observing, and evaluating the practices of inclusion, as well as for rating and dealing with their shortcomings. These seemed to give an indication of the significance of collaboration in developing inclusive practices. This was attested to by the following quotation:

Mrs Kruger: We need to work together often because this help us because if you know that someone is looking at what you do wrong or right you work even smarter to prove a point.

- **Observations and reflections**

Because teachers had to do observations and later give some reflective feedback about what happened in their classes, the observations proved to be very helpful in developing the adopted practices. For example, when some teachers were asked about the value of these visits where observations were done, they had this to share:

Mr Koopman: I think it is good to look at what you are doing, reflect on it and do [make] some improvement.

Mrs Leroy: This visit has provided me with the moral and strategic support to focus on my teaching and improve my ability to be inclusive.

- **Open communication**

The findings suggest that communication was central to the process of implementing the abovementioned practices. At all levels of teacher engagement about what needed to be done, open and transparent communication clearly played a pivotal role. For instance, asked about how they communicated, Mr Mokoena replied:

I think our conversations were open and allowed me to say what I wanted to say freely.

Consequently, open communication assisted the teachers in gauging the needs of the learners. For example, Miss Koeberg explained:

I think learners' remarks help us to have a better understanding of their expectations.

- **Feedback from colleagues**

The value of feedback about what individual teachers were doing in this study was more than evident from the respondents' remarks. It is clear that the teachers benefited from the feedback they received from their colleagues:

Mr Naledi: It helps to see how others do things and when others tell you your shortcomings it can only assist you to improve to the better.

In conclusion, it follows that these aspects were pivotal in the process of developing the teachers' inclusive practices.

7.2.6 Evaluating collaborative action research as a methodology

This theme was aimed at analysing the impact of collaborative action research as a methodology. The analysis is discussed within the context of the following sub-themes that emerged: planning action research, action research as a strategy for change, action research and data collection, and action research and teacher collaboration.

Sub-theme: Planning a collaborative action-research study

Planning a collaborative action-research study involved the following aspects:

Flexibility: The analysis of the planning of the collaborative action-research process suggested that the plan might not necessarily evolve unchanged during the actual process

(see Appendix H). Indications were that the planning of collaborative action research had to be flexible and adaptable so as not to derail the process. For example, when faced with the problem of teachers not being willing to talk during our discussions, as a complementary measure I had to give them a questionnaire in order to obtain their views on the essential issues (see Chapter 5).

Participation: The analysis indicated that sustaining the participation of the research members and safeguarding the research effort was an on-going challenge. For instance, the number of participants declined from 21 to 15 at the start and subsequently declined even further during the research process. As researcher, I therefore had to create mechanisms to keep the participants motivated and to sustain a credible number of participants for the project. For example, Mrs Morena remarked:

I am overloaded with marking work; sometimes it was difficult to attend all [the] meetings.

The analyses of the project participation showed that I had to take the following into consideration in order to mitigate the effect of the aforementioned issues:

- The workload of participants: for example, the participants were willing to be part of the project if I performed some tasks such as writing minutes and keeping records;
- The participants' ability to conduct research: the participants were willing to take part after I had given them training in research methods and the process involved (see Chapter 5) in order to encourage participation in the project.

Time to conduct a collaborative action-research project: The analysis of the time spent on the project showed that the amount of time planned was different from the actual time spent on the project, as the following quotation suggests:

Mr Khumalo: I think the time we got was short for me and the learners to adjust fully to the newly introduced way of teaching and learning.

The planning and dates had to be adjusted continually to accommodate the professional commitments of the teachers. For example, at times there were several apologies for being unable to attend the meetings and research activities (see Appendix I for the number of absentees for each research activity).

It once again follows that the ability to be flexible is crucial in planning an action-research project. The success of collaborative action research depends on the participation of practitioners and the available time at the research group's disposal.

Sub-theme: collaborative action research as a strategy for change

The process of collaborative action research was used in trying to change how teachers planned and acted in relation to being inclusive in their teaching. The analyses revealed several significant aspects. For example, it was evident that the project demonstrated that collaborative action research had created a platform for teachers to explore alternative ways of doing things, as Mr Letuka stated:

I have discovered that there could be alternative ways of doing things.

However, there was an indication that change as envisaged within this project might not have been achieved as it should have been, hence the following remark by Mr Mosia:

I think the time we got was short for me and the learners to adjust fully to the newly introduced way of teaching and learning.

In general, the project might have challenged the teachers' beliefs and attitudes about how they thought about their practices, as suggested by the following statement made by Mrs Leroy:

I had an opportunity to start a new way of teaching successfully.

However, there is reason to believe that change, as it took place during the project, might not be sustainable. For instance, when asked about what was going to happen after the project, Mr Naledi was pessimistic and said:

I think we can do this all over again if our work load could allow it.

While collaborative action research may enhance change, the interpretation of the analysis suggested that it needed time and that mechanisms to sustain the process of change were necessary for change to be realised fully.

Sub-theme: collaborative action research and my role as the researcher

One of the important aspects of collaborative action research is that the researcher becomes part of the research group. While it is not permissible within this mode of research for the researcher to impose his or her ideas on the research group, during this study, given South African teachers' culture of not taking any initiative, it was very tempting to flout this ground rule. For example, teachers requested me to take the lead in initiating some of the research activities, such as discussions, reflective engagements and sharing knowledge on some literature topics (see Chapter 5).

To some extent, the role of the researcher within a collaborative action-research mode seems to be determined by the context within which the study is conducted, the type of practitioners involved, their research skills, as well as their ability to initiate change, being critical, reflective and motivated. For example, during this project one could not but notice that the teachers regarded the researcher as an 'authority' and as a 'knowledgeable other'.

Sub-theme: collaborative action research and teacher collaboration

One of the cornerstones of collaborative action research is its ability to foster collaboration among the practitioners. The analysis of this project clearly proves that when teachers work together they stand to benefit from one another. For example, in acknowledging this, Mrs van Tonder praised action research for benefitting them through collaboration with others:

I have learned to listen and share ideas with my colleagues.

While it was evident that the teachers had benefited from the process of collaboration, the analyses suggest that that collaboration needs time for its value to be fully realised. This became evident when Miss Marumo lamented:

I could learn a lot from colleagues but I think we should have done it more frequently.

The interpretation is that the culture of collaboration does not happen overnight and that time is needed for its full realisation.

7.2.7 The critical stance adopted in the study

The critical stance adopted in this study (see Chapter 4) was the culmination of a process of deep reflection on the consequences of the repressive practices that had stunted educational development in South Africa. The history of oppression and institutionalised racial discrimination in South Africa during the apartheid regime had created a society based on hierarchical power relations and enforced obedience to authority. Education departments and school principals, for example, formed part of the micro-technologies of powers responsible for disseminating the prevailing ideology of exclusion and indoctrination of the time; hence, their authority was not to be questioned. This legacy of expected obedience to authority continued to exert its influence after the transition to democracy in 1994, militated against participative management and stifled initiative on the part of teachers. By reason of my office and high academic standard, I was perceived to be an authority figure and a 'knowledgeable other' who had to take the lead in determining policy and providing direction. This was in conflict with the basic principles of collaborative action which requires equal participation on the part of all participants. Despite my tireless efforts to empower my members of staff, and in particular the members of the research team, to participate democratically, actively and equally in all matters relating to the administration of the school, as well as the research project, I inevitably had to take the initiative from time to time to suggest and organise activities for the study to progress.

The secondary aim of the study was, therefore, to begin a process by which the participating teachers would become increasingly aware of how little influence they had had in fostering inclusive pedagogic practices in the classroom. The study was therefore intended to uncover the hegemony of the past educational dispensation which had sought to subjugate teachers and position them as the mere implementers of policy, rather than as contributors to the theory of their own pedagogic practice.

The following table lists a few excerpts from my reflections in the research diary that assisted me identifying several of the themes identified in the course of the research.

Table 7.1: Excerpts from my research diary

Excerpt	Themes
1	Physical and the social conditions at the school were not inclusive, e.g. buildings were not accessible to the disabled and attitudes were negative to those perceived to be different.
2	Teachers were unreflective, uncritical and uncollaborative in their work; i.e. teachers worked in isolation.
3	Teachers were submissive to authority and unquestioning – usually followed instructions.
4	Teachers were not taking initiative and often had to be prompted to talk. They remained silent and expected to be guided prior to any dialogical engagement.

