

The state of inclusive education in South Africa and the implications for teacher training programmes

Research Report
December 2018



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Abbreviations

ANAs	Annual National Assessments
CAPS	Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements
CPD	Continuing professional development
CSTL	Care and Support for Teaching and Learning
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
ECD	Early childhood development
EU	European Union
HEFG	Higher Education Focus Group
HEI	Higher Education Institution
INSETT	In-service teacher training
LOLT	Language of learning and teaching
OBE	Outcomes Based Education
PRESETT	Pre-service teacher training
SACMEQ	Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SIAS	Policy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support
UN	United Nations
UNISA	University of South Africa

Foreword

It is often argued that the health of a nation can be determined by the extent to which it is able to embrace and include those in society who have been marginalised and excluded from participating fully in society, with dignity. South Africa has a unique legacy of discrimination, separation and segregation and there are few sites where this has been more evident than in our schooling system. We have to acknowledge that our current school environments continue to present serious challenges for inclusive educational practices and that many learners continue to be alienated and marginalised from equitable education access and support to succeed.

It is widely accepted that children fall behind in school for a host of reasons – and these have nothing to do with an inability to learn. Yet it remains convenient to use deficit related arguments to explain ‘failure’ while ignoring the failure of the education system to support all our children. The tendency is to give uncritical allegiance to the arguments about ability and disability rather than to examine the underlying causes which construct ‘success’ and ‘failure’ and to examine our own attitudes which place a limit on what we believe can be achieved.

Our Constitution lays the foundation for an inclusive approach to education because it guarantees the right of every child to be educated free from prejudice and discrimination of any kind. Implicit in this approach is the belief that every child can learn and achieve. An inclusive approach helps us to understand that the key to learner success at school is not to allow preconceptions about ability to limit what we believe is possible, but rather create the right conditions for learning for all children – at home, at school and in their local communities. Learning is social and much of the learning difficulties experienced by learners can be seen as constructions that rise out of fear, alienation, discomfort, mistrust and low expectations. Schools that are not inclusive are hotbeds for such phenomena, leading to poor performance, a sense of failure, risk-taking behaviour, absenteeism, and drop out. And in this way, the prophecy is fulfilled.

Inclusive Education is a connectedness between learners, educators and communities of learning, which provides a positive environment which in turn positively affects self-worth, self-belief and achievement.

The ability to learn depends on these networks of support. This is the essence of *Ubuntu* - that we live in a delicate web of inter-connectedness and interdependence with each other. "*I am because we are.*" If I diminish, insult or mistreat another person, I do so similarly to myself. So inclusive education calls for mutual respect and support.

This holistic understanding of Inclusive Education is still a relatively new concept and requires advocacy, communication, training and support. Inclusive Education is currently largely located on the periphery rather than at the core of Teacher Education. Our aspiration to be a truly transformed and an admirable society must be informed by asking: what kind of people do we want to see coming out of our schooling system and what kind of teacher, curriculum and educational ethos will be needed in order to produce such people?

To this end a group of key stakeholders: the University of South Africa (UNISA), British Council and MIET AFRICA with the Department of Basic Education as associate partner, came together in response to a call by the European Union to ask: "How can we together help build a teacher development programme for Inclusion?" This led to TEACHING FOR ALL: MAINSTREAMING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA. This report describes the research conducted by UNISA to inform the work of the project.

These findings will inform the development of the module for pre- and in-service teachers, to assist students to examine deep seated assumptions, ideologies and values that shape their understandings of inclusion and constructions of difference, and to develop strength-based practices that are reflexive and creative and value all learners. Teachers need to understand how context can shape who they are as teachers, their value system and their agency, and that they need to be, not merely policy compliant, but collective enactors and enablers of policy.

This report will hopefully also contribute to the international body of knowledge around inclusive education.

Our future will be determined by the extent to which we attend to the learning needs of *all*, not only some, of our children and accordingly, how we attend to the professional preparation and retention of those entrusted with the education of our children. Inclusive Education is therefore ultimately about nation building – about a just society.

Professor John Volmink
Teaching for All: Advisory Committee
MIET AFRICA Chairperson

Executive summary

This report, *The State of Inclusive Education in South Africa and the Implications for Teacher Training Programmes*, arises from a collaborative partnership between the British Council, the University of South Africa (UNISA), Media in Education Trust Africa (MIET AFRICA) and associate partner, the Department of Basic Education (DBE). It is co-funded by the European Union (EU) for the benefit of the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET).

The philosophy underpinning the report, and the partnerships that provided its framework, is that of a *social model of education*; that is, one that advocates for inclusive classrooms that provide the best possible learning environment for *all* learners, and which provides social and life skills that learners can take through to adulthood, alongside academic learning. The stakeholders involved wish to facilitate delivery of the full potential that inclusive education offers by ensuring that teachers are trained and equipped with the necessary skills to maximise the potential of the diverse classrooms they meet. Therefore, in this context, *exclusion* refers to a system of education that does not afford all learners access, acceptance, participation and opportunities for success.

This project has drawn together collaborators from UNISA with researchers from the University of Fort Hare, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Cape Peninsula University of Technology and University of Johannesburg to complete this country-wide research project. This report aims to identify both the successes and the gaps in delivery of mainstream inclusive education in South Africa. The research and analyses examine the capacity of the system to provide inclusive education, so as to inform the design of teacher education projects at the PRESETT and continuing professional development (CPD) levels.

The long-term aim of the project is capacity building, through working in partnership with universities to develop responsive quality programmes in inclusive education. In addition, an appropriate range of materials (drawing on information and communication technologies, video, text and mobile phones) will be developed and piloted, and then offered as open educational resources. Finally, innovative and appropriate teacher training materials will also be developed to support the early identification of learners with a variety of different learning needs, including for early learning in the pre-school phase.

It is hoped the various outputs will contribute to a strengthened teacher education system in South Africa through partnerships with universities, support the implementation and mainstreaming of inclusive education and facilitate access for all learners to quality education. It is also anticipated that this report will serve as a springboard for further research on the topic.

The report adopts an integrated approach to inclusive education, which is contrasted with the “medical model of disability” that “takes a narrow, labelling approach that can perpetuate stereotypes and create a cycle of dependency and exclusion that is often difficult to break.”¹

In contextual summary of inclusive education in South Africa, it is shown to fit well with the philosophy of *Ubuntu*, which recognises that “the suffering of one is the suffering of all”. However, it is recognised that inclusive education, as currently practised in South Africa, falls far short of the ideal.

The specific objectives of the Teaching for All project may be summarised as: to develop effective inclusive education training modules for pre-service teacher training (PRESETT) courses, to increase the number of pre-service teachers with positive attitudes towards inclusive education and to integrate inclusive education into the training programmes of all provincial education departments.

