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**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT, FOUNDATIONAL AND
CURRICULUM STUDIES**

TITLE

**CHALLENGES OF INCLUSION WITH REGARDS TO EARLY CHILDHOOD
EDUCATION LEARNERS: THE CASE OF MABULA PRIMARY SCHOOL IN MZILIKAZI
DISTRICT IN BULAWAYO METROPOLITAN PROVINCE.**

BY

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**A project submitted as partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Bachelor of
Education Degree in Early Childhood Education.**

DECEMBER, 2018

GWERU

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APPROVAL FORM

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS, MANAGEMENT AND CURRICULUM STUDIES

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RELEASE FORM

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this research to my parents, my uncle Albert Sibanda and my siblings
Vusumuzi Ncube, Thamsanqa Ncube, Andrew Ncube, Samukeliso Ncube and Lucky
Ncube.

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The researcher would like to acknowledge the different scholars that were used to make this project successful. These scholars are listed in the reference section at the end of this book.

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Last but not least, I would like to thank all the participants that I used to gather information for this research. Without them, there would have been no research.

ABSTRACT

This research project sought to find the challenges faced by teachers and learners at ECE level in the school, then find solutions to the challenges. Questionnaires, interviews and focus group discussions were used to collect data for this research. The researcher investigated from parents on the challenges faced by both the teacher and the learner in an inclusive setting and also what their recommendations were concerning the challenges that were raised.

The findings from the data collected pointed out that there were challenges faced by both teachers and learners at the school as inclusion was being implemented. The challenges comprised of inadequate infrastructure, improper infrastructure, inadequate material resources, and lack of funds to promote IE, lack of teacher expertise, adoption of a result oriented curriculum, lack of a proper policy on inclusion and negative attitudes. The recommendations advocated for alleviating the challenges observed included staff developing teachers, conducting workshops for teachers, sensitising both parents and learners, prioritising funds in favour of IE, improving infrastructure, employing assistant teachers in the ECE department and making use of the learner exit profiles.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

IE	INCLUSIVE EDUCATION
LWD	LEARNERS WITH DISABILITIES
SN	SPECIAL NEEDS
LSN	LEARNERS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS
CWD	CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES
ECE	EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

LIST OF APPENDICES

APPENDIX	TITLE	PAGE
APPENDIX 1 :	INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR ADMINISTRATORS.....	48
APPENDIX 2 :	INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR TEACHERS.....	49
APPENDIX 3 :	INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PARENTS.....	50
APPENDIX 4 :	QUESTIONNAIRES FOR ADMINISTRATORS.....	51
APPENDIX 5 :	QUESTIONNAIRES FOR TEACHERS.....	54
APPENDIX 6 :	QUESTIONNAIRES FOR PARENTS.....	57
APPENDIX 7 :	APPROVAL LETTER.....	60

TABLE OF CONTENTS

APPROVAL FORM.....	i
RELEASE FORM.....	ii
DEDICATION.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iv
ABSTRACT.....	v
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.....	vi
LIST OF APPENDICES.....	vii
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	viii

CHAPTER 1

THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

1.0 Introduction.....	1
1.1 Background to the study.....	1
1.2 Statement of the problem.....	3
1.3 Research questions.....	4
1.4 Significance of the study.....	4
1.5 Delimitations.....	5
1.6 Limitations.....	5
1.7 Definition of terms.....	6
1.8 Summary.....	7

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction.....	8
2.1 What is inclusion?.....	8
2.2 The need for inclusion at ECE level.....	8
2.3 The drawbacks of implementing inclusion at ECE level.....	10
2.4 Ways of implementing inclusion at ECE level.....	13
2.5 Summary.....	16

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction.....	17
3.1 Research design.....	17
3.2 Population and sample.....	17
3.3 Research instruments.....	18
3.4 Data collection procedures.....	20
3.5 Data analysis plan.....	20
3.6 Summary.....	21

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.0 Introduction.....	22
4.1 Findings for research question 1	22
4.1.1 Findings from questionnaires.....	22
4.1.2 Findings from interviews.....	22
4.1.3 Findings from Focus Groups.....	23
4.1.4 Discussion on research question 1.....	23
4.2 Findings for research question 2.....	27
4.2.1 Findings from questionnaires.....	27
4.2.2 Findings from interviews.....	28
4.2.3 Findings from Focus Groups.....	29
4.2.4 Discussion on research question 2.....	30
4.3 Findings for research question 3.....	33
4.3.1 Findings from questionnaires.....	33
4.3.2 Findings from interviews.....	34
4.3.3 Findings from Focus Groups.....	34
4.3.4 Discussion on research question 3.....	35
4.4 Summary.....	39

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction.....	40
5.1 Summary.....	40
5.2 Conclusions.....	41
5.3 Recommendations.....	41
REFERENCES.....	44
APPENDICES.....	48

CHAPTER ONE

THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

1.0 Introduction

Early Childhood Education is a very crucial stage of development whereby most skills are being developed. It addresses the early developmental stages of an ECE learner which also happens to have an impact on the future learning of the learner. The ECE curriculum should also compliment various acts like the Education act, Disabled Persons Act, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Zimbabwean Constitution, the Salamanca Statement and many more. Therefore it is imperative that equality in education is practised in an ECE environment.

1.1 Background to the Study

According to Mafa and Makuba (2013) there has been a universal movement towards inclusive education as proven by the many conventions, declarations and recommendations at global level. Since time immemorial, learners have been segregated due to various reasons and one of the reasons is disability. Chimhenga (2016) states that Zimbabwe implemented inclusive education as an obligation to address various obstacles to learning of children with disabilities. The segregation of learners living with disabilities has led to different disabled people's organisations and some sympathisers of the people living with disabilities into having an outcry on equal treatment of everyone. This is supported by Chireshe (2013) who says that various Zimbabwean scholars have made recommendations whose aim is to promote inclusive education through awareness campaigns, availing resources and training of teachers. This in turn has prompted Zimbabwe to be a signatory and participant of the policies whose main goal was to achieve equality in education which was considered a human right. Cheelo (2016) asserts that the right to be educated in an inclusive setting is in line with various instruments such as the World Declaration on Education for All (EFA) 1990, UNCRC, United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Darkaar framework and the Salamanca statement. All these instruments had a common goal, and that was to achieve equality in education through inclusive education. According to Westwood (2013), the

concerns regarding inclusive education originate from the view that education is a human right. These policies include the Dakar framework which seek to promote education for all, the Universal Declaration for Human Rights which seeks to promote free, compulsory education and infrastructure that is suitable for use by people living with disabilities, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child which emphasises education as a human right for all children and also the Salamanca Statement whose educational goal is to achieve inclusive education. This is confirmed by Chireshe (2013) who state that since Zimbabwe signed the Salamanca statement in 1994, more developments have taken place that promote inclusive education. These policies gave birth to some acts and instruments that sought to achieve equality in education and these included the education acts of (1994,1996, 2001 and 2006) which called for basic education for all, the Disabled Persons Act (1992) which sought compulsory education and saw education as a human right. Chimhenga (2016) agrees that any school that does not enrol a child due to his/her disability will face disciplinary action from the District Education Office. The disabled persons act and the constitution of Zimbabwe in chapter 2 section 22.4 and section 27 identifies education as a human right and encourages the building of infrastructure that makes life more comfortable for people living with disabilities. WHO (2012) agree that inclusion is an answer to the rights of children living with disabilities.

Some of these documents have been amended a number of times so as to provide equality in education to all learners regardless of their being disabled. According to UNESCO (2015), apparently, inclusive education has attained vast attention internationally in the last few years. This quest for equality in education worldwide has prompted many countries to adopt inclusion as a way of addressing this equality in education for all learners regardless of race, gender, disability, status and religion and Zimbabwe is no exception. Ncube, Tshabalala and Gazimbe (2015) assert that after signing the Salamanca Statement in 1994, Zimbabwe was fully obliged to implement inclusion. Inclusion was also adopted as a method of achieving goal four (4) of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) whose sole purpose was to achieve equal and inclusive education and provide learning opportunities for everyone throughout their lives. This is supported by United Nations (2017) which states that goal number four (4) intends to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education. Zimbabwe is one nation that has also

joined other countries in adopting inclusion as an answer to equality in education. UNESCO (2013) stress that all children regardless of their individual differences are eligible to equity of educational opportunities and inclusion remains the preferred approach to provision of education to learners with special needs. This shows that Zimbabwe cannot achieve equity in education without inclusion and that is why most schools have also adopted inclusion in their education systems and Mabhukudwana Primary School is one school that has included learners with disabilities in the mainstream classrooms.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Zimbabwe is one of the countries that has adopted inclusion as an answer to the attainment of equal opportunities in education worldwide. This came into being after there was an outcry from the disabled community and other affected partisans that they were not being given equal opportunities together with their able bodied counterparts. However, after the adoption of inclusion there were challenges that were faced by both teachers and learners at ECE level and the solution to these challenges seemed to be farfetched. This prompted the researcher to find out the challenges of inclusion with regards to ECE at Mabhukudwana primary school.

It is of utmost importance for teachers and learners to equally include learners living with disabilities in all school activities be it social, physical or intellectual so that they perform to their best ability. The researcher noted with great concern how most learners with disabilities appear to be unfairly treated and marginalised by teachers, other learners and in some cases, even the community at large. This has resulted in most of them failing to participate on equal terms with other able bodied learners who happen to be in the same ECE class as them. This is confirmed by WHO (2012) which state that most earners living with disabilities at ECE level often fail at school and at times are encouraged to repeat or drop out of school. This shows that most learners living with disabilities most often lag behind their counterparts and this sometimes results in them failing at school. The researcher also noted that the learners still failed to catch up with others even when their disability is minor and is not a mental disability. Chuchu and Chuchu (2016) confirm that

earners with disabilities performed considerably lower than their able bodied counterparts.