While I embarked on fieldwork with a detailed research plan (Appendix H), the realities of fieldwork sometimes dictated a deviation from the plan. For example, permission was granted late by the education department and the time for other activities had to be curtailed. Teachers did not want to take on roles such as chairing a meeting because they seemed unsure about the roles; therefore, initially, I had to take the lead and perform most of the tasks myself. The number of participants dwindled from 15 to 10 as some teachers lost interest along the way.

While the majority of teachers shared their views openly, the experience was that some were neither willing to speak up in the meetings (so I had to design a questionnaire for those who did not want to share their ideas in a group) nor to take minutes, with the result that I had to take the minutes myself).

When reflecting on their practice as individuals, the teachers were inclined to be biased, but when they were reflecting as a group, their responses tended to be more objective and reasonable.

Many teachers found the adoption of new practices in their classrooms challenging as they sometimes had to try completely new approaches. This meant a new way of planning and presenting lessons; similarly, learners also suddenly had to adjust to a new approach. Because the action programmes were jointly planned, they worked well. It was important to read the minutes of our discussions every time we met as this allowed us to check whether our records were a true reflection of what we were supposed to be doing.

In the light of all this, the main question that must be posed is whether the overall objective of the study has been achieved. My analysis of the research process indicates that, while critical collaborative action research is thought to be instrumental in emancipating the participating teachers psychologically and shifting their thoughts around their practice significantly towards inclusion, achieving the ideal is a lengthy process. For example, the remarks of Mr Koopman gave an indication that this cannot be achieved within a short space of time:

While I felt a little in control about what one can do about one's teaching skills, it will take some time for others to acknowledge this change and therefore it will be difficult to implement what you believe in.

While there were explicit acknowledgements by some that the critical stance or reflective practice had robustly and significantly resulted in changing their beliefs about their own inclusive practice, it might be too ambitious to claim that a lasting change in beliefs and attitudes had been achieved. However, some of the statements were indicative of a significant shift from what teachers initially believed about their practice towards an awareness of the considerable benefits of inclusive teaching, as the following findings recorded during the reflection stage clearly show:

- Discovering new ways of doing things (see Chapter 5, section 5.2.5, statement made by Mr Khumalo).
- Learning from and with colleagues (see Chapter 5, section 5.2.5, statement made by Mr Ramoya).
- Got an opportunity to start new ways of teaching (see Chapter 5, section 5.2.5, statement made by Mr Naledi).
- Realised the need to involve learners in the planning of what ought to be taught and how it should be taught (see Chapter 5, section 5.2.5, statement made by Mrs van Tonder).

However, there were also indications that the sustainability of the change remained vulnerable due to the:

- relatively little time spent on the project (see Chapter 5, section 5.2.5, statement made by Mr Letuka).
- workload of the teachers participating in the project activities (see Chapter 5, section 5.2.5, statement made by Mrs Kruger).

7.3 CONCLUSION

Although determining whether the study had changed the manner in which inclusion was conceptualised within policy frameworks was beyond the scope of the research, the research was a step towards inclusive teaching. The study highlights a process through which teachers may begin to challenge the status quo and ultimately bring about significant policy shifts in educational practice and management.

While it would be premature to claim that the study has had or will have any significant influence on inclusive education policy, it is deeply gratifying to know that the teachers who had participated in the study appeared overwhelmingly motivated to determine the parameters of their own inclusive pedagogic practice.

In conclusion, this chapter has provided a brief summary of the analyses of the data collected during the AR process in relation to the extent to which the process had achieved

the objectives of the study. The chapter has furthermore discussed the themes that were derived inductively and the critical stance I maintained in this study. The final chapter of the thesis will present the findings, locate the study within the literature, and highlight the major implications.

CHAPTER 8: FINDINGS, IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION OF THE STUDY

8.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I provide a brief summary of the aim and outline of the study, and discuss the findings in accordance with the aims as set out in Chapter 1. I implicitly address the question as to the contribution this study makes to the scientific knowledge on inclusion and developing of inclusive practices. Firstly, I analyse what the study has achieved in relation to the research questions; secondly, I contextualise the study comparatively within the existing literature; thirdly, in order to determine what the study has contributed to the existing stock of knowledge on inclusion, I briefly articulate the implications of the findings for inclusive policy and practice in the South African secondary-school context. In conclusion, I discuss the limitations of the study and the areas for further research.

8.2 AIM OF THE STUDY

The principal aim of the study, it will be remembered, was to answer the research question: How can the teaching in the classrooms of South African secondary schools be made more inclusive?

This research problem led to the following sub-questions:

- How do teachers understand the constructs *inclusive education*, *inclusive classroom* and *inclusive teaching* in the South African context?
- Which classroom teaching practices are known to be effective in promoting inclusion internationally?
- Which of those effective classroom teaching practices are applicable to the South African context?
- How can teachers be supported and encouraged to adopt effective classroom teaching practices that are known to promote inclusion?

Therefore, the overall objectives of the study were to:

- conceptualise the notions *inclusive education*, *inclusive classroom* and *inclusive teaching* in the South African context;
- identify international classroom-teaching practices that are known to be effective in promoting inclusive education;
- explore the classroom-teaching practices that are applicable to and effective in promoting inclusion in the South African classroom context;
- determine the extent to which such practices are inclusive, explore how teachers could be assisted in adopting them in their classes, and evaluate their impact on teaching and learning.

8.3 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

The study can be summarised as follows:

Chapter 1 presents the overall theoretical orientation by sketching the background to the study. This is done by highlighting the history of exclusion and briefly discussing the South African inclusive education system. The context and aims of the research are discussed by means of a brief introduction to the research design and the justification for the research approach. An overview of the research site is presented and the chapter concludes with an outline of the structure of the thesis.

Chapter 2 contains a review of the salient research literature, as well as an international perspective on inclusive education. The chapter presents the rationale for the literature review and the method of assembling the research corpus. The literature is discussed in terms of the varied contexts in terms of which inclusion is conceptualised internationally. An international perspective on inclusive pedagogy is discussed. Finally, the concept of change is discussed in relation to the developing of inclusive teaching practices.

Chapter 3 sketches the background to the inclusive nature of the current education policies of South Africa, both from a legislative and theoretical perspective. The chapter presents the

historical context of inclusion, the South African version of inclusion, and briefly discusses inclusive pedagogical practices in the South African classrooms.

Chapter 4 explains the research methodology and outlines the instruments used in the research process. This is done by outlining the epistemological stance, the nature, process and meta-research in collaborative action research (CAR). The methods of data collection, management, and analysis are articulated. The chapter concludes by briefly explaining how triangulation and trustworthiness of the research were maintained.

Chapter 5 discusses the collaborative action-research process and presents data according to the different CAR stages. The collaborative action-research stages, namely planning, observation, action and reflection, are discussed in detail, thus showing how data were gathered and interpreted within each stage.

Chapter 6 articulates the results of the group-interpretative analysis of the data collected throughout the four CAR stages by the research team. Interpretative conclusions are highlighted and discussed.

Chapter 7 presents the results of a meta-research investigation by providing a brief discussion of analytic interpretations of data collected through collaborative action research. The chapter discusses the analyses using the themes inductively derived from the data. The chapter also captures the analysis of the critical stance which I adopted in this study.

Chapter 8 presents a summary of the study, the findings, the positionality of the study in relation to the literature, the implications and limitations of the study, and the areas for further research. The chapter ends by stating the final conclusions arrived at.

8. 4 FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

In this section, the findings of the study are largely based on and discussed with specific reference to how the study addressed the research questions.

8.4.1 Teachers' knowledge of inclusive education

With regard to how teachers conceptualise the notions *inclusive education*, *inclusive classroom* and *inclusive teaching* in the South African context, the following came to light.

Firstly, the study has found that the understanding of the concept of inclusion among the participating teachers was varied and not coherently articulated. Hence they had divergent interpretations of the concept of inclusion, which led to the formulation of different themes. The teachers' divergent views on what inclusion meant in this study were evidenced by the fact that policies had not translated into practical benefits (e.g. there were teachers who should have been properly trained about inclusion) but had been a political window-dressing exercise that subtly maintained the status quo (see Chapter 5, section 5.2.1, par. I).

Secondly, the study has indicated that there were various factors influencing the conceptualisation of inclusion by teachers. It has been demonstrated that in South Africa inclusion is seen as a human and political right that is *inter alia* conceptualised within the political transformation agenda and transition of the country from apartheid to democracy. The latter was confirmed by the utterances of teachers which emphasised the dominance of a political discourse in the articulation of what constitutes inclusion (see Chapter 5, section 5.2.1, par. I). The latter seems to indicate that any attempt to define the concept must draw on the prevailing dominant discourse as it provides the framework from which notions of inclusion are derived.