The main question posed by the study:

What is the state of Inclusive Education in South Africa and the implications for teacher training programmes?”

Sub-questions posed to answer the main question were:

1. *What are the current statistics on learners who are excluded from the education system?*
2. *What are the current policies and teacher training programmes on Inclusive Education?*
3. *What are the attitudes of pre-service and in-service teachers towards Inclusive Education?*
4. *What are the implications of the current state of Inclusive Education on teacher training programmes?*

The major findings of the study revealed that:

1. There are inadequacies in current statistics for inclusive education.
2. There is wholesale exclusion of learners with disabilities from the education system, with about 70 per cent of such learners excluded.
3. But there is also exclusion from *within* the classroom, which stems particularly from limited literacy because of language policies.

As an example, approximately 60 per cent of Grade 4 learners are unable to read with comprehension, while 87 per cent of learners in Grade 4 experience challenges in reading. More than 40 per cent of learners enrolled in Grade 10 do not obtain school leaving matriculation at grade 12.

4. Teacher training programmes for inclusive education are underpinned by a 'siloed' and non-integrative approach.
5. Less than 20 per cent of pre-service teachers were found to exhibit a positive attitude towards inclusive education.

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are put forward for teacher training by HEIs:

1. Infuse inclusive education into all modules of teacher training programmes.
2. Integrate theory and practice of inclusive education in teacher training programmes.
3. Provide knowledge and skills on selection and use of technology in teacher training programmes.
4. Provide pre-service teachers with the fundamental skills for effective lesson planning.
5. Avail opportunities for practice teaching in full-service schools.
6. Infuse inclusive education methodologies into all school curriculum subjects.
7. Provide a comprehensive, integrative foundation on curriculum differentiation.

8. Recognise inclusive education as going beyond the provision of physical access.
9. Ensure that policy mandates the offering of inclusive education as a compulsory component of all teaching courses.
10. Provide staff development on inclusive education to teacher educators (lecturers).
11. Formulate clear and specific policies on inclusive education.
12. Spell out explicitly the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders in the implementation of inclusive education.
13. Familiarise teachers with national and international policies, legislation and guidelines on inclusive education.

1. Introduction to inclusive education in South Africa

To understand the challenges underlying the implementation of inclusive education, it is important firstly to understand how inclusive education is understood and defined by the various stakeholders.

1.1 An understanding of inclusive education

The term inclusive education is entrenched within competing discourses, which adds to the challenge of determining the user's intent. For the purposes of this report, the authors accept the definition of Inclusive Education by Dalton et al (2012), which proposes the following as key guiding elements: addressing diverse needs, addressing barriers that negatively affect learning, supporting removal of barriers to learning and ensuring that education is non-discriminative.² The term applied throughout this report to describe this model of inclusion is an "integrated approach" to inclusive education.

The question of disability terminology is the subject of much debate. The authors acknowledge that the language we use can reflect internalised attitudes and beliefs and influence how we behave.³ Disability terminology may have an evaluative meaning, which is defined by philosophers of language and meta-ethicists as "the force of an expression which conveys the speaker's positive or negative attitude to what the expression is describing, and is in contrast to descriptive meaning, which is a bare description of the fact and picks out the range to which the expression applies."⁴ The authors therefore will apply a "people first" terminology.

There are two main philosophical approaches to Inclusive Education: one is an integrative approach, as described above; the other is commonly referred to as the medical or specialisation approach.⁵ The medical model of disability "takes a narrow, labelling approach that can perpetuate stereotypes and create a cycle of dependency and exclusion that is often difficult to break."⁶ The term "silo" is applied throughout this report to attempt to remove any implicit evaluative meaning. Silo is a natural opposite to the term "integrative": both therefore offer an intuitively descriptive understanding of the models, while removing the more emotive descriptions that involve the medicalisation of a person's nature.

When an education system embraces a silo approach, children with diverse learning needs are excluded from mainstream schools. Often, given the limited number of special schools⁷ or the distance from such learners to such schools, this results in complete exclusion from school. The silo approach is a philosophical construct that fails to recognise the rights of the individual to engage within society's mainstream.⁸⁻¹¹ The alternative paradigm is one of integrated or blended inclusion that, in this context, means that every classroom offers inclusive education, and that all stakeholders, including the teacher, are capacitated to facilitate education in an inclusive manner to meet the diverse needs of their students.

1.2 Inclusive education in the South African context

During the apartheid era, learners with disabilities faced social exclusion, when they were placed in their own racially segregated special schools.¹² In the post-apartheid period, the rhetoric was transformed to include all diverse learners through inclusive education. An existing policy framework supports the rights of learners to an inclusive education in South Africa.¹³⁻²⁰ South African policy follows the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education,²¹ recognising that the most efficient and effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes and achieving education for all is for regular schools to offer inclusive education. The Education White Paper 6 (Special Needs Education: Building an inclusive education and training system, 2001) advocates an inclusive education approach.²² This includes the development of “full-service schools” and the availability of teachers who are adequately trained to support the needs of all learners in school. Furthermore, the National Development Plan 2030²³ highlights the role of the education sector in building inclusivity for society, which is recognised as an important issue to address in South Africa.

However, implementation of these policies to create an accessible educational framework for learners remains inadequate. Learners are hindered by an environment that is not responsive to their needs within a social model of disability.²⁴ Most children with severe to profound disabilities are excluded from education, while most learners with disabilities who are in school attend special schools.^{25,26} In this regard, South Africa is failing to achieve its education goals, specifically the key imperative – that learners who experience barriers to learning should receive appropriate support in a range of educational settings.²⁷⁻²⁹

The Minister of Basic Education, Ms A Motshekga, had stated that as of 2010, there were only eight schools that had been completely converted to full-service schools and therefore capable of meeting a full range of support needs.³⁰

Because the belief-system framework for inclusive education principles exists within *Ubuntu*,* South Africa is particularly well placed to link policy, practice and the community to improve inclusive education initiatives by building upon this Afro-centric socio-cultural context.³¹

Ubuntu recognises that the suffering of one individual is the suffering of all and promotes ‘humanness’, as well as advocating treating others with sensitivity, respect and dignity. It is not surprising, therefore, that the desire to redress past imbalances and transform the system towards creating an equal society, and respect the rights of all, are principles that permeate the South African rhetoric. The consciousness of *Ubuntu* mirrors that of human rights instruments and mandates that every individual – even those exhibiting traits that are different from the norm – should be accepted as valued and loved human beings. Rejection, stigmatisation and exclusionary practices are unacceptable within this philosophical framework, because they undermine one’s identity and self-respect.