In this research, the researcher spelt out the challenges that were being faced by both teachers and learners at ECE level. According to Lewis and Bagree (2013) learners with disabilities who access education often do not participate on equal terms with their non-disabled peers, or achieve to their full potential. This revelation actually showed that there is still a problem in the education system that needs to be addressed so that these learners with disabilities performed to their full potential. The physical, social and intellectual environment in a school setup should be conducive for learning and should include all learners. However, there are challenges that work against the effective implementation of inclusion. If these challenges are not addressed we will continue to see very few learners living with disabilities excelling at school, this will in turn be a problem for the whole nation since each learner is expected to be independent when they reach age of maturity. Chimhenga (2016) confirms that inclusive education promotes the kind of education that is dedicated to make sure that all learners are enabled to be competent and independent citizens of a dynamic society. This study seeks to find out the challenges of inclusion at ECE level and also to find strategies of teaching learners with special needs.

1.3 Research Questions

1.3.1 What are the challenges of Inclusion faced by teachers in an ECE setting?

1.3.2 What are the challenges of Inclusion faced by learners in an ECE setting?

1.3.3 What strategies do we need to take in order to alleviate the challenges of Inclusion in an ECE setting?

1.4 Significance of the Study

The researcher has confidence that this study will benefit a lot in the education system. This study will highlight the problems that are faced by both teachers and learners at ECE in an inclusive setting. This study will help stakeholders such as the parents, community

and the donors is that it will enlighten them on the challenges regarding inclusion that are faced by both teachers and learners and also how these can be alleviated. It will also give stakeholders information on what inclusion is so that they will understand why an ECE learner living with a disability should be taught in the same environment with the other able bodied learners and also why investors should also invest financially and practically in such a learner.

Teachers are role models of a society .therefore, it is important that whatever values and attitudes that need to be imparted to a society should be imparted to teachers first so that it flows to the community. The significance of this study is to equip teachers with the most effective way of handling learners with disabilities. Teachers in inclusive classes and schools will know what to expect if they are to have learners that have any disability in their class or in their institution. Educators will also know how to deal with the different challenges faced by both teachers and learners in inclusive learning environments. This in turn will bring about equality of educational opportunities and will make the community of Nkulumane to look at learners living with disabilities with a different perspective.

1.5 Delimitations

Mabula primary school is a school that is situated in the high density suburb of Nkulumane. It is part of the Nkulumane cluster in Mzilikazi District in Bulawayo. This research looked at what inclusion is and also at the challenges of inclusion with regards to ECE learners and teachers at Mabula Primary School in the Nkulumane cluster only. Including other ECE learners from other schools in the cluster would have had a negative effect on the validity of the study as it seeks to study learners in Mabula only. The researcher also focused on the strategies that can be adopted in order to make inclusion more effective in an ECE setting.

1.6 Limitations

The time available to do the study was very short and it is made worse by the fact that the researcher will conduct the study during working hours and this caused the researcher to experience difficulties in getting all the information that they needed to have. As a remedy to this problem, the researcher made use of lunch hour, break time and even

weekends to reach out to the respondents. The researcher also relied on the information given by the respondents as observation required a lot of time in order for it to give valid information.

The participants failed to respond at the required time. The researcher had to keep on reminding them to adhere to the agreed time. The respondents also kept on breaking appointments because some were busy and some did not take the research as something very important. This affected the study such that the researcher could not finish the study in time.

The researcher also faced financial challenges as the study needed some funding for it to take place. The questionnaires required money for them to be printed and photocopied and gave the researcher some problems as she had limited funds.

1.7 Definition of Terms

1.7.1 Inclusion

According to INVOLVE (2012), inclusion is positively working towards meeting the different needs of different people while labouring to create environments where everyone feels loved and is able to achieve their full potential. Lamport, Graves and Ward (2014) define inclusion as an instrument that allows both disabled and non disabled learners to be educated in the same environment. This means that inclusion is endeavouring to provide for different needs of people and creating an environment that will allow all individuals to perform to their fullest despite their individual differences. It is when learners living with disability are taught in the same environment together with able bodied learners.

1.7.2 Disability

Armstrong (2011) defines disability as a way that society is organised, that is, excluding people with physical and mental challenges. It is when a learner cannot perform to his best ability due to the restrictive environment. physical or mental challenge that a learner has which the learner has to live with for the rest of their life.

1.7.3 Able bodied

It refers to learners who do not possess a physical challenge.

1.7.4 Inclusive education

According to WHO (2012) Inclusive education is defined as a process of establishing the capability of the education system to stretch out to all learners including those with disabilities. This refers to an educational environment that allows both learners living with disabilities and able bodied learners to receive instruction under the same conditions.

1.7.5 Exclusive education

This refers to an environment that is only comfortable to an able bodied learner and not to a learner living with a disability.

1.8 Summary

This chapter looked at the background of the problem. It was found that a number of policies that promoted inclusion were adopted as a way of achieving equal opportunities for learners living with disabilities. The statement of the problem was stated down. In this chapter the research questions which were used in the study were identified. The researcher also pointed out the stakeholders who will stand to benefit from the study in the significance of the study. Delimitations and limitations were identified. The terms to be used in the study were identified and defined according to the way they will be used in the chapter. The terms included inclusion, disability able bodied, inclusive and exclusive environment.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.0 Introduction

ECE level is a very critical stage of development for every child hence more attention should be placed on these developing learners so that their learning becomes effective. This is the stage in which the child develops cognitively, socially, psychologically and emotionally. If a child does not develop well in any area at this stage, then the chances of that child bridging that gap are very slim. This goes also for learners with disabilities, if they are not given that chance to prove their worth and intelligence through education then they will forever be dependent on other people. These ECE learners need to be developed holistically just like the able bodied learners so that the foundation for educational concepts that might later be imparted to them will be built at the right time and hence the need for inclusion. The researcher sought to look at the concept of inclusion at ECE level, highlight its challenges and point out the possible solutions that could be used to do away with the highlighted challenges.

2.1 What is Inclusion?

Inclusion is a process of making an institution or an educationalist to adapt to a learner's challenge rather than the learner labouring to adapt to an institution. Chireshe (2013) agrees that inclusive education is when children with special educational needs are allowed into the regular schools together with learners with no special needs and also making the learning environment more comfortable for them. Inclusion is a policy that has been adopted and implemented into the education system of Zimbabwe and many schools have been of late trying very hard to make sure that the learning environment is suitable for every learner.

2.2 The need for Inclusion at ECE level

In the past, learners with disabilities have been segregated from other learners. They have been treated differently, they have been made to believe that they are not like other

learners and they can never be like other learners. Ruggs and Hebl (2012) assert that treating learners differently can lead to negative outcomes. This means that segregating learners destroys their learning capabilities. Such stereotyping has made it difficult for disabled learners to be positive about themselves. Integration of course has helped to make these learners feel a bit normal, however they still felt a certain degree of being abnormal since they only had to meet the able bodied learners (considered to be normal by the community) only for a brief period of time every day.

WHO (2012) state that inclusive Early Childhood Education offers learners living with disabilities a vital space in which to ensure maximum development by providing chances for child centred learning, play, involvement, interaction and friendship development. The inclusive education in an early childhood education class gives disabled learners an opportunity to develop through learning through play whereby they develop cognitively while unaware. For example in a grade one class, the teacher can make use of a pada game to teach reading. If the teacher involves all learners, then even the physically disabled learners will get a chance to exercise their muscles while at the same time learning to read and enjoying the game. According to Manning, Garvis, Flemming and Wong (2017) ECE that is of poor quality can be harmful to the development of learners, especially those that face some disadvantages at the early developmental stages of their life. Earners living with disabilities should get all the quality education they need during their early years of schooling.

Inclusion is very important to an ECE learner as it builds confidence to a young disabled learner. Young learners are still in a stage whereby they are still trying to know themselves and they still have not yet fully realised that they are different from other learners. WHO (2012) state that all inclusive education at ECE level is very critical as the learners are still developing physically, socially and psychologically. Therefore educating them in an inclusive environment will help them to be positive about themselves at an early stage and this in turn will boost their confidence which is an essential element of living in a world full of people who think they are better. Ruggs and Hebl (2012) confirm that stereotypical feelings lead to low self-esteem.

Early intervention can be realised through educating learners in an inclusive environment. There are some parents who keep their children for a long time and only realise that they have a disability after them attending school. This is supported by the European Commission (2013) which states that one important method of facilitating early intervention is to make sure that children with learning disabilities access ECE at an the right age. Children who attend ECE at an early age have the advantage of getting early intervention since their teachers will be concerned about giving them physical, intellectual and emotional education, it therefore becomes easy for them to detect any special need problems that the child has.

When a learner attends a school whereby most of the learners are able bodied the educator is most likely to notice their disability by comparing them to their peers who are in the same classroom with them. According to Chimhenga (2016) in his research, he found that learners who had poor vision required large print books and they often strained their eyes as they tried to read. For example, a learner who is short sighted can be discovered in a classroom by the teacher when he notices that the learner copies letters wrongly, a 'b' copied as an 'h', 's' copied as an 'e'. When the teacher notices this, they will most likely try to experiment by moving the learner during writing time, to seat next to the chalkboard for a better view. This will make the learner to copy the words correctly and this in turn will make the educator to realise the weakness of the learner and most likely inform the parent who will take their child for investigations by a professional. Ncube and Hlatywayo (2014) contend that the common goals for learners living with disabilities and other special needs are most realised if teachers and parents work hand in glove. This means that teachers and parents can only achieve inclusion if they work as a team. This will lead to an early intervention. However, there are some parents who live in denial of the fact that their children have a disability. This is confirmed by Samkange (2014) who asserts that some parents may spend a lot of time rejecting their child's disability due the stigma attached to some disabilities.