Thirdly, the notion of inclusion in South Africa transcends the mere provision of education by challenging the history of exclusion that had been entrenched in the country by the apartheid system. For example, at the beginning of this thesis, I referred to my schooling background as an example of how in the past education was used to perpetuate exclusion and entrench the apartheid regime's policy of so-called separate development for various population groups (see Chapter 1, section 1.2). This notion was evident in the study as both teachers and learners viewed the research project as part of a process of emancipating themselves from the oppressive practices of the past (see Chapter 5, section 5.2.4). Therefore, in view of these

aspects, teachers regarded inclusion as a tool to rewrite history, redress the past imbalances, and empower the marginalised (a perception consistent with the vision of the current South African government). It seems that the conceptualisation of the notion of inclusion, and of developing inclusive education practices, must take cognisance of the historico-political context of South Africa as the basis from which it should be derived.

Fourthly, the conceptualisation of inclusion was influenced by teacher beliefs and attitudes. During this study, teachers exhibited beliefs and attitudes which clearly informed their basic understanding of the concept of inclusion. The research evidence suggests that the teachers found it difficult to change their current beliefs about what they thought constituted best inclusive teaching practice. For example, when they were asked about their initial practice, it became evident that their beliefs were essentially the result of the kind of training and experiences they had undergone (see Chapter 5, section 5.2.1, par. II). For example, many of the teachers exhibited a culture of non-involvement in policy development, which impacted negatively on how well the practices of inclusion were developed. Furthermore, when asked about the lack of training in implementing inclusive teaching practices, the teachers indicated that they had not received any training. Therefore, it seems that, with regard to the conceptualisation of inclusion in the South African school context, teacher beliefs and attitudes had not yet changed at the time of the research study.

Fifthly, the research findings suggest that context plays an important role as far as the understanding of inclusion is concerned. For example, the practices identified by the teachers were similar to those found in the international literature (e.g. peer tutoring, collaborative learning and group work). However, the difference is that for such practices to work in a South African context, they would have to be adapted and made relevant to the local context (see Chapter 5, Tables 5.2 & 5.3) to show how the shortcomings of the practices were identified and solutions generated to adapt them to the school context. Therefore, it is clear that the conceptualisation of inclusion is not easily transferable between contexts but needs to be derived from local theories and contexts.

This study therefore contradicts practices where context is ignored, because the developing practices of inclusion in some contexts may not necessarily work in other contexts; moreover, the findings indicate that it is questionable whether there are universal ways in which practices of inclusion can be used.

Lastly, the study has found that, although there has been some shift in the policy framework from exclusion to inclusion in South Africa, only a slight shift has been registered from special needs education to practices of inclusion. The conceptualisation of inclusion as alluded to earlier is still strongly influenced by special needs education as evidenced, for example, by some of the concepts used by teachers during the study (see Chapter 5, section 5.2.1, par. I). Therefore it is clear that, although current South African policies advocate inclusion, little has translated into an actual shift from special needs education to inclusion in the classroom. It follows that in developing practices of inclusion, there is need for a more hands-on (practical) approach than mere policy rhetoric. Furthermore, it is evident that special needs education still influences the manner in which inclusion is implemented in South Africa, and that there is a need for inclusion to be re-conceptualised, away from the current line of thought.

8.4.2 Teachers' knowledge of inclusive teaching and classrooms

As mentioned earlier, this study maintains that the way inclusive teaching is understood by South African teachers is influenced by the special needs pedagogy that they have been trained to adopt. The conceptualisation of an inclusive pedagogy was derived from the medical model, whereby learning barriers are attributed to the learner rather than by looking at how the teacher and his/her pedagogic practice impacts on the learning process (see Chapter 5, section 5.2.1, par. III). The study has shown that there was a tendency on the part of the teachers to relate all problems to the learners' perceived inadequacies; hence, the learners were not regarded as partners during the teaching and learning process (see Chapter 5, section 5.2.2, paras. a)–e)).

On the other hand, it is important to bear in mind that an inclusive class transcends the physical composition of the class in so far as both the social and pedagogic aspects are

interwoven with the physical. The need to interconnect these components was clear (see Chapter 5, section 5.2.2, par. e)).

The study has revealed that, in the South African school context, the physical and social aspects of the class have not been made inclusive. These aspects appear not to have been given full attention as there are still crippling problems involved in how they could be interconnected to enhance inclusive environments (see Chapter 5, section 5.2.2, par. e)).

8.4.3 The identification of inclusive practices in the classroom

With regard to the practices that are known to be promoting inclusive education, and those relevant to the South African context, the study has demonstrated the following:

First, with reference to my earlier argument, the study has confirmed that South African inclusive education has not parted ways with special needs education (see this Chapter, section 8.4.1). The learning barriers seem to be associated with the learner. While one could assert that inclusive education is a reaction to special education, and that the two should therefore not be equated, the study has shown that teachers believe the two to be the same (see Chapter 5, section 5.2.1, paras. I, II, III).

Secondly, while peer tutoring, group work, co-operative and collaborative learning are among popular practices perceived to be inclusive in the school context, the study has demonstrated that the form in which they are applied has to be adapted to local contexts, as was the case during this project (see Tables 5.4 & 5.5 on how practice was initially evaluated and adapted to the school's inclusive pedagogical context). Furthermore, caution should be exercised in the application of these practices because they might not necessarily be inclusive in other contexts.

Thirdly, the study has shown that, in general, South African teachers neither collaborate nor co-teach. For example, in reflecting on the project, I realised that the teachers had to learn to work and reflect on their practice together (see Chapter 5, section 5.2.4). Therefore, it is clear

that collaboration among teachers is not yet regarded as a prerequisite for developing practices of inclusion.

Earlier, I made mention of the fact that practices of inclusion in South Africa are influenced to a large extent by the special needs education background of the past education system (see Section 8.4.1). However, data from my observations recorded in a research diary indicated that, while the participating South African teachers regarded practices such as peer tutoring, collaborative and cooperative learning and group work as inclusive, the problem was how well these practices could be used given the existing culture of non-reflection and non-collaboration by teachers. In the first instance, the study has demonstrated that there is a need to develop a culture of reflection and critical thinking. As there is no recipe for inclusive practice, the study argues that, rather than being given a blueprint for the practices, teachers in their context should creatively develop practices that could be applicable in their situation. This seems to militate strongly against a ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach.

8.4.4 Adopting effective practices of inclusion in the classroom

With regard to how teachers can be assisted to adopt effective practices that will enhance inclusion in their classes, the following conclusions can be drawn from the research. Firstly, as discussed in Section 8.4.3 of this chapter, it is apparent that South African teachers are still a far cry from the levels of collaboration needed for the enhancement of inclusion. This is despite the policy requirement that school-based support teams (SBSTs) be formed as collaborative platforms for teachers to engage in reflective practices to enhance their inclusive practice (see Chapter 3, section 3.4). Despite this policy requirement, the study has shown that, at the time of the research, no evidence of co-teaching or collaboration on the part of the teachers existed. Therefore, it appears that, in the development of inclusive practices, collaboration is significant, and that in its absence it would be very difficult fully to develop practices of inclusion in South African schools. The absence of collaboration hampers the efforts to make teaching more inclusive; thus, a more appropriate platform is needed to enhance collaboration among teachers.

Secondly, the empirical investigations have found that, while there was an attempt on the part of the teachers to implement inclusive education, there appeared to be challenges in terms of how this (inclusive teaching) needed to be done (see Chapter 5, section 5.2.2). The majority of teachers seemed uncertain whether or not their teaching was inclusive. By contrast, the learners' responses clearly indicated that the teachers' practices were not sufficiently inclusive (see Chapter 5, section 5.2.2, paras. a)–e)). This was also evident during the observations (see Chapter 5, Table 5.2 for the identified shortcomings) when it became clear that teachers were not collaborating and lacked joint strategies to make their teaching more inclusive. It follows that these factors in the South African context hinder inclusive teaching and need to be addressed for progress to be made.

Thirdly, in the course of this study, various beliefs and attitudes among teachers were witnessed which affected the ability of teacher to teach inclusively. These translated into a lack of interest in participation (see Chapter 7, section 7.2.6), a failure to take initiative, unreflective tendencies, and treating learners in an authoritarian manner (e.g. sending them out of class as punishment). Data from my research diary as captured in my reflective observations are evidence of the latter (see Chapter 7, section 7.2.7). Instances of authoritarian tendencies towards learners were evident, for example, when learners commented about the attitude of teachers in class (see Chapter 5, section 5.2.2, paras. a)–e)).