Ubuntu also embraces an impulse of ‘interdependence’, that is a perspective of the individual in relation to self and the community. This recognises that individuals are not isolated entities but belong to a community, and is encompassed in the sentiment, “It takes a village to raise a child.” Embedded in this concept is a strong sense of shared responsibility. The South African consciousness recognises that the responsibility of raising children should be the collective effort of community members, including parents who may have no formal education. Because the belief system framework for inclusive education principles exists within *Ubuntu*, South Africa is well placed to link policy, practice and the community to improve inclusive education.³²

**Ubuntu* means “humanity” in various Nguni languages, but is also used in the philosophical sense of a shared connectedness among people and communities.

1.3 Problem statement

The disadvantaged are often those who have diverse and specialised needs. Learners with physical or mental challenges often face restrictions, prohibiting access to knowledge, social interactions and the framework to create a vision of their future as involved, productive members of their society.

Despite the policy framework provided by The Education White Paper 6 (2001) in support of an education system that responds to the needs of all learners, a significant number of learners in South Africa are excluded from the education system.³³⁻³⁸ The successful implementation of inclusive education, however, requires a culture in which diversity is both affirmed and promoted. This requires that teachers and other stakeholders demonstrate positive attitudes to inclusion and work together to ensure that all learners – especially those who have previously been marginalised – receive a quality education. In addition, it is important to develop inclusive, needs assessment-based programmes, and to provide teachers with ongoing training and support to empower them to respond to diversity in their classrooms.³⁹

This study therefore aims to facilitate the continued improvement of inclusive education policies and practices in the South African education system. Its focus is to raise capacity within the education system by addressing teacher proficiency, both at the PRESETT and CPD levels, with the aim of raising the achievement of all learners.

1.4 Limitations

Despite the clear need to recognise the shortcomings of the current educational paradigm (that is, a curriculum-driven, teacher-centric classroom, at all levels of schooling), it lies outside the scope of this study to propose alternatives. Similarly, there are many historically disadvantaged South African schools that have a low socio-economic status: their lack of resources creates an environment of exclusion for many learners. Again, however, it is outside the scope of this study to propose solutions. This report simply presents these barriers in the context of how they inhibit inclusion.

This study reviews the functioning of the current education system in South Africa but provides only an assessment at this particular time. It is therefore not an evaluation, if an evaluation is understood to be a systematic investigation into the effectiveness of social interventions.⁴⁰ (Such systemic investigations are available, however.^{41,42}) The study is limited to examining and addressing the competence and attitudes of, and the resources available to, the teachers; but it cannot address or assess composition of staff or any structural problems within the education sector or educative paradigm itself.

1.5 Project objectives

This project arises in response to the needs of the most dispossessed. It works towards creating a system empowered to support individuals and respond to their individual needs and challenges. It nurtures the ambition that such a system may become both robust and humane enough to support the needs of all the individuals relying on it.

The specific objectives of the project are to:

- Develop effective inclusive education training modules to be integrated into PRESETT courses in South African universities
- Increase the number of pre-service teachers with positive attitudes towards creating inclusive classrooms
- Integrate inclusive education training modules and materials into the INSETT programmes of all nine provincial education departments

Phase one of the project required a comprehensive analysis of the status of inclusive education in South Africa, and the implications for teacher education programmes.

1.6 Research questions

1.6.1 Main research question

To facilitate the empowerment of teachers, it was vital to assess the status quo. Therefore, the main research question that underpins this study is:

- 1. *What is the state of inclusive education in South Africa and the implications for teacher training programmes?***

1.6.2 Research sub-questions

To answer this, the following sub-questions were posed:

2. *What are the current statistics on learners who are excluded from the education system?*
3. *What are the current policies and teacher training programmes on inclusive education?*
4. *What are the attitudes of pre-service and in-service teachers towards inclusive education?*
5. *What are the implications of the current state of inclusive education on teacher training programmes?*

The first sub-question of the research required an analysis of the current statistics on learners who are excluded from the education system.

The first part of sub-question two required the identification and review of current inclusive education policies and frameworks, the most influential of which include the Constitution of South Africa (No 108 of 1996); the National Education Policy Act (No 27 of 1996); the South African Schools Act (No 84 of 1996); and White Paper 6 on Inclusive Education (2001). The second part of the sub-question required the identification of teacher training programmes on inclusive education, collected from all HEIs that provide teacher training. Findings indicated that there was no clear consensus among HEIs about how to facilitate inclusive education in teacher training, although the most common model adopted is the 'silo' approach.

Sub-question three required an analysis of the attitudes towards inclusive education, which was answered through open-ended interviews with two cohorts of pre-service teachers – namely UNISA analyses (2017 pre-service students who had completed their compulsory modules) and concurrent analyses (currently enrolled students at four other representative universities). From the results it was apparent that a silo philosophy still permeates the teaching profession, among both trainee teachers and their lecturers.

The fourth sub-question examined the implications of the current state of inclusive education on teacher training programmes. Various shortcomings in existing policies were identified, including a lack of uptake by HEIs on certain policy recommendations, a lack of clarity with regards to definitions of disability and ambiguity regarding policy wording in some cases.

2. Status of inclusive education in South Africa

2.1 The reality of exclusion

Sub-question one asked: *What are the current statistics on learners who are excluded from the education system?* This was addressed by examining the literature that provides the current statistics on learners who are excluded from the education system, as well as literature providing analyses on the data available.

2.1.1 Methodology

A literature review on the state of inclusive education and the extent to which learners are excluded was conducted, as per Leedy and Ormrod (2013).⁴³ The key search terms used were “inclusive education”, “exclusion”, “inclusion”, “out-of-school”, “basic education system”, “disability” and “learners and South Africa”. The search terms were systematically combined to search for relevant statistics and literature from the internet, and by examining relevant books published between 1994 and 2016. Policy documents were also examined (the start date for the search was significant in understanding the status of inclusive education in the post-apartheid era). Sources for statistical data included the DBE’s website and the Household Surveys, as conducted by Statistics South Africa.⁴⁴⁻⁵³

2.1.2 Results and discussion

Limitations of the general statistics on school enrolment

Statistics from the DBE’s website and Statistics South Africa’s household surveys are important sources. Such data must be handled with caution, however. Gustafsson⁵⁴ warned about the limitation and unreliability of the statistical data from national surveys, attributing dishonesty because of fear of censure as one reason to expect invalid data. As an example, interviewees may claim that children are at school, when they are not.

The challenge is that, even at government level, stakeholders are not motivated to volunteer such statistics, because their focus would be more on statistics that indicate achievement. By admitting to having a specific number of excluded children, this could expose responsible bodies to criticism when policy is aligned to international child protection conventions and clauses.