2.3 The drawbacks of implementing Inclusion on at ECE level

Inclusion can be the answer to inequality in education, however, there are challenges in implementing it. These challenges can affect different individuals in different ways. The

people who can be affected by the challenges include learners with disabilities, able bodied learners, teachers and even the community. In this section, the researcher shall highlight some of the challenges that have been highlighted by other researchers.

Chimhenga (2016) found out in his research that negative perceptions in the implementation of inclusion may become obstacles as general education teachers make efforts to include learners with disabilities. The general attitude in the Zimbabwean education system often forces the learner living with a disability to adjust to the environment rather than the school environment making moves to adapt to the learners situation. Mariga, MacConkey and Myezwa (2014) confirm that the burden is laid on the learners to adapt themselves to the prevailing insufficient provisions in the school. This means that the onus is on the learners to make a move to adapt to the environment. For example, in most Zimbabwean schools, the teacher pupil ratio is so high that a learner who cannot walk well will have to learn in that overcrowded classroom and try to avoid all obstacles that may cause him to fall since there will be fewer classes and no other rooms to place the class equipment.

Learners living with disabilities often face discrimination from their peers, the teachers and the community. Gasser , Malti , Buholzer (2014) confirm that one study found that most teachers and children in inclusive settings did not include learners with disabilities in academic and athletic activities, as compared to other activities deemed fit for special needs learners. This exclusion is revealed in various ways and one of them is when teachers and learners judge a disabled learner and prevent him/her from taking part in some activities which they feel the learner is not capable of doing. It becomes difficult for the implementation of inclusion to become effective if the disabled learner feels unwanted and unequal to other learners in the classroom. This in turn makes the learner to hate school and thus it becomes the beginning of inequality in education because the disabled learner is not receiving equal love and acceptance at school. This is further supported by the European Commission (2013) which asserts that learners with special Educational Needs often struggle to diffuse in mainstream schools, and inclusion does not rule out the possibility of discrimination. Mafa (2012) further reveals that inclusion may have a negative impact on the self esteem and confidence of learners with disabilities especially

when gifted learners ridicule them. This means that the disadvantaged learners will always struggle to learn because they lack confidence in themselves.

According to Mafa (2012) it will continue to be difficult to implement inclusion if there continue to be deficiency of appropriate facilities and sufficient resources. The environment at school is also unwelcoming to the learner because the infrastructure is made in such a way that the learner is forced to adapt to it rather than the environment adapting to suit the needs of the learner. Mitchell (2016) asserts that the infrastructure of the school is often built without paying attention to children with disabilities and this usually makes it almost impossible for the disabled learner to adapt to. This further makes the learner to feel uncomfortable at school because he/she will always be forced to find ways of making himself /herself comfortable. The disabled learner is forced to use the toilets used by other able bodied learners and this can be very unhygienic because the young learner will need to climb the toilet seat using hands that they will also use to eat with during break time. This is supported by Deluca, Tramontano and Kett (2014) who found out in their research that the lack of the right infrastructure made it a challenge to achieve some of the practices with disabled learners.

The classes are usually overcrowded because the schools keep on enrolling and this becomes a challenge to a disabled learner who will not get adequate education because the teacher has too many learners to attend to. This deprives the learner from getting the special attention that he/she needs from a teacher in order to grasp the concept being taught. This actually places the learner on uneven ground with the other able bodied learners. Mahlo (2017), in her research found that teachers were frustrated by the large teacher pupil ratio in their classes and attending to learners with diverse needs individually, proved to be a burden.

The attitudes from teachers and other learners will also make it impossible for the implementation of inclusion in an ECE setting. A teacher who has an attitude of being overprotective towards a learner will not help a learner receive adequate learning. According to Lindsay and McPherson (2012), if a teacher decides that a child with a disability needs to have a special treatment other than that given to peers will emphasise

the fact that the child is different from his/her peers. Learners with special needs are usually conscious of how people feel about them, they always detect early if they feel they are different and this further builds a rift between the learner, peers and the teacher. Where a learner living with a disability feels loved and equal to other learners, they can even excel at school. This will in turn place the disabled learner on level ground with the other able bodied learners.

According to a research finding by Ncube et al(2015), there is a significant shortage of specialist teachers in special education .This actually shows that most teachers who take inclusive classes are not skilled to teach learners with special needs. This is supported by Mukhopadhyay, Nenty and Abosi (2012) who state that a research revealed that teachers possess little experiences in teaching and taking care of learners with disabilities. It is difficult for a teacher who is not trained to teach special needs learners to teach such learners because he/she does not have the know-how on the teaching of such learners. Chimhenga (2016) contends that the implementation of inclusive education is hindered by the lack of skilled teachers who will address the different individual needs of learners. This makes it impossible for special needs learners to benefit much from an inclusive setting with a general ECE teacher.

Some parents are not comfortable in having their children enter classes together with their able bodied peers. Some fear that they might not be treated well and some feel they will not be given the special treatment that they deserve. This is supported by Lindsay and McPherson (2012) who state that some parents are anxious about their disabled children and this can serve as a possible barrier of inclusion. This actually shows that if a parent is uncomfortable with his/her child attending school in an inclusive setting then this might have a negative impact on the child's education.

2.4 Ways of implementing inclusion at ECE level

According to Hlatywayo and Muranda (2014) instead of inclusion being a marginal issue on how learners can be diffused into the mainstream education, it is an approach that seeks to change the education system into a system that caters for learner's individual differences. Therefore, inclusive education is there to change the mind-set of the education system regarding learners with special needs. There are various ideas

highlighted by some writers which if taken into consideration they will help make inclusion more effective in the classroom. One way will be to give consentize all learners and teachers so that they will learn to accept each other regardless of their differences. Hlatywayo and Muranda (2014) explain that the change of attitude towards people living with disabilities plays a big role in attaining equity in education. If effective counselling takes place in schools, there will be a change of attitudes even from the teachers. Once the disabled learners feel loved in a school environment then inclusion will be more effective as it will make all learners feel the same. This is supported by Sharma and Somia (2018) who assert that schools should involve qualified counsellors to assist the community, teachers and learners in changing their perception of disability.

Hlatywayo and Muranda (2014) state that the inclusive environment should be reachable to learners living with disabilities. The schools should make it a priority to also consider learners with disabilities when building or improving on the school infrastructure. According to Sharma and Somia (2018), all schools should have ramps, handrails and some other devices that help the learners with special needs to move around the environment. The school authorities should consider the needs of all learners when building the schools, not just the needs of the majority, which are the able bodied learners. The ablution facilities should be user friendly and should be suitable for both able bodied and learners with special needs. Schools should have ramps, and playgrounds should also allow learners with special needs to play and develop physically.

The teacher pupil ratio should be paramount especially when it comes to inclusive ECE classes because each child will need individual attention from the teacher. Mafa (2012) notes that absence of such attention may result in most of these learner's individual needs remaining unresolved. The classes should not be overcrowded so that the teacher is able to attend to all learners and also so that even learners who require special attention will get it. This is supported by Mukhopadhyay et al (2012) who found out in their research that teachers complained of large teacher-pupil ratios that were not favorable and that having a learner with a disability increased the workload. All young children are experimental by nature, and this theory does not apply to able bodied learners only, also to learners with special needs. Learners with special needs should not be restricted from

moving around so that they can also make use of their experimental nature. If classes are spacious and not crowded to allow free movement of learners, then all learners, including those with special needs, will develop critical thinking skills which are essential for all future concepts to be built.

According to Cheelo (2016) states that if teachers are not trained to teach learners with special needs, it will increase the number of teachers with negative attitudes towards inclusive education. The teacher training courses should include special needs training so that all teachers are skilled enough to teach learners with special needs. According to Phasha, Mahlo and Sefa Dei (2017), to achieve the goal of inclusive education therefore requires teachers with skills and competences that can only be achieved through transforming the current teacher education programs. This means that for inclusive education to be effective, there is need to have qualified teachers skilled enough to teach all learners. This will equip teachers to teach these learners with confidence. Mafa (2012) agrees that qualified teachers can be armed with inclusive teaching skills through inservice teacher development and workshops. Those teachers who are already in the field should receive training so that they will also be in a position to teach in an inclusive environment. This move will further make teachers to embrace inclusive education. Chikwature, Oyedele and Ntini (2016) assert that failure of the teacher's colleges to implement inclusive education will result in having a product of qualified teachers who do not possess the necessary expertise, knowledge and abilities to teach in inclusive settings.

ECE is a very crucial stage of development, whereby the educators are mostly concerned with developing the whole child. If improperly handled, the damage can be fatal and eternal. Most authors have looked at various challenges of inclusive education and their recommendations. However, researchers that specifically look at ECE are missing. This research seeks to look at challenges of inclusion with regards to ECE. It will further look at the population of Mabula Primary school, whereas, other authors looked at other areas and not specifically the case of Mabula Primary school.