The authoritarian attitudes towards learners hinder effective learning and compromise learner intuition and initiative because teachers act as the sole sources of knowledge, thus ignoring the significance of the prior knowledge possessed by learners.

The challenge of non-participation hinders the processes of developing inclusive practices (see Chapter 7, section 7.2.6); therefore, I would maintain that in the South African school context the level of teacher participation retards the speed at which inclusive practices could be developed and implemented. The inability of teachers to take initiative and find creative solutions to the problem of the lack of inclusive practices prevents them from designing innovative practices. This non-reflective tradition prevents teachers from improving their

practice; instead, they cling dogmatically to past experiences and use those as their points of reference.

Furthermore, data from observations in my research diary indicate that the participation rate of South African teachers in developing practices of inclusion is low (see Appendix I) as the attendance of teachers during the action-research project steadily declined. This is an indication that teachers in South Africa are still hesitant and unsure about how well they can initiate change by themselves and see it through to its full implementation.

Lastly, evidence gathered by means of a research diary reveals that, given the way the research site (school) was structured, very little change was visible in terms of accommodating a diverse learner population (see Chapter 7, section 7.2.6). The physical setting (buildings and furniture) was designed for a uniform type of learner population. Therefore, the types of schools in South Africa (of which the research site is an example) seem to be inherently exclusive and fall short of eradicating the prevalence of special needs education; for example, not all schools are fully inclusive (the research site is an example), and there is only a handful of schools identified as full service schools. The manner in which schools are arranged only serves to perpetuate the status quo in so far as schools are still by nature and operation classified according to the service they provide to the learners. This, I believe, hinders or delays the implementation of inclusion in schools. It is clear that any form of segregation (separation) of learners would not constitute an inclusive practice.

It also became clear that teachers still depend on outsiders (in this case the researcher) to give guidance about scrutinising their practice critically (see Chapter 7, section 7.2.6). Furthermore, teachers in South Africa do not take the initiative to launch reflective engagements. It could be that in the past South African teachers were not really expected to contribute anything and that they mostly had to implement policies developed elsewhere; as a result, their ability to be critical about everything was severely compromised. For instance, while the participating teachers were fairly well qualified, they seemed to lack the ability to engage in a reflective and creative analysis of their practice. Furthermore, the struggle against apartheid had entrenched a

culture of resistance among teachers, and therefore any process of initiating change was viewed politically and might be challenged.

Therefore, in this study, a community of inquiry was established but, in view of the reasons stated in the previous paragraph, most processes were initiated by me as the researcher. While the teachers were excited about the project, it is still not clear whether the excitement was because the project was conducted by me as their principal or whether they had genuinely bought into the idea of improving their practice.

8.4.5 Evaluating collaborative action research as a methodology

This study has highlighted several issues with regard to collaborative action research as a strategy to develop inclusive practices. Firstly, using collaborative action research afforded the teachers an opportunity to reflect on their practice and suggested how it could be improved (see Chapter 5, section 5.2.4 & Chapter 7, section 7.2.6). Secondly, collaborative action research balanced the power relations between the teachers and me as the researcher because we acted as equal partners in the whole process, which resulted in what teachers thought was their emancipation or empowerment (see Chapter 5, section 5.2.4). On the basis of these statements, one can see that collaborative action research can indeed assist the teachers in making their teaching more inclusive.

However, during the collaborative action-research process several challenges were registered. The process posed challenges as far as participation was concerned. This unique situation in South Africa was further complicated by the entrenched culture of non-participation during the apartheid era. There was the problem of teachers' inability to reflect critically on themselves and their practice. For example, data from my research dairy indicate that one of the factors hindering the collaborative action-research process was the fact that teachers hardly disagreed with anything said or done by authority figures (a culture of being submissive). Consequently, it could be very difficult for anyone in a position of authority (in my case, as the principal) to elicit an honest opinion from the teachers about anything, which could have jeopardised the trustworthiness of the research process.

The study has shown that the role of the researcher was instrumental as, in the South African context, collaborative action-research teams still needed guidance from the researcher. For example, although the objectives and processes had been jointly determined, as the researcher I had to take the lead and give guidance and purpose. The fact of the matter is that, to some extent, teachers are still used to being told what to do; therefore, it is difficult for them simply to carry on and chart the way forward.

As collaborative action research compels the researcher to refrain from imposing his/her ideas on action-research teams, and calls for strict ethical measures to maintain the trustworthiness of the research process, in this study my role as the researcher had to reflect a similar ethos. However, it was very difficult in the sense that the culture of research in South Africa is still such that teachers expect initiative from the researcher. The research process relied to some extent on the researcher's ability to stimulate discussions, debates and reflective accounts on the part of the teachers. As the researcher, I was also expected to express an opinion about certain topics introduced by the teachers, which could in turn have influenced the manner in which the teachers understood and performed some of the research activities. The above-mentioned factors therefore confirmed the perception in the reviewed international literature that collaborative action research is a highly participative research process, balancing power relations between the researcher and participants, as well as being reflective, critical and emancipatory. However, the study has shown that, for collaborative action research to be successful in the South African context, there is a need to develop the teachers' culture of participation, as well as the skill of reflecting on practice, being critical, and taking initiative.

8.5 CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STUDY TO THE EXISTING LITERATURE

In this section, I explain how the findings of the study are located within the existing literature. I therefore discuss what the literature is telling us, and explain the gaps that were identified in the literature.

The literature reviewed in Chapter 2 alluded to the fact that there are two views on making the teaching in the classroom more inclusive. There are those who contend that borrowing special needs education strategies and applying them in the classroom enhances inclusion (Florian 2007; Farrell 1997; Nind et al 2003; Rief & Heimborge 2006), while others argue that the creative development of practices by teachers in the classroom is the right way to do it (Ainscow 2010; Dyson 2001; Ainscow & Booth 2002; Ainscow & Howes 2002; Engelbrecht 1999). The question was which one would be suitable for the South African school context. The study has confirmed that South African inclusive education still has more in common with the former approach even though the latter approach would be more applicable. For instance, in this study, rather than prescribing what teachers ought to do to teach in an inclusive way, the research project afforded them the opportunity to be creative and develop their own practice.

Furthermore, what has emerged from the reviewed international literature, and what has been confirmed by the study about making pedagogy more inclusive (see Mittler 2000), is that the practice of inclusion in other parts of the world becomes more practical if inclusion is clearly and contextually conceptualised, and if teachers are more reflective and work together more in developing effective practices. However, it was not clear whether the same could be said for the South African school context. The study has demonstrated that, for teachers to become more reflective, critical and collaborative, they should be allowed to chart the way forward collectively by forming communities of enquiry. However, unlike their counterparts in countries that did not suffer the repressive system of apartheid (with its culture of submission), they will require the kind of guidance that I provided during this study.

On the other hand, the information gleaned from the literature on how the understanding of the construct of inclusion has been conceptualised, both internationally and nationally, has shown the following:

- The study has confirmed the view expressed in the literature that inclusion is seen as a human right and as furthering social justice (Dyson & Millward 2000; Artiles & Dyson 2005).

- It has further been confirmed that, while the conceptualisation of inclusion is influenced by various discourses (see Chapter 2), these discourses shape and map out a framework through which the concept of inclusion is defined and understood (Dyson 2001; Artiles & Dyson 2005; Florian & Kershner 2009).

However, the main contribution of the study towards the conceptualisation of inclusion is perhaps the acknowledgement of the dominant political orientation it is given within the South African context which the international literature was silent about.

The literature has indicated that the discourse of politics predominates in the policy articulation of inclusion in South Africa (Sayed & Carrim 1998; Naiker 2005), but it has left a gap in the literature as to how such political policy can be realised in practice in the classroom. The study has provided the valuable insight that, to translate policy into practice, communities of enquiry which are teacher-driven need to be at the centre of implementation rather than perpetuate the current top-down approach.