Such data could therefore contradict the declarations made by the Government on achievements attained and deviate from the DBE's message. It is further argued that some schools inflate the enrolment figures of learners to attract more teaching posts and funding, making the statistics on increased annual enrolment somewhat unreliable.⁵⁵

Recognising the potential for discrepancies, it is therefore important for the DBE to present its statistics on out-of-school learners in its Country Reports⁵⁶ in a way that enables a better understanding of exclusion within the education system.

South African school enrolment data

Van Wyk⁵⁷ argues that the enrolment statistics should not be overlooked because they illuminate the goal of universal primary education in 2015, as presented in the South African Millennium Development Goal Report.⁵⁸ Figure 1, below, presents enrolment statistics in respect of schooling for the period 2012-16.

These enrolment statistics include primary and secondary learners in public and independent schools throughout South Africa. However, the statistics exclude learners with disabilities in special schools and in early childhood programmes. The trends show an annual increase in learner enrolment in all nine provinces. Official figures report that gross enrolment rates in primary schools increased from 88.1 per cent in 2002 to 94.2 per cent in 2015, and that gross enrolment rates in secondary schools increased from 89 per cent in 2002 to 94.5 per cent in 2015.⁵⁹⁻⁶¹

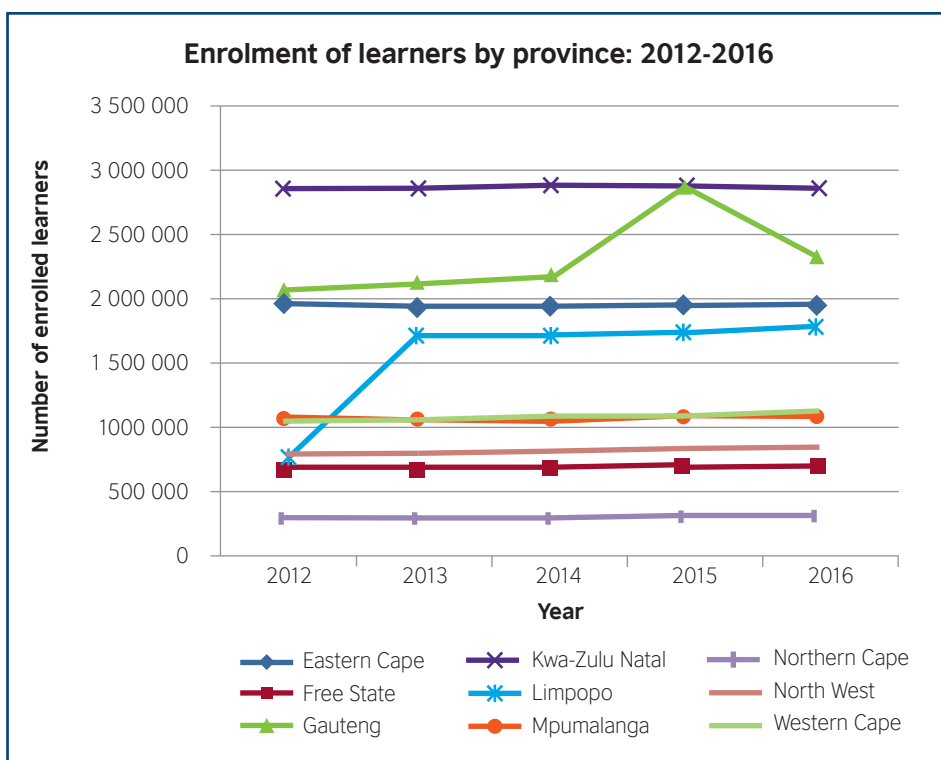


Figure 1: Learners on South Africa by Province, 2012-16
 (Data for 2012 taken from DBE;⁶² 2013 and 2014 from DBE;⁶³ 2015 from DBE;⁶⁴ 2016 from DBE⁶⁵)

From 2014 to 2015, the number of learners in the system increased by 2.1 per cent nationally.⁶⁶ According to Human Rights Watch: “In 2015, the Government declared it had reached universal enrolment in primary education and achieved the United Nations Millennium Development Goal on education,”⁶⁷ implying that all primary learners had completed a full year of schooling in that year of declaration. Spaul⁶⁸ argues that South Africa has a 98 per cent primary school enrolment, which is the highest in Africa. Although the present enrolment statistics are useful in that they provide a context in which exclusion can be understood, they do not, however, include specific statistics of learners who are out of school, nor do they build a picture of the number of learners repeating years in school.

Recalling Gustafsson's observation⁶⁹ that the enrolment statistics can be misleading, examining the Statistics South Africa (2016) report confirms that enrolment statistics are not as simple as the number of learners enrolling each year.⁷⁰⁻⁷² For example, the gross enrolment rate for black Africans in primary school was 124.3 per cent, which demonstrates the high number learners enrolling outside the school-age range.⁷³⁻⁷⁵

Gustafsson⁷⁶ also argued that the percentage of learners in special schools could be lower than recorded, because some of those learners enrol in institutions that the Government does not recognise as schools. Thus, while the trend is an increase in enrolment, it should be remembered that the figures for learners in special schools are omitted.

Exclusion of learners *from* the school system

a. *Out-of-school children*

The definition of *out-of-school children* is broad and encompasses different dimensions of exclusion. The United Nations Children's Fund (2015)⁷⁷ provides a four-point typology that includes: (i) children old enough to go to primary school who are not enrolled, (ii) children old enough to go to lower secondary school who are not enrolled, (iii) primary school learners dropping out of primary school, and iv) secondary school learners at risk of dropping out of secondary school. Furthermore, it must also extend to those children who enrol but do not attend school, or who enrol in schools that offer no facilities or teachers. Thus, there are learners who are supposed to be schooling, but for one reason or another are not.

While enrolment statistics are of importance in understanding the annual trends in the enrolment of learners, they also have the potential to assist in understanding the exclusion of learners from the education system. However, Gustafsson⁷⁸ observed that there was always a discrepancy between the age-specific enrolment totals provided by the DBE, and the age-specific population statistics in household surveys provided by Statistics South Africa. This difference indicates that there are children who, by law, should be in school, but who are not.

Gustafsson estimated that 14 per cent of children aged seven to 15 (which translated to 1.4 million children) who were supposed to be in school were actually out of school.⁷⁹ However, he examined other sources for the same year and concluded that it is more likely that "fewer than two per cent of children aged seven to 15 are not attending school".⁸⁰

Table 1 shows Gustafsson’s calculated estimates of out-of-school learners from the official enrolment for 2009, and the household survey population statistics provided by Statistics South Africa.