2.5 Summary

Inclusion can be the key to equality in education. However, there are challenges to its implementation across the globe. Some of the challenges are universal, while some are specific for some areas only. This chapter looked at the definitions of inclusion from other writers and a working definition for this research was laid down. The researcher also looked at the literature that state reasons why there is need to implement inclusion in schools. Challenges in the implementation of inclusion were highlighted in this chapter. These challenges were discussed and some ways of effectively implementing inclusion were noted, as highlighted by other writers. The challenges included discrimination, attitudes, infrastructure, teacher-pupil ratio and unskilled personnel. Some literature gaps which the researcher intends to venture in were also noted.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

Inclusion is one area that has been noted by most scholars as the key that will unlock the holistic development of ECE learners with special needs. This study aims at addressing the challenges of inclusion with regards to ECE learners. In this chapter the writer stated the type of research design that was chosen for this research. The population and the sample that were used for this research were described. The instruments that were used for this research were described. The researcher stated how the data was collected and analysed. Lastly, a list of references used in this proposal was listed at the end of this chapter.

3.1 Research design

The researcher made use of a case study as a research design. A case study design breeds testable hypothesis that makes further investigations possible (Muller-Rommel and Leuphana 2016). This showed that a case study was most suitable for this research as it had a possibility of provoking further investigations. A case study research design involves the use of qualitative research methods which make it possible to gain a greater understanding of a phenomenon.

Qualitative research concerns the gathering of information with the use of a smaller group taken from a larger group (Wong, 2014). It uses a small group of people taken from a large group to answer questions concerning the whole group. This type of research design was chosen because only a very small number of special needs cases are found at Mabula School. This research design also made it possible for the researcher to use a number of instruments to gather data for this research.

3.2 Population and sample

A population is a whole group. A sample is defined by Alvi (2016) as a small group of people chosen from a population for the purposes of research. It is therefore a part that

is taken from the whole group and represents the whole group in an investigation. The population that was under study were all the ECE learners and ECE staff at Mabhukudwana Primary School in Mzilikazi district. The sample consisted of five ECE learners with identified special needs and all ECE teachers at the school.

The sampling technique that was used was the purposive sampling which is also known as a non-random sampling technique. Etikan, Musa and Alkassim (2016) define purposive sampling as a method of choosing only those participants possessing the qualities needed by the researcher for his/her research. This particular technique was chosen by the researcher because it allowed the researcher to choose only those learners with special needs and their teachers. Purposive sampling is cheaper, less effort is needed, not time consuming and is also convenient for the researcher (Etikan et al 2016). Thus, the researcher chose this method because the time frame to conduct this particular research was short and not too many expenses would be used when conducting and choosing the participants for the research. The researcher selected one learner from each of the following disabilities together with their parents or guardian: physical disability, learning disability, speech problem, poor sight and mental disability. All twelve ECE teachers at Mabula Primary school were selected for this research.

3.3 Research Instruments

The researcher intended to use different types of instruments to conduct this research. The researcher made use of questionnaires, interviews and focus groups as research instruments.

3.3.1 Questionnaires

A questionnaire is a document whereby the respondent will be required to respond to questions in a written form. Bolariwa (2015) asserts that a questionnaire is a tool with a set of questions that are used to collect the required data. The questionnaire was chosen so that it helped to make a survey on the number of ECE learners with special needs and also it helped the researcher to know which ECE teachers have learners with special needs in their classes. It also made the researcher to gather the required information for the research.

The questionnaire was given to the administration, the ECE teachers and the parents of learners with special needs. This instrument allowed the researcher to get information from many people all at once, therefore it was not time consuming. The other advantage of using this type of instrument was that the chances of the respondent straying off topic were very slim. The respondent was always guided by the questions. One weakness of using a questionnaire was that there was a chance of the respondent being influenced by other people present. The researcher asked the respondents of the questionnaires to always respond truthfully and to make sure they were alone when answering so as to avoid being disturbed.

3.3.2 Interviews

An interview is a one on one question and answer session whereby the researcher will be asking questions and the respondent will be answering. Kvale (2002) defines an interview as a conversation between the interviewer and the interviewee with the aim of obtaining information on the interviewee's view of a phenomenon and interpreting it. It is a way of obtaining information from the people under study and using the information to analyse the data. The researcher conducted interviews with the school administration. Interviews were also used to gather information from five of the learner's parents on the learners' background. Interviews were chosen because they provided instant feedback and when the researcher needs clarity on anything they could always explore further. Interviews helped the researcher to get some clarification when the need arose. This instrument was chosen because it allowed the researcher to get more information on the challenges of inclusion and also accessed deeper information since the questions were not fixed, one could always change the questions during the session.

3.3.3 Focus Groups

A focus group is a group interview or a group discussion that done by a researcher with a selected groups of people. Four groups of focus groups which comprised of ECE teachers was conducted. This was done so as to gather information concerning the issue under study. Like interviews, focus groups were chosen because they provided the research with deep knowledge on the issue under study and allowed the researcher to probe for more where need be. Focus groups allowed the participants to give each other

confidence when under study and they allowed the participants to help each other in understanding the questions being asked. However, the danger of focus groups is that participants can lead the topic astray and also some heated arguments can occur which may lead to fights.

3.4 Data Collection Procedures

In this research, the researcher asked for permission from the Ministry of Education to conduct this research by writing a letter. The researcher also sought permission from the school administration to allow her to conduct a research in Mabula School. Next the researcher conducted a survey in the ECE department in the form of questionnaires so as to gather data on the number of ECE learners with special needs, the type of special need and the identity of their teachers. The parents and teachers of learners with special needs were issued with letters so as to get permission to conduct the research using their children.

Interviews were conducted between the parent and the researcher so as to allow the researcher to gather information on the challenges faced by the learner with special needs because in most cases these ECE learners are too young and immature to answer for themselves. More interviews between the researcher and the administrators of the school were conducted. These helped the researcher to gather information on the challenges of implementing inclusion in the classroom.

Interviews and focus groups were done by the researcher during break time, lunch and during sports days. These helped the researcher to compare the information got from other methods with one got from interviews. This research was conducted within the period of twelve weeks which is within the second term of the school calendar.

3.5.1 Data Analysis Plan

The researcher used visual methods of analysing data because they were more understandable (UNECE, 2009). The visual methods used were in the form of tables, charts and descriptive methods. The survey taken by using an interview was presented in the form of a table because it was describing mostly quantitative data. The data included the information on the perceptions of inclusion, experiences and

recommendations from the respondents. The information got from the questionnaires on the topic being researched on was coded on excel and analysed and presented in the form of charts and tables because it was helpful in describing the quantitative data collected. The data gathered from interviews and observations was recorded and transcribed so as to be able to make the themes necessary for thematic data analysis which was related to the research questions. Transcription is defined by Johnson and Christiansen (2012) as changing interview notes and audio recordings into texts. Thematic analysis was used to make the data collected from the respondents to flow.

3.5.2 Validity and reliability of the instruments

The researcher used three instruments to collect data so as to ensure validity of the instruments. The data collected was analysed one by one to ensure that the findings were valid.

3.5.3 Ethical considerations

The researcher asked for permission to conduct the research. A written response was given to the researcher after permission was granted. The researcher also asked for permission from the Ministry of Education to conduct a research in one of their schools and the permission was granted in written form. The researcher also sought permission from teachers and parents of the sampled learners in written form which also informed them of the nature of the research. No names were used when conducting this research to allow for confidentiality of respondents. The respondents were also assured that the research was for academic purposes only.

3.6 Summary

In this chapter, the research design to be used was identified and described. The population and sample was named. The sampling technique used together with its advantages was identified. The researcher also identified the research instruments that were used in this research and the reasons why the researcher chose them. The researcher explained the data collection procedures and the data analysis plan. The validity and reliability of the research together with the ethical considerations were highlighted.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.0 Introduction

In a perpetual quest to find challenges faced in the implementation of inclusion at Mabula Primary school, the researcher used a number of methods of collecting data from various respondents. In this chapter, the researcher put down the findings from different data collecting methods that were used, analysed the data and discussed on the findings. The researcher carried out four groups of focus groups, three interviews for the administrators and five interviews for parents. The focus groups were called Focus Group 1, Focus Group 2, Focus Group 3 and Focus Group 4 respectively. The participants in each focus group were named Participant 1, Participant 2 and Participant 3. The participants in administrator's interviews and questionnaires were named admin 1, Admin 2 and Admin 3 and Admin 4. The participants from the parent's interviews and questionnaires were called Parent 1 up to Parent 5. The participants from the Teachers questionnaires were called T1 up to T9.

4.1 Findings from research question 1 which says 'what are the challenges of inclusion faced by teachers in an ECE setting?'

4.1.1 Findings from questionnaires

In this study three out of four administrators identified lack of teacher expertise and lack of material resources as the limitations of implementing inclusive education effectively. Furthermore, seven out of nine teachers identified lack of suitable infrastructure as a limitation to attaining inclusive education and all nine teachers identified lack of skilled personnel as a limitation to attaining inclusive education in the school.

4.1.2 Findings from interviews

Most of the participants were in agreement that inclusion was a good move in the education system, however there were challenges that were experienced in its implementation. The researcher found out from the administrator's interviews that the

admin felt that the teacher's lack of expertise was a challenge in the implementation of IE. Admin 1 noted that *"the teachers were not properly trained to handle those children"*. This administrator went on to say, *"...and in some cases these children scream and for teachers to handle that scenario can be a challenge"*. Admin 1 also noted that, *"teachers were not properly equipped with skills of handling learners with disabilities in their training"*.

When asked what were the challenges of implementing IE in the school, Admin 3 exclaimed that, *"lack of graft literacy! That is, failure to understand and implement the tenants of Inclusive Education"*. Another challenge noted was that of poor infrastructure at the school. Admin 1 stated that *"we do not have proper facilities because we do not have the resources."* He went on to hint that, *"resource constraints also limit Inclusive Education because two teachers will be teaching in one class"*.

Parent 3 noted that, *"it is difficult for the teacher to teach because she has many children in her class, and to concentrate on my one child becomes difficult to the teacher"*.