A review of the research literature of countries such as the UK quickly leads to the realisation that the notion of inclusion is an idea developed to ensure that education is accessible and equitably provided to all learners (Ainscow et al. 2006). The conceptualisation in South Africa came amidst political changes towards democracy in 1994, and was therefore mapped within the framework of a broader process of political redress in South Africa. The aim of using inclusion to redress the inequalities of the past historico-political situation is captured in South African policy documents (White Paper 6, DoE 2001). However, what the literature was silent on was how this need to change historico-political conditions could be realised in practice. Similarly, policies fail to spell out a practical course of action by teachers in developing practices of inclusion. To fill this gap, the study has demonstrated that people/teacher-driven policy formulation can be triggered by theorising at local level and thereafter feeding into national and international discourse, unlike is currently the case.

The literature reviewed shows that internationally, where change has to be implemented, teachers exhibit beliefs and attitudes which hamper and prevent changes (Goodson 2003). The

study has confirmed that, while the South African situation is unique due to its past political history, it is no different from the rest of the globe in this regard. However, given this uniqueness, the literature appears silent on how teacher beliefs and attitudes could be transformed in a South African context. To fill this gap, the study has demonstrated that the conceptualisation of inclusion must also include the redress of past imbalances; however, this redress should be initiated at grassroots level rather than adopting a top-down approach as is currently being done.

In the review of the international literature in Chapter 2, the various contexts in which inclusion is conceptualised were discussed. These contexts derive from the dominant discourses underpinning the aetiology of the concept of inclusion and are often based regionally or in a particular country (Dyson 2001; Artiles & Dyson 2005; Florian & Kershner 2009). This makes the conceptualisation of inclusion different; therefore, inclusion becomes a context-dependent notion (Clough & Corbett 2000; O'Brien 2001: 4; Ainscow 2010). However, the trend in many studies is to attempt to universalise the practices regardless of context; for instance, some countries have used the Index of Inclusion developed in a UK context with a different background (Artiles & Dyson 2005). This study has confirmed that the latter is the case in South Africa and that there is a need to explore alternative methods of developing practices of inclusion. This study, through the establishment of communities of enquiry embarking on action research, makes a valuable contribution by serving as an alternative model to developing practices of inclusion.

It is also evident that, internationally, in the definitions of inclusive education, significant emphasis is put on the need to accommodate all learners in the mainstream of education and provide pedagogic support according to the varied educational needs of the learners (Miles 2007 Miles & Ainscow 2010). There is a need to change educational methods so that they respond to the needs of learners (Ainscow 2010). The indication is that, while the study has confirmed this, it has found that very little change has occurred in this regard in the school context as teaching still does not accommodate the needs of all learners. The study has revealed the way teaching strategies could be made inclusive, through teacher-driven enquiry,

and has demonstrated how teachers can develop and make their teaching practices more inclusive.

What we also know from the literature is that the philosophies of normalisation, integration, mainstreaming and special needs education have a significant influence on defining the concept of inclusion. At some point in time, all the philosophies determined how inclusion was understood. Therefore, the policies of inclusion in different parts of the world are influenced by defining inclusion within the framework of these ideals, consequently impacting on how inclusion policies are developed. This explains why practices developed elsewhere might not necessarily work in other contexts. This was confirmed by this study; however, there is a gap in the literature as to how practices could be made relevant to the South African context. The study fills this gap by articulating a context-derived process of developing inclusive practices, while practices developed elsewhere could be borrowed. What the study indicates is that locally a context-derived practice could work better in the South African situation.

As pointed out in the literature review (Chapter 2), there is a perception that special needs practices can be borrowed and used to plan inclusive teaching (Farrell 1997; Rief & Heimburge 2006). The existence of such a view was confirmed by the study. Furthermore, in the literature, the definition of *inclusive class* was conceptualised as one that connects the physical, social and the pedagogic aspects of the class (Stainback & Stainback 1992; Volts, Sims & Nelson 2010). This definition was confirmed by the study. However, how these are defined in the South African context was not clear. The study has therefore contributed the idea that definitions of the concepts of inclusive teaching and inclusive classroom could be developed from the local context, but that such definitions may differ from international ones due to the context from which they were derived.

In the international literature reviewed in Chapter 2, practices such as peer tutoring, cooperative/collaborative learning, and group work were found to be prompting inclusion (Miles 2007; Florian 2007). Furthermore, collaborative or co-teaching were deemed appropriate for inclusive teaching as these were confirmed by the study. However, the

literature was silent on how these practices could be adapted to suit different school contexts, especially South African schools. The study has filled this gap by suggesting a mechanism (dealing with shortcomings of practices in the South African classroom) that teachers could use to adopt practices in their classroom in order to enhance their inclusiveness.

The literature reviewed in Chapter 3 indicated that the tendency in South Africa was to import practices developed elsewhere without taking into consideration the different context (DoE 2005). What was not clear was which of those were applicable in the South African context. Furthermore, there was a lack of evidence-based literature on classroom practices of inclusion. The study has identified different practices that are relevant to the South African context and has provided evidence of how inclusive they are and how they could be developed to be more inclusive.

What was evident from the international literature reviewed in Chapter 2 was that, in countries such as the UK and USA where inclusive practices have been developed, the emphasis has been on teacher collaboration and that reflective teaching was a cornerstone of the development of inclusion (Ainscow et al 2004). No evidence-based literature was available on developing practices of inclusion in South Africa. The study not only serves as a model but lays a foundation for the ways in which inclusive practices could be developed. The study has provided a significant evidence-based literature on inclusive practices in South African classrooms.

In the literature reviewed in Chapter 2, I highlighted the importance of change as a prerequisite for developing inclusive practices. The literature reviewed, which is mostly international, indicates there are several ways in which change is implemented in schools. These are crucial because change has an effect on teacher beliefs and attitudes, which consequently has a bearing on whether or not policy will be fully implemented. For instance, it is believed that change is smooth and attainable when teachers initiate change by themselves, are highly participative, motivated and are led by a change-oriented leadership (Haney, Lumpe, Czerniak & Egan 2002). Indeed, this view was confirmed by the study but, given the beliefs and attitudes of South African teachers who are very submissive as a result of the

culture of repression during the apartheid era, teachers still require guidance and support to initiate change, as happened in this study.

The literature on the ways of developing inclusive practices indicates that action research is widely applied as a change strategy. Communities of enquiry are established to probe practice with the purpose of improving it. The success of communities of enquiry lies in the willingness of teachers to participate. However, there are challenges of participation and a lack of research skills on the part of the teachers. Developing a community of enquiry also fosters collaboration and enhances the willingness of teachers to consider changing their beliefs about their practices (Richards et al. 2001). However, what was not clear was how this could be realised within the unique situation of a South African school. The communities of enquiry may be used as agents of change in South African schools; however, the study cautions that the culture of non-participation, being unreflective, submissive and uncritical, may hamper the effectiveness of such communities; so, teachers cannot be left on their own to initiate enquiry.

Furthermore, what is evident from the literature reviewed in Chapter 4 is that collaborative action research has several advantages, such as balancing power relations between the researcher and practitioners, and fostering collaboration and reflection on practice (Ainscow et al. 2004), as confirmed by the study. However, collaborative action research is also known to have disadvantages such as low and often challenging participation levels, and a reliance on the willingness and honesty of the participants and the role of the researcher, which might foster ethical dilemmas (O'Hanlon 2003). The gap in the literature was the absence of directives for applying collaborative action research in the South African school context, which is characterised by a culture of submissiveness, suspicion, non-reflection and non-collaboration. The study has made a unique contribution by demonstrating that, to deal with the latter, the researcher still has to take centre stage, initiate and drive the process.

8.6 IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

In the following section, based on the findings of the study, I discuss the implications of the study. I highlight some recommendations towards the improvement of the state of inclusive pedagogy in the classrooms with reference to the findings as discussed earlier.

The contribution of the current study is significant in that it demonstrates that, in order to make the teaching in the South African classrooms more inclusive, there should be a paradigm shift from the current special needs embedded approach to one that enhances the creativity of teachers.

Therefore, to make teaching more inclusive, teachers would have to change their divergent views on inclusion in favour of a coherent and well-articulated conceptualisation of inclusion within the context of their school. A culture of reflective practice would have to be initiated and learners should be encouraged to participate in determining ways of including them in the pedagogic discourse. Practices will have to be developed in relation to context and teachers will have to collaborate in developing their inclusive practices.

Although inclusion is a human rights issue internationally, the conceptualisation of inclusion in the South African school context must go beyond the human rights discourse. Indeed, it must be part of the broader socio-political transformation of society in that a practical school-based, teacher-driven programme is needed to realise what I would term the current policy rhetoric.