TABLE 1: OUT-OF-SCHOOL LEARNERS, 2009 – OFFICIAL ENROLMENT VS POPULATION STATISTICS (Adapted from Gustafsson, M⁸¹)

Enrolment and Population	Statistics
Enrolment from Grade 1-12 from official educational report (2009)	12,227,963
Population from Stats South Africa (mid-year estimates)	12,556,885
Enrolment ratio	97.4
Implied out of school	328,892

The latest figures available from Statistics South Africa⁸² provide a breakdown, rather than a total “implied out of school”, as per Figure 2:

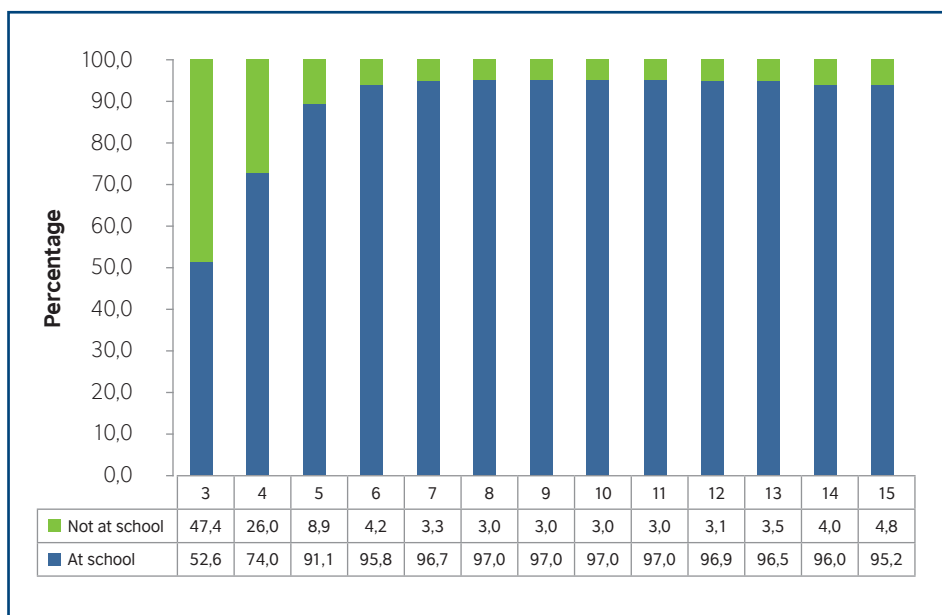


Figure 2: Out-of-school children 3-15, by single age (Taken from Spaull, N And Kotze, J⁸³)

b. Exclusion of learners with disabilities from schooling

Because of the disparities in figures provided by the various departments, the reliability of the specific statistics cannot necessarily be guaranteed. But such disparities are to be expected when no consensus exists as to the classification of disability.⁸⁴ Estimates suggest that in South Africa 70 to 90 per cent of children of school-going age with disabilities are out of school.⁸⁵⁻⁸⁷ Estimated figures for 2015 suggest that at least 600,000 learners with disabilities are out of school,⁸⁸ which is almost double the 280,000 estimated in 2001.^{89,90} Statistics provided by Statistics South Africa⁹¹ show that in all age groups from five to eighteen, the percentage of learners with disabilities enrolled in school is lower than those of learners without disabilities.

From the literature, several reasons emerged for children with disabilities being out of school:

- Extra costs for assistants and transport that children with disabilities have to pay⁹²
- Lack of access to appropriate special schools in the communities where the children live
- Lack of access to relevant and appropriate education while in school
- Inadequate classroom environments that are unable to facilitate inclusive education
- Teachers' lack of knowledge with respect to the needs of children with disabilities: The lack of knowledge extends to technology, augmentative devices and teaching methodologies. As a result, some learners physically present in schools cannot access the education.⁹³
- Long waiting lists for entry into special schools
- Cultural barriers, and attitudes about the importance of educating children with disabilities affecting whether parents decide to send them to school⁹⁴
- Changes in guardianship: Cultural attitudes may impact who acts as guardian to the learner, with disabled learners not necessarily living with their parents, but instead residing with guardians who do not necessarily show proactive attitudes towards their care.⁹⁵
- Stigmatisation of learners with disabilities⁹⁶⁻⁹⁹

c. Exclusion of learners from the primary school system

Between 2002-15, there were increases in pre-school and primary school attendance.¹⁰⁰ However, drop-outs from South African schools constitute a high percentage of exclusions.^{101,102} Contrary to the declaration of Universal Education at Primary School Level made by Government in 2015,¹⁰³ the literature review revealed that there is significant exclusion of primary school learners in the South African schooling system.¹⁰⁴⁻¹⁰⁸

Because of inequalities in the schooling system, learners from disadvantaged social contexts lag way behind their advantaged counterparts in terms of accessing the curriculum.^{109,110} For example, Grade 3 learners from a disadvantaged school lag behind their peers by three years, and by the time they reach Grade 9 the lag is five years.¹¹¹ This underscores the gap between learners from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds and those from advantaged schools, which later culminates in dropping out of secondary schooling. Moreover, although the primary school enrolment is 98 per cent,¹¹² almost half of such learners do not complete their schooling.

d. Exclusion of learners from the secondary school system

Drop-outs also contribute to the exclusion of secondary school learners from the education system. Gustafsson noted that even beyond unequal primary schooling opportunities, there were other reasons, major and minor, why learners were dropping out at secondary levels. These included:¹¹³

- Lack of finances: This is the main reason for mid-year drop-outs, with 37 per cent of learners dropping out because of financial constraints.
- Teenage pregnancy: This was cited as the second largest reason, with 27 per cent of learners affected; when coupled with socio-economic factors, it was responsible for forcing the girl-child out of school.
- Disadvantaged backgrounds, such as limited economic resources, low parental education, loss of one or both parents, lack of transport to school: This resulted in 20 per cent of learners dropping out of school to look for jobs, underscoring the fact that socio-economic conditions also underlie the reasons for dropping out.
- Illness
- Learners with additional needs

- School circumstances, such poor learner-teacher relationship, language of teaching and learning
- Lack of enthusiasm about education, as perceived as not to be useful
- Learners feeling that they have acquired the level of education they need at the point of drop-out
- Child-headed households linked to the death of one or both parents as an element of vulnerability

Of the 3,032,098 orphaned children in South Africa, 5,970 were reported to be heading households.^{114,115} Many of these children either miss out on schooling altogether or attend sporadically.