4.1.3 Findings from focus groups

In Focus Group 1, Participant 2 highlighted that, *"I knew about Inclusive Education when I studied about it on my own. I was never taught on how to cater for those children, but was only told at college that I will meet such children"*. Participant 1 in Focus Group 4 explained that, *"during our pre-service training we were taught how to identify them, but on the teaching aspect, it wasn't done thoroughly"*. Participant 2 added that, *"on how to handle them part we didn't receive any training so we don't know how to handle these learners"*.

Participant 1 in Focus Group 2 on IE exclaimed that, *"people don't yet understand it"*, she further stated that, *"even us as teachers lack knowledge"*. Participant 2 in Focus Group 2 indicated that, *"as teachers we are not experts in teaching learners with disabilities"*. She further noted that they could not sign as a way of communicating with deaf learners. Participant 2 in Focus Group 4 admitted that, *"as teachers on the ground, we do not have the expertise to handle learners with disabilities"*. Participant 1 in Focus group 2 also said that, *"shortage of qualified personnel is also a challenge"*.

Participant 1 in Focus Group 2 lamented that, “ *as a teacher you take more time on the challenged learner when demonstrating*”. Participant 1 in Focus Group 1 noted that they faced the challenge of, “ *lack of resources*”. Participant 2 in Focus Group 2 noted that, “ *resources like braille were not available*”. Participant 2 in Focus Group 4 explained that, “ *...at schools there are no resources, there is nothing! You are just suffering with a child with a certain disability but you don’t even know how to handle the child*”. Participant 1 in Focus Group 2 noted that, “ *some parents are in denial*”.

Participant 2 in Focus Group 3 lamented that, “ *for inclusive education the classes are too big*”. She went further and said that, “ *the teacher pupil ratio is too much, so I cannot be lagging behind because of one learner*”.

4.1.4 Discussion of research question 1 which says ‘what are the challenges of inclusion faced by teachers in an ECE setting?’

A high number of administrators and teachers identified lack of teacher expertise and lack of material resources as the limitations of implementing inclusive education effectively. This meant that teachers felt that they needed to have knowledge on how to cater for LWD for effective implementation to take place. Chimhenga (2016) in his study found out that lack of teacher expertise was a challenge against inclusion. This shows that teacher expertise is very crucial for the achievement of IE in the school.

Maka (2012) found that most teachers colleges have not yet reacted to the changes being steered into the schools by inclusion. This finding corresponded with the researcher’s finding which noted that a greater part of teachers admitted to receiving very little training on the teaching of learners with special needs, which meant that they did not have confidence in teaching LSN. Administrator 2 in an interview also noted that the in service training of teachers lacked SN training and this posed as a challenge. This is in support of a statement by Chikwature et al (2016) which states that failure of the teacher’s colleges to implement inclusive education will result in having a product of qualified teachers who do not possess the necessary expertise, knowledge and abilities to teach in inclusive settings. This is in line with the findings by Phasha et al (2017) who proclaim

that inclusive education can be achieved through transforming the current teacher education programs. Parent 2 recognised that,

Teachers should be trained on how to treat our disabled children at school.

The above statement proved that it was evident even to the parents that the teacher lacked expertise to teach learners with disabilities. This corresponds with the findings by Chimhenga (2016) who found that teachers were not skilled enough to teach learners with special needs and they even admitted to that. Cheelo (2016) also noted that most teachers were not trained to teach learners with special needs and this poses as a challenge to IE. When asked if IE was a good move in the education system, Participant 2 in Focus Group 4 said that, *“It is not a good move because there is no way that I can spend the whole day, for all these years with a learner that I don’t even know how to handle”*. This meant that the teachers felt that they were wasting the time of LWD because they were not benefiting from them. Chireshe (2013) noted in her study that some participants felt that meaning of IE was not well understood. Chimhenga (2016) agreed that lack of knowledge also contributed to the negative attitudes of teachers. The fact that the teachers themselves even admitted to having very little knowledge on the teaching of learners with special needs purposed that there was a challenge that needed to be urgently addressed. From my observation, an inexperienced teacher should not be allowed to teach a class whereby they need to impart knowledge on learners they don’t even know how to handle, only skilled teachers should handle these learners. This is in agreement with Maka (2012) who assumed that skilled teachers could select appropriate methods and use instruction that will most likely benefit learners with special needs.

Sharma and Somia (2018) noted that all schools should have ramps, handrails and some other devices that help the learners with special needs to move around the environment. This finding was coherent with the findings from this research in which Admin 1 and Admin 3 identified lack of suitable infrastructure in the questionnaires and interviews as a challenge to the teachers. Mapuranga, Dumba and Musodza (2015) posit that inclusive schools ought to develop their infrastructure and facilities to handle learners with disabilities. This shows that infrastructure is very important in the learning development of learners with disabilities. This is in line with Mafa (2013) who acknowledged that without

suitable facilities and adequate resources it is difficult to properly implement inclusion. The majority of teachers also identified suitable infrastructure as a limitation to attaining inclusive education at the school. Admin 3 even pointed out the fact that:

The ratio of classroom sharing was one classroom is to two classes.

This showed that shortage of classrooms was a challenge on teachers as they needed more time with learners in the classroom to provide the individual attention needed by the learners facing challenges especially at ECE level where some learners are still developing and do not need to be rushed so as to give time to the other class to use the classroom. Maka (2012) noted that one size fits all teaching in such classes does not work.

The teachers also said that lack of adequate time prevented the teachers from giving full attention to learners facing different challenges. This is confirmed by Chimhenga (2016) who noted that teaching a child with a disability was a burden to the teacher. The teachers went on to express that this was mainly caused by the large teaching load which they were expected to teach effectively. Participant 1 in Focus group 3 even said that:

If given a smaller teaching load, I would be able to teach the learners facing challenges effectively. The ECD ratio of 1:20 should stretch up to grade 2 to make it easy for individual teaching. Participant 1 in Focus Group 2 said, "I will give you an example of John whom I once taught (fictitious name), used to get lost and I would neglect the whole class and move around looking for him. Sometimes I will find her in the garden."

Maka (2012) noted that lack of individual attention meant that most of the problems faced by the disabled learners continued to be unanswered. This means that teachers had large loads which made them fail to give enough attention to the learners facing challenges. Chireshe (2013) noted that the issue of shortage of resources was made worse by the large teacher pupil ratio. This made some teachers in this research to compromise the time of other able learners in favour of the LSN. Chimhenga (2016) found that teachers failed to cope with large numbers of learners within their classrooms and therefore this posed problems in them attending to a challenged learner as it proved to be an extra burden. Matthew et al (2017) also noted that learners registered in classes with low

teacher to pupil ratios tend to be more socially proficient. The ECE department at the school had a large teaching load. This is against the Statutory instrument 106 of 2005 which advocates for a teaching load of 1:20 for ECD teachers. There were also some teachers who also blamed the result oriented curriculum for making them to neglect learners facing challenges and invest more time on learners who are likely to raise the class percentage pass rate.

Chimhenga (2016) notes that disabled children tended to be ignored by the teacher as the teacher placed more focus on the able learners. This implies that despite the fact that the revised curriculum is now more skills based, the teachers at the school were deliberately choosing to neglect learners with challenges and focus more on those without challenges in a bid to produce a higher pass rate and thereby making the administration happy. Chireshe (2013) concludes that because of this high teacher pupil ratio, teachers cannot cater for Learners with disabilities.

Some teachers also identified lack of material resources as a limitation to attaining inclusive education in the school. Out of the three administrators interviewed, two of them said that material resources posed a challenge to the teachers. Mafa (2012) acknowledged that effective teaching of inclusive classes required a lot of resources. This means that the teachers at the school were failing to teach effectively learners with disabilities due to lack of resources. This may have led to neglect of learners with disabilities. The findings noted above revealed that teachers were indeed facing challenges in the implementation of inclusion in the school.

4.2 Findings from research question 2 which says 'what are the challenges of inclusion faced by learners in an ECE setting?'

4.2.1 Findings from questionnaires

The hindrances of implementing inclusive education at Mabula Primary school included lack of teacher expertise and lack of material resources as highlighted by three administrators in questionnaires. These limitations stated above have a direct impact on the education of a child with special needs.

4.2.2 Findings from interviews

Findings on attitudinal challenges were noted. Admin 1 noted that, *“there can be an attitudinal challenge in that other children may not want to play with children with disabilities”*. Admin 3 also highlighted that, *“learners with disabilities may not receive much support from the other able bodied learners”*.

Admin 2 acknowledged that, *“some pupils do not want to associate with learners with disabilities”*.

Parent 1 stated that,

“I don’t think the teacher is doing much for my child’s education because looking at the class size in my child’s class, there are a lot of children, so for the teacher to reach out to my child and help her, and have a one on one teaching its difficult”.

Parent 3 stated that, *“when a child is dull, they are labelled by other learners and the teacher may even end up having an attitude towards the learner and the learner might end up not wanting to go to school”*.

Parent 2 stated that, *“the teachers needed to be taught on how to handle learners with special needs”*

Parent 2 lamented that, *“looking at the toilets, they are not good for disabled children like mine”*.

Parent 2 said that, *“the government should make sure that our disabled children learn in separate classes from the able bodied ones because the able bodied children usually look down upon our disabled children”*.

Parent 3 kept on calling her child ‘Danda’ (the dull one) and this could be a challenge on the learner as the parent already sees nothing positive coming out of the child.

Parent 3 said that, *“the able learners should not be taught in the same class with learners with disabilities as it discourages learners with disabilities because they are usually lagging behind”*.

4.2.3 Findings from focus groups

Participant 1 in Focus Group 3 commented that, “ *those lagging behind, I don’t give them enough time to deal with them one by one*”.