The current research inevitably leads to the conclusion that, while the political intentions are clear in the policy documents, there is a need to shift focus from policy to practice. A practical school-based, teacher-driven course of action similar to the one adopted in this study could lay a foundation for developing inclusive practices. This will ultimately emancipate and empower both teachers and learners.

Moreover, in order to change teacher beliefs and attitudes, a platform similar to the one created by this study must be initiated. This platform must be school-based, teacher-driven and must foster a reflective, critical and collaborative culture among the practitioners. Context-driven conceptualisations of inclusive practices must be initiated in the South African school context. There should be a move away from the wholesale importing of practices developed elsewhere to developing practices locally.

Moreover, conceptualising the notion of inclusive teaching requires a shift away from the medical model of determining learning barriers. This can be realised by changing the mind-set of teachers about what constitutes a barrier to learning. At the same time, any attempt at identifying learning problems needs to take cognisance of all aspects of teaching and learning rather than just focusing on the learner. Secondly, in conceptualising and realising the notion of an inclusive class, teachers will have to ensure that the physical, social and pedagogic aspects of the class are fully integrated. A speedy move is required to change the physical and social settings of classes into more inclusive ones. The education department will have to declassify schools according to the service they render so that all schools are assisted in becoming inclusive.

In adopting the aforementioned inclusive practices in their classrooms, teachers need to take into consideration the relevant context within which these practices are applicable. Teachers need to adapt them in their classes, as was the case in this study; identify their shortcomings in context; generate solutions; develop their own local theory; and then use it to enhance inclusion.

While group work, peer tutoring, the use of games, discussion, support teaching (remediation), practical demonstrations, collaborative learning, and collaborative teaching all needed to be adapted to individual school contexts, they were found to be applicable within the South African school context. However valuable these practices may be, the study has demonstrated that it is not appropriate to transfer practices across contexts without adapting their use; therefore, teachers need to be creative rather than dogmatic in using practices unquestioningly.

Collaboration has been found to be pivotal in probing practices; therefore, a platform needs to be created where practitioners can collaborate in reflecting on their practice. In this case, the current research suggests the development of inclusive practices by pointing out that, for change to happen, teachers will have to be given the space to initiate change by themselves, plan and drive its implementation.

With regard to developing inclusive practices and inclusive policies, the study recommends the use of action research through the establishment and development of communities of practice (research teams), as constituted in this study, and the manner in which these research teams could be used to enhance the development of inclusive practices.

a) Establishment of inclusive-research working teams (communities of enquiry)

While the South African literature on inclusive practice has indicated that site-based support teams (SBSTs) have been established in schools to deal with the implementation and handling of inclusive education (see Chapter 3, section 3.4), the study has demonstrated that they do not seem to create a platform where teachers can share their views on teaching methodology in an inclusive educational environment in particular. The SBSTs are focused mostly on the technical aspects of inclusion, with much less emphasis on teaching methodology. From time to time, teachers have to do research to investigate new ways of enhancing inclusion. Teachers can only do this by establishing inclusive-research working teams within which they try out new methods. Schools in the same local area could co-operate with their research teams and establish communities of enquiry which will conduct research according to local contexts. These research communities will then empower teachers with regard to inclusive practices.

b) Principles of inclusive-research working teams

Research teams must be composed of teachers. While it could be advantageous to have experts on the inclusive education research teams, it is recommended that these professional research teams should be run and controlled by teachers themselves. The role of experts should be to advise, not to play a leading role. Research teams should function in such a manner that teachers collaborate with and learn from one another. The following are the main steps for teachers to follow in pursuing the process of enquiry (conducting research):

- Establish a research team.
- Create a platform for brainstorming and for the establishment of meaning.

- Identify good practice through observation.
- Develop a programme to share good practices in the classroom.
- Engage in review and reflection practices in the classroom.
- Discuss feedback jointly and determine local theories.
- Establish collaborative teaching forums.

The research revealed that, while South African teachers believe that collaborative teaching could enhance inclusion, this was not the case in the classrooms. Teachers teach as individuals and never share the teaching platform with their peers. The collaborative teaching forums could enhance an exchange of good practice among teachers leading to the empowerment of all teachers.

Firstly, the policy conceptualisation of inclusion derives from the special needs background. Secondly, while White paper 6 (DoE 2001) makes provision for the implementation of inclusion in schools, it is silent on how such practices could be developed. There is an assumption that teachers will adopt a recipe of practices (as suggested in the 2010 guidelines) in their classes and that all these practices will work in all contexts. Thirdly, the SBSTs resemble diagnostic groups and in no way are they probing practices with the aim of developing inclusive practices.

In view of the above, I would urge the conceptualisation of inclusion in terms of White Paper 6 (DoE 2001) – that is, away from the special needs approach and away from the medical model of understanding inclusion. I strongly recommend that the stipulated procedures and guidelines on how teachers can probe their practice and develop effective practices within their context be put in place, away from the ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach evident in the current guidelines.

8.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The research was limited to a secondary school in the Free State province of South Africa, and the findings may only be applicable to schools with similar characteristics. The research process was also informed by the fact that the implementation of inclusive education in South Africa is not yet complete, thus having an impact on the research.

The research posed a challenge with regard to the confidentiality of information as volunteers took part in the project. It was advisable to adopt a code of conduct for the participants, which was discussed in the workshop prior to the commencement of the research, but no one could guarantee that some confidential information would not leak despite all the precautions that had been taken to prevent that from happening. During the process of the research, some information that was not relevant to the project but nevertheless important to the management of the school did leak. Subsequently, the information was referred to the management of the school, which antagonised some participants as they were troubled that such information had reached their seniors. My role as a principal and researcher had an influence on the teachers because, to some extent, the openness and honesty of teachers about some of their practices was compromised. Most processes were initiated by me, which begs the question whether teachers would have been able to do the same in my absence. While the study was intended to be emancipatory, the indication was that this presented a challenge and was not fully realised. For example, while teachers could take the initiative to probe their practice, their decisions would still be judged in terms of how far they complied with more top-down administered policy. Teachers might have been empowered with new ways of doing things but remained powerless in articulating the new ways within the current system.

8.8 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

As the research was limited to one school, it remains uncertain if the findings could be transferred to other schools. The schools in South Africa have similar but not identical contexts, which makes it difficult to generalise the findings.

The issue of multiracial staff and learner compositions makes it complicated to determine the attitudes of the different races towards inclusion. This leaves room for further research to determine the impact of race on the practice of inclusion in South African secondary schools. While teachers with different levels of qualifications participated in the research project, the effect of such varying levels of education on the approach to the implementation of inclusion was not tested.

8.9 CONCLUSION OF THE STUDY

In conclusion, it is evident from the study that there is room for more research as far as inclusion and inclusive pedagogy are concerned. The contribution of this particular study is its validation of the significance of the voices and the contributions of the practitioners in developing practices of inclusion which, in most cases, appeared to have been ignored. The reflection on practice is a powerful tool with which beliefs about practices of inclusion could be challenged and improved. Collaborative action research is clearly a working system with reflective practices that allow the voices of the practitioners involved in developing practices of inclusion to be heard. While the study draws extensive lessons from the international context, its relevance to education research is that of forming the basis for developing inclusive practices within the context of the education system of a developing and transforming country such as South Africa.

As pointed out in the previous chapters, the legacy of racial exclusion in South Africa had an effect on power relations at the research site. My position as principal of the school, together with my academic standing, resulted in my being perceived as an authority figure and knowledgeable person who was expected to take the lead in all matters pertaining to the administration of the school. This also had an effect on the way the research study was conducted. Although the nature of collaborative action research demands equal participation on the part of all participants, the diversity of the research participants made it necessary for me as the researcher to be proactive, take initiative and be instrumental in organising activities for the study to progress.

It is evident from the research proceedings that keeping the participants in the study motivated presented an on-going challenge. Initially, teacher confidence was very low but gradually improved as the study progressed. In the course of the research, it also became evident that there was still a visible influence of special needs education in the way teachers thought and acted. In addition, there was also evidence that teachers and learners saw teaching and learning differently, thus spotlighting the pressing need for critical dialogue.

Finally, the study has unmasked tensions and contradictions between the ideal theoretical state of inclusion and the reality of the classroom, with the result that future research should be aimed at narrowing the gap between theory and practice. It is also evident from this study that exclusionist, repressive policies and practices can make way for constructivist and humane approaches to educational policies and practice.

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Appendix A: Ethical concern form

Exploring classroom teaching practices that are effective in promoting inclusion in South African secondary schools

Instructions to participants: Please print write your name and sign in the space provided in section A before you participate in this study. Once the study is over debriefing meeting will be held with you to clarify misconceptions and anxieties that you might be having as a result of the study. Please sign in the space provided in section B.