The chart below illustrates minor reasons for learners in Grades 8 and 9 and Grades 10 to 12 dropping out, as identified by a study conducted by Gustafsson in 2011.¹¹⁶

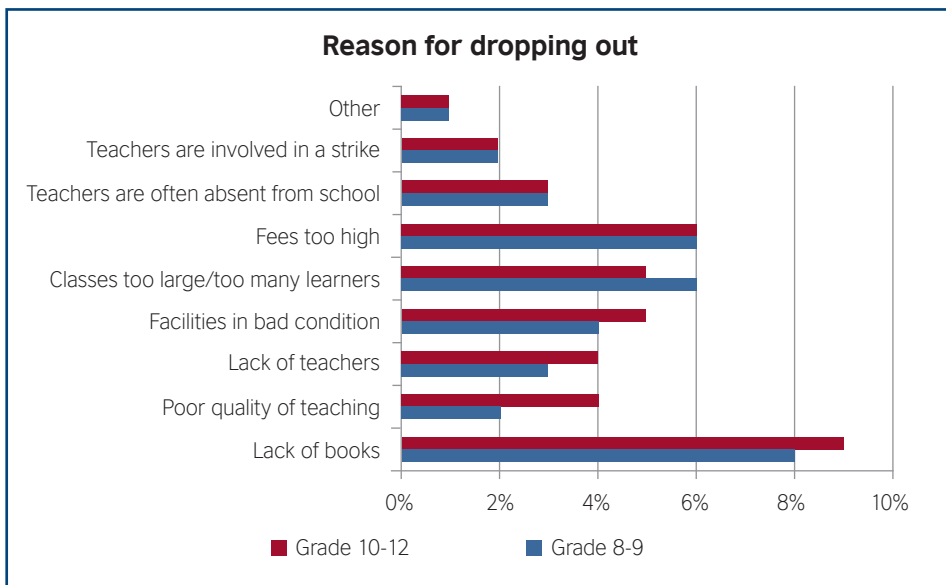


Figure 3: Reasons for dropping out of school, Grades 8 and 9 and 10 to 12 (Taken from Gustafsson, M¹¹⁷)

All the reasons provided are contextual and predominate in disadvantaged schools. It could be argued that learners who are extensively excluded by the system of education in South Africa are those who are already disadvantaged.

It should be emphasised that while statistics regarding drop-out rates do not compare learners from wealthy and poor schools, it is highly likely that learners from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds represent the largest proportion of those that drop out, with large proportions of learners from poor and rural schools being both illiterate and innumerate.¹¹⁸ Spaul and Kotze¹¹⁹ have argued that learners are not excluded from schooling because of any inherent deficiencies in themselves, but rather because of the failure of the South African education system to provide opportunities for sustained and meaningful learning for them.

Figure 4 shows statistics on the drop-out of learners at Matric level across all provinces. However, it should be noted that the statistics in respect of the drop-out of learners may not be accurate, with the confounding variable of learners repeating grades. Learners who did not proceed to Matric as expected may repeat Grades 10 or 11. Notwithstanding, it should be emphasised that repeating a grade indicates that a learner has not yet mastered the prerequisite concepts at that grade level, making them unready for the next. This is a fundamental challenge faced by the current education system.

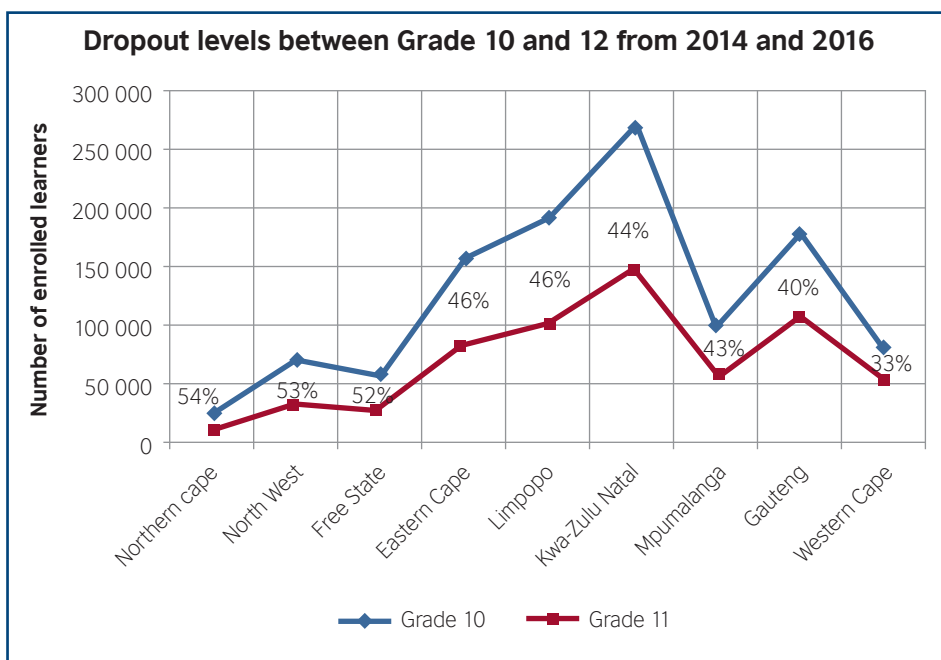


Figure 4: Grades 10-12 dropout, 2014-16 (Adapted from DBE¹²⁰)

Figure 4 illustrates that in three provinces, namely Northern Cape, North West and the Free State, an average rate of 58.9 per cent of learners who enrolled for Grade 10 in 2014 dropped out of school and therefore did not proceed to Matric in 2016 as expected. The same pattern occurred in the other six provinces, where an average of 42.1 per cent of learners did not proceed to grade 12. Across the whole country, a drop-out of 44.6 per cent was experienced. This clearly reflects an education system that is experiencing severe challenges, and one that is excluding a significant percentage of learners from schooling.

Exclusion of learners *within* the school system

Figures on exclusion *from* the school system fail to highlight the extent of exclusion *within* the school system. For example, there is a stark difference in the literacy and numeracy performance in the 25 per cent of wealthy schools and the 75 per cent that constitute the poor schools.¹²¹ This dualist school system, linked to socio-economic status, perpetuates educational inequalities.¹²² As the poorer schools represent the larger percentage in terms of literacy and numeracy, it points to a greater number of learners being excluded from within the system.

Research indicates that children from low socio-economic status households and communities develop academic skills slower than children from higher socio-economic groups.¹²³ Low socio-economic status in childhood is related to poor cognitive development, language, memory and socio-emotional processing, and consequently poor income and health in adulthood.¹²⁴ Typically, school systems in low-socio-economic status communities are often under resourced, further negatively impacting learners' academic progress and outcomes. Studies have shown that socio-economic status at the individual and school level are positively correlated with literacy achievement in all English-speaking countries.¹²⁵

The following components of socio-economic status – income, parent education and parent occupation – are statistically significant predictors of school literacy achievement.¹²⁶

a. Exclusion of learners with disabilities within the school system

Any learner is excluded when teachers are not trained or provided with the resources and structures required to meet a learner's unique needs. But a learner may also be excluded in terms of physical and social structures. We thus find those learners with visual and physical challenges being excluded by extrinsic factors such as inaccessible infrastructure, more specifically the infrastructure or public transport.