Participant 1 said that, *a child is brought to school without the needed resources, for example, Molly (fictious name) who sometimes falls down and there are no mattresses to use when she falls.* ”. Participant 2 in Focus Group 2 noted that, “ *resources like braille were not available*”.

Participant 2 in Focus Group 2 stated that, “ *infrastructure is not conducive for learners with disabilities*”. Participant 2 went on to say that, “ *these children have their own needs and at times the parent fails to meet the needs*”.

Participant 2 in Focus Group 3 noted that, “ *I overlook them at times trying to move with those who are able*”.

Participant 2 in Focus Group 4 stated that, “ *it’s obvious that I will move on with the other learners who are able to cope*”.

Participant 2 in Focus group 3 stated that, “ *if the parent is in denial, it becomes a challenge to teach their child*”. Participant 2 in Focus Group 3 stated that, “ *some parents are in denial, some of them don’t even agree that their children have a problem, so it’s very difficult to help someone who is on denial stage*”. Participant 2 in Focus Group 4 noted that “ *there is no way I can be with a learner for all these years without knowing how to deal with them, its very difficult.*”

Participant 1 in Focus Group 4 stated that, “ *these end up being disadvantaged because most of the time we are after the pass rate and these learners have a problem in catching up in whatever concept that you teach*’.

Participant 1 in Focus Group 2 noted that

It is better for us ECD teachers because we are developers, we don’t really mind about the pass rate. When the challenged learner reaches grade one they face problems with the teacher because the teachers up there are concerned with the pass rate.

4.2.4 Discussion of research question 2 which says ‘what are the challenges of inclusion faced by learners in an ECE setting?’

One of the challenges noted by the three administrators interviewed included negative attitudes from the learners and from teachers. Maka (2012) noted in his research that parents felt that their disabled children needed to be protected from rejection by their developing peers. The negative attitudes from both learners and teachers have a negative effect on the learners facing challenges as they lower their self-esteem and may even lead to school dropouts. This is pointed out by Global Partnership for education (2018) which states that the negative attitudes that children with disabilities face often discourages them to attend school and may eventually lead to school dropouts. Chimhenga (2016) noted that the negative attitudes from teachers was due to the fact that they lacked adequate knowledge on how to cater for learners with disabilities. This means that the teachers sometimes have negative attitudes only because they lack knowledge, and the more such learners receive negative attitudes, the more they fail to cope with their school work and the lesser they develop. Cheelo (2016) confirms that the training of teachers is important as lack of training increases the number of teachers with negative attitudes towards inclusive education.

Lack of proper infrastructure was also highlighted by the administrators as a possible factor that contributes to the challenges faced by learners in the implementation of inclusion. This finding is in line with a statement by the Global Partnership for Education (2018) which states that the school needs to have ramps, spacious classrooms, wide doors, movable furniture, large windows to allow light and water and sanitation facilities. The bulk of participants noted that proper infrastructure was contributing in the learners’ challenges. Hlatywayo and Muranda (2014) noted that an inclusive environment should be accessible to learners living with disabilities. Infrastructure should be accommodating to all learners, including those with disabilities, yet in this school participants complained of improper infrastructure. This is in line with findings by Maka (2012) who found that buildings in most schools were not built with children with disabilities in mind.

Lack of teacher expertise was also one of the challenges noted by the admin, teachers and parents during interviews and focus groups. This is in support of the findings by

Chimhenga (2016) which stated that teachers' lack of expertise was a challenge on the effective implementation of inclusive education. The learners with disabilities need to be taught by a teacher who can identify their needs and provide for their needs. In this case, the bulk of teachers have very little knowledge to teach learners with special needs thereby failing to meet the individual needs of learners with special needs.

The other challenge identified by the respondents was lack of material resources. They felt that the needs of the disadvantaged learners was not met in terms of material resources. In a research by Maka (2012), it was found that the availability of resources was a problem in most schools. The implementation of IE was being deterred by the fact that the school lacked material and financial resources to cater for the challenged learners. This is in line with the observations by Chimhenga (2016) which noted that the implementation of inclusive education in Zimbabwe was alleged to be presently affected by inadequate resources needed to meet the specific needs of learners. The Global partnership for Education (2018) also revealed that lack of material resources in Zimbabwe was a barrier for learners with disabilities in participating at school and this eventually led to school dropouts. This means that learners failed to receive the right education that was due to them due to inadequate resources. This is in agreement with a statement by Eshiwani (1985) who asserted that shortage of school resources affects learning in both primary and secondary schools. Some respondents stated that they needed some assisting devices for learners with special needs but were not provided though they were expected to help the disadvantaged learners. Chireshe (2013) found that negative attitudes towards learners living with disabilities in the country had a negative effect on the provision of resources to them. A research by Maka (2012) found that effective teaching of inclusive classes required a lot of resources like braille and other assisting devices. This proves that the school was not ready to implement inclusive education due to the unavailability of the material resources which are very crucial in the implementation of IE.

Some participants stated that it was difficult to implement IE because most teachers were concerned about producing a high pass rate. Maka (2012) also found in his research that the curriculum was content laden and examination oriented. This meant that a teachers'

effectiveness is teaching was judged by the pass rate they produced and not by the quality of education they give to their learners.

Mukhopadhyay et al (2012) found out in their research that teachers complained of large teacher-pupil ratios that were not favorable and that having a learner with a disability increased the workload. During this research, teachers and parents remarked during interviews that the teacher to pupil ratio at the school was too large and was affecting the learners facing challenges negatively. Maka (2012) noted that teachers could not successfully manage inclusive classes due to conflicting demands. This meant that the learners facing challenges did not get adequate education due to them because the load was too much for the teacher and therefore the teacher could not meet the demands of all the learners. This is in agreement with a research by Gasser et al (2014) which confirms that most teachers and children in inclusive settings did not include learners with disabilities in academic activities. The teachers had to prioritise on where they had strengths. This is in agreement with Chireshe (2013) whose findings revealed that the high teacher to pupil ratio left the teachers with no room to provide quality education for learners with disabilities. Mafa (2012) also noted that CWD can only achieve their full potential only if they are provided with normal opportunities. This means that for LWD to perform to their full capacity, there is need for the teacher to give them the same opportunity given to an able bodied child. Ashman (2015) asserts that teachers are at the centre of implementing inclusive education in schools and hence should be supported and trained to teach in an inclusive setting.

Lindsay and McPherson (2012) assert that some parents are anxious about their disabled children. This shows that parental involvement can pose as a challenge faced by learners. In this research the ECD teachers grieved over the parents' lack of support for learners facing challenges. This was in coherence with a finding by Ncube and Hlatywayo (2014) which found that the common goals for learners living with disabilities and other special needs were most realised if teachers and parents work together. T1 lamented that the parents were sometimes not cooperative in providing materials for their children, they pretended that their children were like other children with no challenges. This means that the parents were in denial of their children's disabilities as they felt that the needs of their children was the same as the other able bodied children. Hayes and Bulat (2017) assert

that school, parent and community engagement is very important during times of transition or education reorganisation. All ECE teachers stated that some parents suffered from denial on their children's disabilities. Mapuranga, Dumba and Musodza (2015) noted that most of the stigma is linked to society where if the family lacks support from school they tend to conceal their children thus violating the rights of these children. This meant that some parents faced challenges of accepting the different conditions of their children due to stigma and discrimination despite stating during interviews that they have accepted. Some parents accept the condition of their children in a negative way which may also in turn have a negative impact on the learner. The researcher observed this when Parent 3 kept on calling her child 'Danda' (the dull one) which the researcher saw as a label on the learner and this may have posed as a challenge to the learner as the parent already saw nothing positive coming out of the child. This behaviour confirms a finding by the Global Partnership for Education (2018) which found that learners with special needs were often not valued by the people.

4.3 Findings from research question 3 which says ' what strategies do we need to take in order to alleviate the challenges of inclusion in an ECE setting?'

4.3.1 Findings from questionnaires

Table 4.9 above reveals the recommendations that were given by the administrators at Mabula School on how to make inclusive education more effective at the school. Three out of four administrators prompted for staff developing teachers and educating stakeholders on inclusive education so as to attain equality in education. Two out of the four administrators wrote that the teaching of LSN should be taught during pre-service training so as to produce teachers who are ready to implement inclusive education.

Most teachers identified teacher training and provision of adequate infrastructure as a way of implementing inclusive education effectively.

Four out of five parents of learners with disabilities recommended that education for LSN should be free. This could have meant that parents of LSN were facing financial challenges of educating their children.

4.3.2 Findings from interviews

Admin 1 recommended that *“the government should equip the teachers with the necessary skill”*. Parent 1 noted that, *“I think the teachers should be too many, and there should be fewer children in a class so that the teacher can reach out to my disabled child.”*

Admin 3 encouraged that, *“teachers should be staff developed and there should be some in-service training”*. Parent 1 recommended that, *“Teachers should be work shopped and taught how each child should be treated, with or without a disability”*.

Admin 1 said that, *“the government should avail financial and human resources so that Inclusive Education can be effective”*. Admin 2 encouraged that, *“the government and the school should make community awareness so that the parents bring their disabled children to school”*. Parent 2 noted that, *“the government and city council should help in building suitable ablution facilities suitable for use by disabled children like mine”*.

Admin 3 stated that, *“a deliberate policy should be enunciated by the Ministry of Education”*.