Section A

I _____, voluntarily give my consent to participate in this Project. I have been informed about, and feel that I understand the basic nature of the project. I understand that I may stop taking part at any time and my anonymity will be protected.

_____ Signature of Research Participant

Date

Section B

Please sign next to each of the following statements once the study has been completed and you have been debriefed.

_____ I have been debriefed.

_____ I was not forced to Participate in the study.

_____ All my questions and concerns have been addressed

Appendix B: Observation schedule

Exploring classroom teaching practices that are effective in promoting inclusion in South African secondary schools

OBSERVATION FRAMEWORK (GUIDE)

The observation guide gives a hint of what will be observed in the classroom and should not be applied strictly. The researcher will use it to maintain focus to the observation process.

A. Curriculum related aspects of class teaching

- Carrying out lesson plan
- Presenting the lesson
- Assessment of learners during and after the lesson presentation
- Participation of learners during the lesson
- Interaction of learner with the teacher and with other learners
- Sitting arrangement of learners and teacher movement in class

B. Teaching (pedagogic) aspects

- Teaching approach e.g. behavioral, interactive
- Teaching strategies e.g. collaborative, differentiated, motivation, reciprocal, scaffolding, multi level, multiple intelligence and multi sensory
- Use of technology to aid teaching
- Maintaining discipline in the class (methods used)
- Motivation of learners e.g. extrinsic or intrinsic
- The role of assistant teacher in the class

C. Learning aspects

- Cooperative learning
- Group work
- Peer tutoring
- Collaborative problem solving

D. Social aspects in the classroom

- Communication between learners and the teacher and learners among themselves
- Management of diversity (accommodating differences in the class)

- Relationships between teacher and learner and between learners themselves
- Values and norms in the classroom

Appendix C: Unstructured interview questions

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

The interview questions will be derived from the data collected through observation. The interview questions will be intended to the fact that teachers should give a detailed account of their practices in the class, reflecting on their experiences and to gather more data. The questions will be open ended and will be focused on themes as observed during the observation process.

Appendix D: Criteria for observation

INTERVIEW:

Evaluating the effectiveness of a teaching practice towards promotion of inclusive education

Questions:

1. Which practice did you adopt as part of our project to promote inclusion?
2. How would you rate this practice in terms of the following since you applied it in your class:
 - Participation of learners;
 - Interaction and communication between learners themselves and with you;
 - Cooperation among learners;
 - Inclusion of all learners through a differentiated instruction to cater for all learner needs
 - Relationships among learners and with you;
 - Discipline in your class;
 - Tolerance and respect for diversity;
 - Motivation of learners;
 - Achievement of outcomes by learners?
3. Would you regard this practice as promoting inclusion of all your learners in your class?

Appendix E: Letter to Department

30 Fourth Avenue West

Tel: 0825804872

Clocolan

9735

01 September 2008

The Head of education: Free State province

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH FOR A PhD

Dear Sir/Madam

I am a registered PhD student at the University of Manchester. I am engaged in a research project investigating the effective teaching practices promoting inclusion in secondary school classrooms. The research topic is;

“Exploring classroom teaching practices that are effective in promoting inclusion in South African secondary schools”

Some of the teachers and learners in the selected school in your province will be requested to take part in the study.

Kindly take note that the study will not intrude the individual rights or privacy, nor will it apply ethically unacceptable procedures. Data collected will be kept confidential and names of participants and school won't be revealed.

The investigation will include selecting a research task team, observing teachers presenting lessons and conducting the interviews. The action research program will be designed jointly with teachers and implemented through an integrated quality management system (IQMS) to avoid disruption to normal teaching in classes. The envisaged starting date is 10 September 2008 and end date August 2009.

Find attached observation guide and an interview schedule.

Hoping the request is considered.

Yours truly,

Tsediso Michael Makoelle

Researcher

Appendix F: Daily reflection diary

Daily (reflection diary) report form

Instruction: complete this diary every lesson you present

Name of teacher _____ subject _____ Grade _____

Teaching practice adopted _____ date _____ from _____ to _____

Practice indicator	Teacher observations and comments
Participation of learner	
Learner and teacher communication	
Cooperation among learners	
Atmosphere and human relations in the class	
Class discipline	
Learner motivation	
Learner achievement	
Others	

Appendix G : Letter to participants

TM Makoelle BA (UNISA) B Ed Hons (UPE)

Med (UFS) PGDE (UFS) FDE (UP) STD (Tshiya Co Ed)

Address: Brian Redhead Court

Enquiries mobile: 07504317270

Flat no 27

121-123 Jackson Crescent Street, Hulme

Manchester M15 5RR

United Kingdom

email:tsedisomichael.makoelle@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk

Re: Participation in a PhD Project September 2008 to Sept 2009

Dear Colleague

I am presently registered for a PhD studies at The University of Manchester, UK for academic years 2007 to 2010 (see attached registration documents).

The research title is: *Exploring classroom teaching practices that are effective in promoting inclusion in the South African Secondary schools.*

I wish to undertake my research fieldwork from September 2008 to September 2009 at your school and will need your support and participation for the success of the project.

If you agree to take part you will be requested to do the following:

- be interviewed by the researcher;
- be observed in your class and be prepared to observe and share your observation experiences of your colleagues through IQMS observation visits;
- be willing to reflect on your practice and share your experiences with the researcher and your colleagues;
- Jointly with the researcher identify evidence based practices that are effective in promoting inclusion in your classroom.

Kindly note that you will be informed about the details of the research project prior you taking part which will include the ethical issues such as the confidentiality of information, the consent form that will indicate your right to stop participating at anytime you deem necessary.

Permission will be requested from the Free State Department of Education and such permission will be made known to you. Although the researcher is Principal at your school, his authority will bear no authority on the project since the participants will determine how all processes will be handled. Kindly fill the participation form and return it together with all the attachments to the researcher.

Hope you find this in order

Yours truly,

TM MAKOELE

30/04/2008

Appendix H: Field work plan

Phase	Start date	End date	activities
1(preparation)	01 September 2008	30 September 2008	Permission for access Workshop of volunteers Ethical issues
Supervisory report		30 September 2008	Email report
2(identification)	01 October 2008	30 January 2009	Brainstorming concepts Participants observations Unstructured interviews Focus group interview (learners) <i>Monthly supervisory reports</i> Group analysis: meeting Researcher's analysis
Face to face supervision Alan Dyson/Susie Miles	Two days in February 2009	Two days in February 2009	Discuss phase 2 Analysis and report
3 (action)	Mid February	End June 2009	Develop a programme to adopt inclusive practices in the classes. Semi- structured interviews <i>Monthly supervisory report</i> Group analysis: meeting Researchers analysis
Face to face supervision Alan Dyson/Susie Miles	Three days in June	Three days in June	Discuss phase 3 Analysis and report
4 (reflection)	August 2009	August 2009	Conclusion and report Member check Group analysis report: meeting Researcher's analysis
Face to face supervision Alan Dyson/Susie Miles	September 2009	September 2009	Discuss the researcher's analysis

Appendix :I**ACTION RESEARCH PROCESS ACTIVITIES AND DATES OF MEETINGS**

ACTIVITY	DATE AND TIME	Who attended
Election of the research volunteer group	1 October 2008 at 14.30	All 15 teachers and learners
Dealing with ethical issues and introducing the project	08 October 2008 at 14.30	All 15 teachers and learners
Identifying practices through brainstorming	15 October 2008	All 14 teachers and learners
Conceptualizing inclusive concepts	15 October 2008-28 October 2008	All 15 teachers and learners
Determining (evaluating) current practice	05 October 2008	All 13 teachers and 12 learners
Observations in the classroom	12 November 2008	All 14 teachers and 12 learners
Learner focus group interviews	19 November 2008	All 15 learners
Participant Observation	14-21 January 2009	All 15 teachers
Report from observations	28 January 2009	14teachers and 15 learners
Report on unstructured interviews	01-11 February 2009	12 teachers and 14 learners
Discussing the shortcomings of practices	18 February 2009	11 teachers and 14 learners
Planning to adopt practices in the classroom	25 February 2009	9 teachers and 12 Learners
Evaluation of adopted practices	29 February 2009	12 teachers and 15 learners
Determining the impact of visits in the first 3 months	6-10 May 2009	15teacher and 15 learners
Determining the impact of visits in the second 3 months	29 May 2009	15 teachers and 15 learners
Agreeing on report	August 2009	15 teachers and 15 learners