In mainstream schools, children with disabilities are often confronted with attitudinal barriers from teachers and other learners. This can reach the extremes of physical abuse, violence and neglect. These children are turned away by school officials and medical personnel, and a silo philosophy to their education is applied. This may mean that they are referred to special schools, where the admission process can take up to four years, with children having then to wait at home or in care centres before being admitted.¹²⁷ Even when children do have access to teachers at special schools, these teachers are often untrained in a range of assistive approaches including South African Sign Language and Braille.¹²⁸

Not all children with disabilities are altogether excluded from education. Where possible, and depending on the extent of the disability, when learners are on a special school waiting list, they continue attending a mainstream school until there is space at a required special school. This is not a reflection of an integrative policy on inclusive education, but rather offered as an alternative to complete exclusion from some form of education. In some cases, those with severe disabilities are allocated to special needs care centres where they receive some form of education (Western Cape Education Official, 2017; Autism Western Cape, 2017). It is therefore argued that schools decide whether or not they are willing to accommodate learners with particular challenges.¹²⁹ It is important to note that the reasons put forward for children with disabilities not to be at school are all contextual.

Oliver¹³⁰ argues that the limitations of persons with disabilities are not in their impairments, but in the social environments within which they exist.¹³¹⁻¹³⁵ Thus, to overcome the exclusion of children with disabilities from the education system, there is a need to tackle the context of schooling, and, consequently, apply an integrative system of inclusive education.

In its report, *Complicit in Exclusion*, Human Rights Watch (2015) argued that there are hundreds of thousands of children with disabilities who are in school but remain excluded from the system. Physical access to school does not equate to equal access to learning opportunities; the risk therefore exists of exclusion within an “inclusionary” framework”. Though the report does not provide exact statistics on those children, it points to the extent to which they are excluded from the education system in South Africa.¹³⁶

The literature also reveals that learners with disabilities who enrolled in special schools post-1994 may not have equal access to the curriculum. The experiences include limited subject choices, with higher-grade subjects such as Physics, Maths or Accounting not being offered. Some special schools do not offer education up to grade 12 level.¹³⁷ It should be understood, therefore, that inclusion is not simply presence in a physical space: it relates to the quality of education children receive at any given time.

b. Exclusion of learners from within the primary school system

There is mounting evidence of mass exclusion from within the schooling system itself. Studies investigating mathematical performance in South African schools, for example, reveal, with regards to numeracy, learners are excluded *within* the education system. In the Annual National Assessments (ANAs), conducted from 2011-14 to test learners from Grades 1-6,¹³⁸ the majority of learners were found to be performing below their grade level in Maths. Schollar (2008)¹³⁹ argued that at the primary level, the system fails to assist learners’ progress from counting to calculation, and yet promotes them to the next grade before they have mastered the foundational content in their respective level. Spaul and Kotze¹⁴⁰ also argued that there is a cognitive backlog, which has resulted in learners not acquiring the required basic numerical competencies in lower-grade levels.

As an example of the magnitude of the issue, Spaul¹⁴¹ argues that in 2011, 76 per cent of Grade 9 learners had not acquired basic skills in the whole number system, decimals and operations. It may be inferred from this that a Grade 9 learner’s operational level in mathematics is equivalent to that of a Grade 3 learner. It is expected that mathematical concepts such as basic whole number, decimals and operations are fully acquired at Grade 3 level. Since mathematical knowledge is hierarchical and cumulative, without the mastery of basic concepts at appropriate grade levels, the acquisition of complex competencies might never be acquired, let alone mastered, by learners as they progress to higher levels of learning.

Statistics on Grade 3 learners who were performing at appropriate Grade levels in Maths in all provinces are presented in Figure 5, below. The Grade 3 systemic evaluation was used as the test instrument; the results were analysed by Spaul and Kotze,¹⁴² using the Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ) III data set. The focus on Grade 3 level is important, because this is the level at which learners should have a mastery of elementary numeracy that would lay the foundation for other complex mathematical concepts in progressive grades. Thus, the results at this specific grade level could be a good indicator of the performance at all other grade levels.

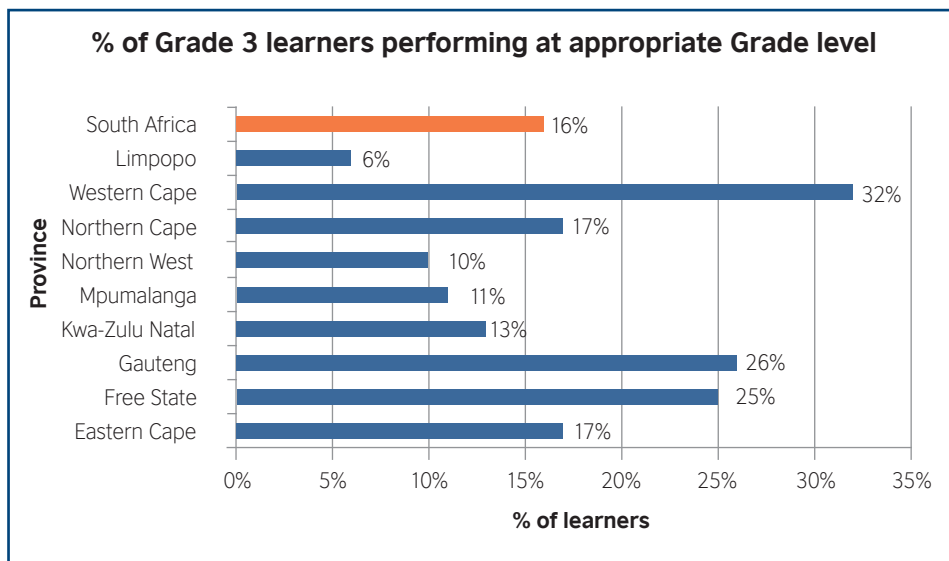


Figure 5: Grade 3 learners performing at grade level, by pProvince (Taken from Spaul, N¹⁴³)

Figure 5 illustrates that, across all provinces, the percentage of Grade 3 learners who were performing at their appropriate grade levels was low. It follows, therefore, that the number of under-performing Grade 3 learners was high. For example, in Limpopo Province, only six per cent of learners were performing at appropriate Grade 3 levels, with 94 per cent performing below the appropriate level. According to Spaul and Kotze,¹⁴⁴ 84 per cent of Grade 3 learners, especially from disadvantaged schools, are not performing at appropriate grade levels. In South Africa as a whole, Spaul and Kotze reported only 16 per cent performing at Grade 3 level.