4.3.3 Findings from focus groups

. Participant 2 in Focus Group 3 stated that, *“if I am given at least 30 learners I can try”*. Participant 1 in Focus group 3 noted that *“I think what is done in ECD A and B of which the teacher pupil ratio is 1:20-25, it should go up to grade 1 and 2 so that all children are given proper education suitable for them”*. Participant 2 in Focus group 3 recommended that, *“teachers should not be given too many children such that the teacher will move with the fast learners....government needs to re-look at the teacher pupil ratio and employ more teachers”*. Participant 1 in Focus Group 3 also explained that, *“if the teacher pupil ratio is not big I will have enough time to draw the disadvantaged child closer to me and try to help her”*.

Participant 2 in Focus Group 4 recommended that on the government part, *“there should be a way of including these learners in the curriculum, because there is no way I can be able to break down content for different learners of different abilities in the same class.”*

On negative attitudes from other learners, Participant 2 in Focus group 3 stated that, *"teachers needs to be friendly to such learners and even assist other learners to accept the child"*. Participant 2 in Focus Group 4 stated that *the communities need to be taught to include children with disabilities in their community... so that they don't extend their life of discrimination to the school"*.

Participant 1 in Focus group 3 noted that the government should, *"build more classrooms with adequate furniture for effective learning to take place"*. Participant 1 in Focus group 3 went on to say that, *"the classrooms should be spacious to allow for free movement"*.

Participant 1 in Focus group 3 said that, *"Government should provide adequate resources by providing teachers"*. On that same note, Participant 3 in Focus Group 4 stated that, *"the government should reduce the teacher to pupil ratio so that teachers will be able to work towards handling those children"*.

Participant 1 in Focus Group 4 recommended that, *"the government needs to build special schools where they are taught special skills like carpentry"*.

Participant 2 in Focus Group 4 stated that, *"there should be staff development of some sort in special needs on how to handle these learners"*.

4.3.4 Discussion of research question 3 which says 'what strategies do we need to take in order to alleviate the challenges of inclusion in an ECE setting?'

(i)Teacher training

Different recommendations were made by the respondents on ways of alleviating the challenges of inclusion at ECE level at the school. All four participants in administration recommended for staff development of teachers to educate them on how to cater for the individual needs of learners facing challenges. The bulk of teachers also recommended that the teachers be staff developed and be trained on teaching learners with diverse needs. Phasha et al (2017) concur that in order to achieve the goal of inclusive education it requires skilled teachers and this can only be achieved through transforming the current teacher education programs. This means that there is need to train teachers at the school

so that they are in a better position to implement inclusive education. Training teachers will go a long way in equipping them with the IE teaching skills that are lacking.

Admin 3 pointed out the fact that the teaching of learners with special needs was lacking in the teacher training syllabus. This is in line with Hayes and Bulat (2017) who postulate that the teacher training curriculum should include the teaching of learners with disabilities instead of having separate courses of educating teachers on teaching special needs learners. This means that special needs should be included in teacher training instead of having a qualified teacher going for another diploma in teaching special needs. The greater part of teachers agreed that they lacked teacher expertise in teaching learners with special needs. This is in line with a study conducted by Chireshe (2013) who found that most teachers lacked training on inclusive education. Therefore, it is the opinion of the researcher that there is need to train educators on how to handle learners with special needs starting from the Minister going down to the implementers who are the teachers themselves. This training can be done through workshops, staff development courses, short courses and even the inclusion of SN education in the teacher training curriculum.

(ii) Stakeholder education

A large number of respondents agreed to educating stakeholders on inclusive education so as to attain equality in education. Another recommendation made by Admin 3 included advocacy for inclusive education. Chireshe (2013) noted that lack of understanding IE could be due to lack of awareness campaigns focussing on IE. The researcher believes that if all concerned stakeholders are given education on inclusion, equality in education might be achieved through the implementation of inclusion. This is in line with Hayes and Bulat (2017) who state that different stakeholders need to be meaningfully included to guarantee and encourage effective implementation of inclusive education. These could be done through organising awareness campaigns in the community, including the teaching of parents on inclusion of learners with special needs during parents meetings and advocacy for inclusive education through inviting knowledgeable people to the school meetings with parents. Chireshe (2013) noted that running awareness campaigns that involved people living with disabilities are most likely to change negative attitudes.

(iii) Providing adequate and proper infrastructure

A greater number of ECE teachers and the parents recommended the provision of adequate infrastructure as a way of implementing inclusive education effectively. This is in support of Deluca et al (2014) who found out in their research that the lack of the right infrastructure made it a challenge to achieve some of the practices with disabled learners.

One parent even noted that:

The school should make the toilets user friendly for my disabled child who needs assistance from the teacher each time they go to the toilet.

The researcher notes that the provision of enough and adequate infrastructure would go a long way into making life easier for the teacher as there will be no more hot sitting. It will give the educators ample time to do individual teaching without fear of being chased out of the classroom. Chireshe (2013) in the study noted that lack of resources was a major challenge to the implementation of inclusive education.

(iv) Providing an inclusive curriculum

T7, T8 and T9 in Focus group 4 recommended that there be a provision of an inclusive curriculum for primary education. This means that the syllabuses should give clear information to the teachers on how to teach a concept to learners of various challenges. The researcher believes that the curriculum should clearly spell out how the learners with disabilities should be taught. This is in agreement with Mapuranga, Dumba and Musodza (2015) who acknowledge that it is essential that schools adopt a highly individualized education programme for learners with disabilities. This will actually lead to all learners benefiting from the learning programme. There is nothing in the revised curriculum that gives the teacher methods of teaching learners with special needs.

(v) Policy on inclusive education

One administrator noted in a questionnaire that there was no clear cut policy on inclusive education. The researcher believes that once the ministry sits down and lays down a policy that will guide educators on how to implement inclusion. This is consistent with Hayes and Bulat (2017) who assert that after a nation commits itself to the notion of

inclusion in education, it is imperative that they adjust the national policies and laws. Furthermore, another study conducted by Chireshe (2013) revealed that there was no clear policy in Zimbabwe on inclusive education and this posed as a major challenge. This shows that educators more often fail to implement inclusion because there is nothing to guide them. The policies that are there do not make it a law for a learner to be taught in an inclusive setting. This is in coherence with Mapuranga, Dumba and Musodza (2015) who state that the government should endorse clear policies that accommodate learners with disabilities.

(vi) Minimise the teacher to pupil ratio

A greater number of educators recommended that the government minimise the teacher pupil ratio at the school through providing enough human resources and revising the tenants of the policy which states that the teacher to pupil ratio for grades one and two should be 1:40. The teachers felt that the ratio of teacher to learner at ECD should stretch up to grade two. T6 said:

The teacher pupil ratio of the ECDs should also apply to the grade ones and twos so that we are able to give more attention to learners living with disabilities.

It is of the researcher's opinion that if this teacher pupil ratio is revised, the infant teachers will have a smaller number of learners because even the admin will enrol with the policy in mind. The school can even make use of assistant teachers to reduce the load. This is in support of Hayes and Bulat (2017) who point out that the use of teacher assistants as a way of assisting teachers in inclusive settings is an effective method in many countries. This will in turn give the educators time to do individualised teaching for learners with special needs.

(vii) Providing financial assistance for learners with disabilities

Four out of five parents of learners with disabilities recommended that education for LSN should be free. This meant that parents of LSN were facing financial challenges of educating their children. The researcher believes that this may have been due to the fact that LSN needed more resources than the learners without special needs. For example

an ECE physically challenged learner needs a wheelchair if they cannot walk, or transport to school if they walk with difficulty. This may give a parent financial challenges as they have to invest more money on the education of such a learner.

4.4 Summary

Inclusion is a very controversial issue in the education system hence the need for a thorough research on the challenges associated with it and their solutions. In this chapter the researcher laid down some major findings of the research and these findings were discussed in relation to literature. These findings were also linked to the research questions.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

The previous chapter was mainly concerned with noting down the major findings of this research, then tabulate and discuss on the major findings noted. In this chapter the researcher will summarise the whole research, thereafter, some conclusions will be noted down by the researcher. Finally, the researcher will write down a list of recommendations on what can be done to make the implementation of inclusive education more effective.

5.1 Summary

The main focus of this study was to investigate on the challenges of inclusion with regards to ECE learners. The research was conducted at Mabula Primary school in Mzilikazi District in the Bulawayo Metropolitan Province. This study sought to answer three research questions. The content of the research questions included the challenges faced by teachers, learners and the strategies that are needed to alleviate the challenges noted. Some major terms that were used in this chapter were also identified.

The literature review was divided into sub-topics and these included the definition of inclusion, the need for inclusion, drawbacks of implementing inclusion at ECE level and ways of implementing inclusion at ECE level. The researcher quoted some previous scholars that wrote on inclusion.

A research design to be used was identified and this was a case study. The population was identified and purposive sampling was used as a sampling technique. The research instruments to be used in the study were stated and the reasons to the choice of instruments were specified. The researcher stated the data collection procedures to be used and a data analysis plan was mapped out. Some ethical considerations of the research were noted.

Major findings from the data collected were noted down and analysed. Finally, the researcher discussed on the major findings in relation to literature.

5.2 Conclusions

The researcher concluded that the bulk of teachers at the school were ready to implement inclusion but there were some challenges that hindered them from effectively implementing it. These challenges included lack of material, financial and human resources. The other challenges were inadequate infrastructure, large teacher to pupil ratio, lack of teacher expertise, confusion between integration and inclusion by the admin.

The learners also faced challenges just like the teachers. Their challenges included negative attitudes from both teachers and learners, lack of parental support, improper infrastructure, and lack of individual attention from the teacher, lack of material resources and lack of quality education due to being taught by inexperienced teachers.