Appendix J:

DESCRIPTORS OF MEASUREMENT TO DETERMINE HOW HIGH OR LOW THE PRACTICE AGAINST THE CRITERIA

Criteria	When high	When low
participation of all learners	when more than half (70%) of the class participate during the lesson, this was seen by answering of questions and contributions to the topic under discussion	When learners less than half (40%) of the class do not participate in the class, less answering of questions and not willing to make contributions to the topic under discussion
interaction and effective communication between the all learners and the teacher	When more half (70%) of the class show signs of willingness to talk in the class both to the teacher and fellow learners	When less than half (40%) of the class do not show signs of the willingness to talk in the class both to the teacher and fellow learners
cooperation among all learners	When the majority (more than 70%) of learners are willing to work with their fellow learners	When only a minority (less than 40% in the class is willing to work together
inclusive and differentiated instruction (caters for all learner needs)	When according to the discretion of the learners most (more than half (70%) of class) of them feel their needs were catered for (teachers ask learners at the end of every lesson)	When according to the discretion of the learners few (less than half (40%) of class) of them feel their needs were catered for (teachers ask learners at the end of every lesson

Atmosphere that strongly promotes good human relations	When according to the discretion of the learners most (more than half (70%) of class) of them feel that the atmosphere was conducive and promoted good human relations (teachers ask learners at the end of every lesson)	When according to the discretion of the learners most (less than half (40%) of class) of them feel that the atmosphere was not conducive and promoted good human relations (teachers ask learners at the end of every lesson)
levels of discipline in the class	When the teacher has registered fewer than 3-5 incidents which signify good discipline	When there was an overwhelming disciplinary problems in the class more than 5 - 10 incidents will constitute poor discipline
tolerance of diversity	When according to the discretion of the teacher the were more incidents showing that learners tolerate one another's differing view points	When according to the discretion of the teacher the were more incidents showing that learners do not tolerate one another's differing view points
motivation of all learners	When the participation of learners in the lesson is sustained till the end of the lesson (at least of more that 70% of class)	When the participation of learners in the lesson is not sustained till the end of the lesson, showing a declining level of participation
Achievement of expected outcomes by all learners	When more than 70% of the class are able to demonstrate that they have learned (assessment scores used)	When less than 40% of the class are able to demonstrate that they have learned (assessment scores used)

Appendix: K

THE ACTION RESEARCH EXTERNAL INDEPENDENT VERIFICATION REPORT

NAME: Mahlomaholo Geoffrey MAHLOMAHOLO

POSITION: Professor of Education

UNIVERSITY: University of the Free State

DATE: June 13, 2012

PURPOSE: The purpose of this report is to verify, rate and comment about the action research project activities and how they were conducted.

TITLE OF PROJECT: Exploring classroom teaching practices that are effective in promoting inclusion in South African secondary schools

INSTRUCTION: Firstly rate at the activities of the above mentioned project honestly and objectively using the scale provide (make a cross (x) in an appropriate block and write your comment (in different colour) below to cite reasons for your answer.

1) Preparations to get access to the research site were done timely and properly

Excellent

1) Comment: *Preparations to get access to the research site were done timely and properly and nobody was inconvenienced, from; the Senior Free State Education Department Officials from whom permission was to be obtained to the participants, all were consulted in time and all research ethical principles were observed*

2) Ethical issues were dealt with appropriately

Excellent

Comment: All participants were informed of the aim and purpose of the study and they were given enough time to reflect on where they would want to participate or not. They were expressly informed and assured that; their participation was purely voluntary, that they would not receive any monetary compensation for participation and that they had the right to drop out of the study or refuse to talk at any stage of the process without any negative consequences. Furthermore they signed informed consent forms where the above was explained, they also were assured of confidentiality in that their identities would not be revealed to anybody under any circumstances and that all the data will be kept on a computer with password requirement to log onto the data files. They were also assured that these data would eventually be destroyed once the study was complete and all requirements met.

3) The objectives of the project were determined jointly by the research team

Excellent

Comment: There was sufficient consultation from the onset until the end of the study among the research team members both face-to-face and electronically where the former was not possible.

4) The role of the researcher was clearly defined both in relation to co-researchers and ethical issues

Excellent

Comment:

5) The four stages of action research data collection were logically and systematically carried out

Excellent

Comment:

- 6) The group interpretative data analysis by the research team was rigorously done**

Excellent

Comment: There is ample evidence in the manuscript of the thesis itself confirming the high level of rigour observed in the analysis of data.

- 7) The conclusions arrived at by the research team are strongly supported by data**

Excellent

Comment: The strength of the argument made in the manuscript of this thesis lies in the fact that the objectives of the study unpacking the aim which responds to the research question are very clearly stated. Both the conceptualisation and operationalisation sections of the study cohere neatly with one another based on these objectives. Furthermore the findings, conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for future research made in the manuscript are anchored neatly and logically on the same objectives referred to. Finally, the above are supported very strongly by both theoretical data from the literature and empirical data from the field.

- 8) Records of the project were properly kept and in keeping with the ethical standard**

Excellent

Comment: *See comments under 2) above.*

9) Time frames of the project as per plan were more or less adhered to

Excellent

Comment: *One significant piece of evidence that the time frames were adhered to is the submission of the manuscript of the thesis for examination*

10) The participation of research group in the project is such that the report could be rendered highly trustworthy

Excellent

Comment: At every stage of the study, the researcher made sure that the voices of the participants were strong so ensure trust worthy ness of the report.

Appendix L: Programme to adopt practices in the classes:

Week	Start date	End date
1	9 March	13 March 2009
2	16 March	20 March 2009
3	23 March	27 March 2009
4	20 April	24 April 2009
5	28 April	30 April 2009
6	4 May	8 May 2009
7	11 May	15 May 2009
8	18 May	22 May 2009
9	25 May	29 May 2009
10	1 June	5 June 2009
11	8 June	12 June 2009
12	15 June	19 June 2009
13	3 August	7 August 2009
14	17 August	21 August 2009
15	25 August	28 August 2009

Teachers will adopt practices in the classroom; two teachers (pair) adopted one practice.

Pair	Practice	teacher
Pair A	Group work	KP ,MAG MOS
Pair B	Peer tutoring	MK, VU
Pair C	Use of games	BE, REK
Pair D	Discussion group	MO, EK
Pair E	Remediation	LEB, RM

Pair F	Practical and demonstrations	ST, CH,
Pair G	Collaborative/project learning	BOR, KET

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Dr. Darren Petersen
Principal/Director of Curriculum

June 1, 2012

To Whom It May Concern:

I give T.M. Makoelle permission to use our photographs.

Sincerely,



Darren and Karen Petersen
dpetersen@hardingtwp.org



Department of Education
Free State Province
P.O. Box 944, Bloemfontein
9001
Tel: 051 447 7318
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2008 - 09 - 23

Mr. TM MAKOELLE
UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER, UK
CLOCOLAN HIGH SCHOOL

Dear Mr. Makoelle

REGISTRATION OF RESEARCH PROJECT

1. This letter is in reply to your application for the registration of your research project.
2. Research topic: **Exploring classroom teaching practices that are effective in promoting inclusion in South African Secondary Schools.**
3. Your research project has been registered with the Free State Education Department.
4. Approval is granted under the following conditions:-
 - 4.1. Learners and educators participate voluntarily in the project.
 - 4.2. The names of all schools and participants involved remain confidential.
 - 4.3. The questionnaires are completed and the interviews are conducted outside normal tuition time.
 - 4.4. This letter is shown to all participating persons.
 - 4.5. A bound copy of the report and a summary on a computer disc on this study is donated to the Free State Department of Education.
 - 4.6. Findings and recommendations are presented to relevant officials in the Department.
 5. The costs relating to all the conditions mentioned above are your own responsibility.
 6. You are requested to confirm acceptance of the above conditions in writing to:

The Head: Education, for attention: DIRECTOR : QUALITY ASSURANCE
Room 401, Syffete Building, Private Bag X20565, BLOEMFONTEIN, 9301

We wish you every success with your research.

Yours sincerely

FR SHELLO
DIRECTOR: QUALITY ASSURANCE

Directorate: Quality Assurance, Private Bag X20565, Bloemfontein, 9300
Syffete Center, 63 National Street, Bloemfontein
Tel: 051 404 6730 / 730 051 447 7318 E-MAIL: quality@ed.gov.za