There are intervention strategies on the challenges encountered during the implementation of inclusion at the school. Both the teachers and the administration needed to be trained on how to implement inclusion effectively in the school. There was need for the teachers to be removed the burden of having a large load in their classrooms. The teachers were driven by the pass rate and this led them into side lining LWD. It was finally concluded that most teachers had a passion to teach learners with special needs but needed the school and the government to intervene so that they can teach effectively.

5.3 Recommendations

The findings from the study prompted the researcher to make the following recommendations to different stakeholders:

5.3.1 Teacher training

There is need for the school to organise some workshops and staff developments sessions in order to give the teachers and the administrators the necessary skills to implement inclusive education. The school can make use of other experienced people from outside the school. This will go a long way in removing the negative attitudes from the teachers.

5.3.2 Sensitise learners

The school needs to make use of the school guidance and counselling sessions to sensitise learners. The school can also make it a policy to extend this to classroom level. This will eradicate negative attitudes from learners.

5.3.3 Encourage teachers to further their education

The school administration needs to encourage teachers to further their education. This will help to equip teachers with necessary skills since most educational courses now include special needs education.

5.3.4 Prioritise funding to improving inclusive education

The school needs to make IE a first priority when channelling funds as this will help to improve its implementation.

5.3.5 Improve infrastructure

The school needs not only to build ramps to improve access to education for learners with disabilities. There is need to provide appropriate ablution facilities which consist of a spacious toilet with handles for use by physically challenged learners.

5.3.6 Sensitise parents

The school can make use of parents meetings to sensitise parents. Parents often think they have accepted the conditions of their learners yet they are the ones still stigmatising them. There is need to teach parents not to label learners or to write them off.

5.3.7 Reduce teacher to pupil ratio

The teacher to pupil ratio at the school can be reduced by employing the para professionals who will assist the teachers in the ECE department so as to make it easy for teachers to do individualised teaching.

5.3.8 Make use of learner exit profiles

There is need for the school to fully adopt the new curriculum that is skills based and does not consider academic excellence only, but also considers co-curricular and practical work such as craft work. In that way, the school can then discard school report books in favour of learner exit profiles.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

INTERVIEW GUIDES FOR ADMINISTRATORS

My name is Joyce Ncube, a student from Midlands State University. I am doing a research on the challenges of inclusion with regards to Early Childhood Education learners. All information given in this questionnaire shall be treated as confidential, therefore no names shall be mentioned in this research. Participation is voluntary, all respondents are allowed to withdraw from participating in this research anytime that they wish to do so. Your cooperation will be greatly appreciated.

1. What is your designation?
2. How long have you been in administration?
3. Do you hold any qualification on special needs?
4. what do you understand about inclusive education?
5. Do you think it's a good move in the education system at ECE level?
- 6.why?
7. With your experience as an administrator, what do you think are the challenges faced by teachers in implementing inclusive education at ECE level?
8. With your experience as an administrator, what do you think are the challenges faced by learners in implementing inclusive education at ECE level?
9. What are your recommendations on inclusive education.?

Thank you for your cooperation

APPENDIX 2

INTERVIEW GUIDES FOR TEACHERS

My name is Joyce Ncube, a student from Midlands State University. I am doing a research on the challenges of inclusion with regards to Early Childhood Education learners. All information given in this questionnaire shall be treated as confidential, therefore no names shall be mentioned in this research. Participation is voluntary, all respondents are allowed to withdraw from participating in this research anytime that they wish to do so. Your cooperation will be greatly appreciated.

1. which class do you teach?
2. what do you understand about inclusive education?
3. Do you think it's a good move in the education system at ECE level?
- 4.why?
5. How many learners do you have in your class?
6. How do you manage to teach effectively the learners with diverse needs?
7. What do you think should be done to attain equity in education for learners with special needs?
8. Do you communicate with parents of your special needs learners?
9. How does it help?

Thank you for your cooperation

APPENDIX 3

INTERVIEW GUIDES FOR PARENTS

My name is Joyce Ncube, a student from Midlands State University. I am doing a research on the challenges of inclusion with regards to Early Childhood Education learners. All information given in this questionnaire shall be treated as confidential, therefore no names shall be mentioned in this research. Participation is voluntary, all respondents are allowed to withdraw from participating in this research anytime that they wish to do so. Your cooperation will be greatly appreciated.

1. How many children do you have who are at ECE level at this school?
2. What do you understand about disability?
3. i) Does any of them have a disability?
ii) If the answer to the above question is yes, what kind of disability do they have?
kind of disability does your child have?
iii) The first time you learnt about the disability how did you feel?
iv) Have you accepted?
4. What made you accept that your child has a disability?
5. i) Do you think it is a good practice to have learners living with disabilities to be taught in the same class with those without disabilities?
6. What do you think are the challenges of inclusion to your child, teacher and even you?
ii) Give reasons to your answer.
7. i) Do you think the school provides the education that caters for your child's educational needs?
ii) Are there any issues that you feel should be addressed?
ii.a) If so, name them.

Thank you for your cooperation

APPENDIX 4

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR ADMINISTRATORS

My name is Joyce Ncube, a student from Midlands State University. I am doing a research on the challenges of inclusion with regards to Early Childhood Education learners. All information given in this questionnaire shall be treated as confidential, therefore no names shall be mentioned in this research. Participation is voluntary, all respondents are allowed to withdraw from participating in this research anytime that they wish to do so. Your cooperation will be greatly appreciated.

Questionnaire for Administrators

Section A

Tick the appropriate box

1. Sex **Male** [] **Female** []

2. Qualification

C.E. [] **D.E.** [] **B.E.D** []

OTHER.....

3. Years of experience as an administrator

Period	0 – 5yrs	6 – 10yrs	11 – 15yrs	16 – 20yrs	21 – 25yrs	26yrs and above
Response						

Section B

4. i) Do you hold any qualification to teach learners with disabilities? Yes [] No []

ii) If the answer to (8i) above is yes, which qualification do you hold?

.....
.....
.....

9. i) Did you receive any training in teaching special needs learners during your pre-service training?

Yes [] **No** []

b.) If yes, was it adequate to help you to teach effectively learners living with disabilities?

Yes [] **No** []

Section C

Answer the following questions in the spaces provided.

10. What do you understand about inclusive education?

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11.i) Do you think inclusive education is effective at ECE level? Yes [] No []

ii) Give reasons to your answer

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12. What do you think hinders the effective implementation of inclusive education at E.C.E. level at your school?

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13. What are your recommendations on inclusive education?

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(Thank you for your cooperation)

APPENDIX 5

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS

My name is Joyce Ncube, a student from Midlands State University. I am doing a research on the challenges of inclusion with regards to Early Childhood Education learners. All information given in this questionnaire shall be treated as confidential, therefore no names shall be mentioned in this research. Participation is voluntary, all respondents are allowed to withdraw from participating in this research anytime that they wish to do so. Your cooperation will be greatly appreciated.

Questionnaire for teachers

Section A

Tick the appropriate box

1. Sex **Male** [] **Female** []

2. Qualification

C.E. [] **D.E.** [] **B.E.D** []

3. Teaching experience.

Period	0 – 5yrs	6 – 10yrs	11 – 15yrs	16 – 20yrs	21 – 25yrs	26yrs and above
Response						

Section B

4. Which grade do you teach?.....

5. How many learners are there in your class?.....

6. How many of your learners require special attention?.....

7. How long have you been teaching ECE learners?

Period	0 – 5yrs	6 – 10 yrs	11 – 15yrs	16 – 20yrs	21 yrs and above
Response					

8. i) Do you hold any qualification to teach learners with disabilities? Yes [] No []

ii) If the answer to (8i) above is yes, which qualification do you hold?

.....
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.....

9. i) Did you receive any training in teaching special needs learners during your pre-service training?

Yes [] No []

b.) If yes, was it adequate to help you to teach effectively learners living with disabilities?

Section C

Answer the following questions in the spaces provided.

10. What is inclusive education?

.....
.....

11.i) Do you think inclusive education is effective at ECE level? Yes [] No []

ii) Give reasons to your answer

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12. What do you think hinders the effective implementation of inclusive education at E.C.E. level at your school?

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13. What are your recommendations on inclusive education?

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(Thank you for your cooperation)



APPENDIX 6

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PARENTS

My name is Joyce Ncube, a student from Midlands State University. I am doing a research on the challenges of inclusion with regards to Early Childhood Education learners. All information given in this questionnaire shall be treated as confidential, therefore no names shall be mentioned in this research. Participation is voluntary, all respondents are allowed to withdraw from participating in this research anytime that they wish to do so. Your cooperation will be greatly appreciated.

Questionnaire for parents

Section A

1. Do you have a child who is at ECE level at this school? Yes [] No []

2. What do you understand about the term disability?.....
.....
.....

3.i) Does your child have any disability? Yes [] No []

ii) If so, please specify.....

4. Have you accepted your child's disability? Yes [] No []

5.i) Are you able to supply the resources needed for the betterment of your child's disability?

Yes [] No []

ii) Give reasons to your answer.....
.....

Section B

6i) Do you think it is a good idea that your child is learning in the same environment with learners without disabilities? Yes [] No []

b) Give reasons to your answer?

.....
.....
.....

7. what do you think are the challenges of having inclusive education at the school?

8.i) Have you observed any changes in the child's development ever since the child entered ECE at this school? Yes [] No []

ii) If so what changes did you observe?

.....
.....
.....

9 i) Is there any discrimination of E.C.E learners living with disabilities at the school?

Yes [] No []

ii) If yes, specify.

.....
.....

10 i) Do you discuss your child's progress with the teacher? Yes [] No []

ii) Does it help to improve the progress of your child? Yes [] No []

iii)How does it help?

.....
.....

11 . What do you think should be done to improve inclusive education?

.....
.....

(thank you for your cooperation)