It may be argued that despite learners being enrolled in schools, they do not master the basics in foundation phases, and hence are excluded from access to the grade-appropriate curriculum.¹⁴⁵ Similarly, Figure 6 illustrates the level of illiteracy and innumeracy manifested by South Africans aged over 15 years because of exclusion from, or within, the school system.

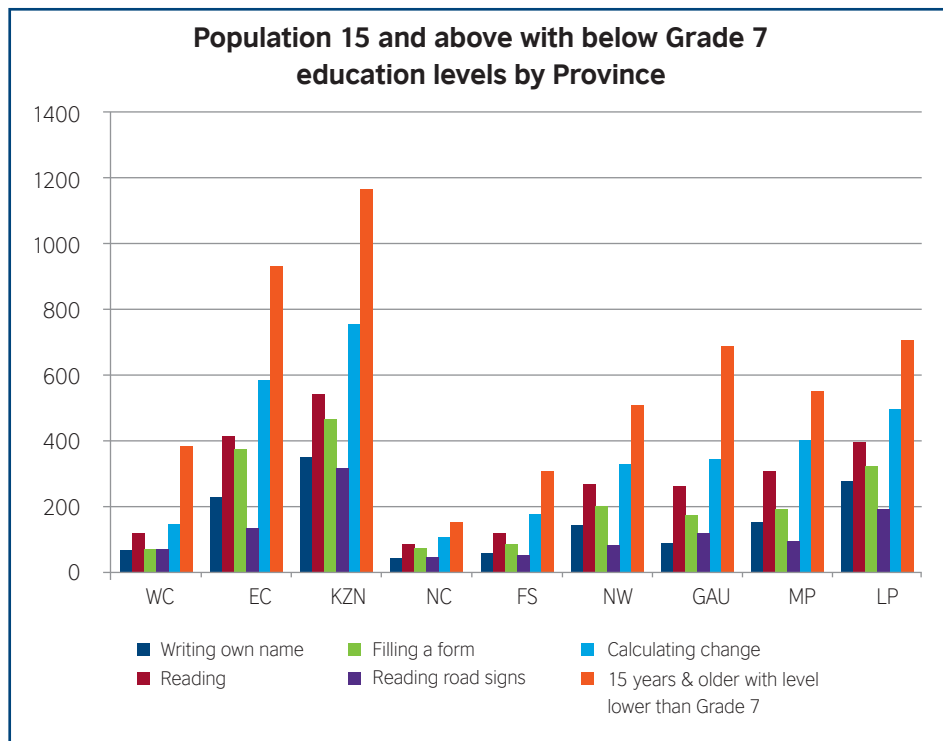


Figure 6: Population aged 15 or older with an educational level below Grade 7
These South Africans are therefore unable to do basic literacy and numeracy activities (Adapted from statistics South Africa¹⁴⁶)

From Figure 6 it can be seen that there are learners in all provinces who do not possess basic literacy skills such as writing their names or reading road signs, nor basic numeracy skills such as calculating monetary change. Furthermore, compared to other countries in the Southern and Eastern African Region, South Africa manifests low educational achievement,¹⁴⁷ which is relevant to the challenges of providing access to quality education for all learners.

Spaull and Taylor¹⁴⁸ used SACMEQ III data for education to analyse literacy achievements statistics for Grade 6 learners in South Africa compared to other countries in Southern and Eastern African Region.

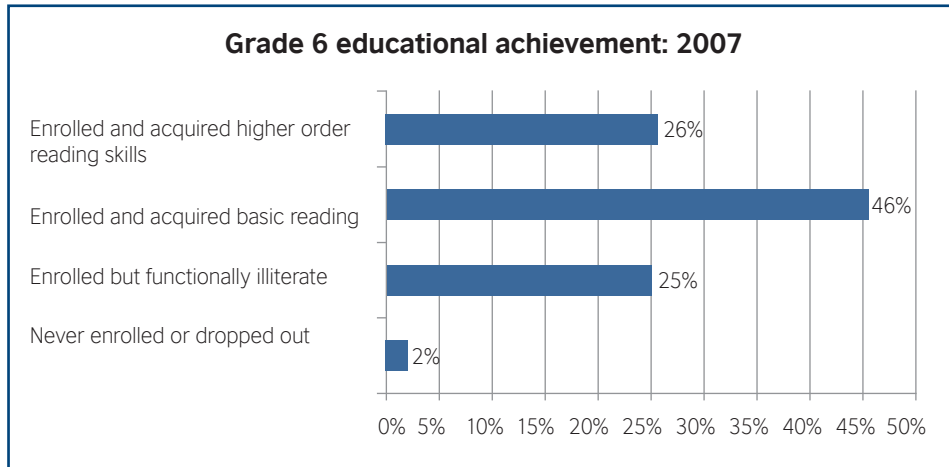


Figure 7: Education achievement in Grade 6 in 2007 (Adapted from Spaull, N and Taylor, S¹⁴⁹)

Figure 7 shows that 25 per cent of those learners in enrolled Grade 6 in 2006 were functionally illiterate, having only acquired basic reading skills: learners who had acquired higher-order reading skills represent only 26 per cent of the total. Although South African schools had a higher percentage of enrolment compared to other countries that participated in the study,¹⁵⁰ there is a noted lack of access to quality education, resulting in illiteracy in its schools.

c. Reasons for exclusion from within the schooling system

A number of key reports have highlighted the subject knowledge of classroom teachers as a cause for concern within the South African Education system.¹⁵¹ The lack of content knowledge among many Maths teachers has been attributed as a primary reason for poor numeracy competencies among learners.¹⁵²⁻¹⁵⁵ The SACMEQ III (2007) study analysed by Venkat and Spaull (2015)¹⁵⁶ tested a nationally representative sample of 401 Grade 6 Maths teachers, using Grade 6- and 7-level test items; it found that 79 per cent of those teachers had a content level below the grade level they were teaching.¹⁵⁷

Venkat¹⁵⁸ and Spaul's analysis of the study further revealed that 17 per cent of Grade 6 learners were taught by teachers with content knowledge below Grades 4 and 5 levels. Whereas 62 per cent of learners were taught by teachers with Grades 4- and 5-level content knowledge, only five per cent were taught by those with Grades 6- and 7-level content knowledge.

Later investigations raised similar concerns. Hlungi et al. claim that only 32 per cent of South African Maths teachers have "desirable levels" of their subject content knowledge.¹⁵⁹ Although the SACMEQ study was conducted in 2007, it may be argued that a large percentage of learners are still excluded from the system through that cognitive backlog that had a negative effect as they progressed through school.

The language disadvantages experienced by many learners and their teachers is another major capacity issue that must be addressed.¹⁶⁰ There is a clear need for more appropriate language policies, informed by a better understanding of the mechanisms through which language factors affect learning outcomes. There are many success stories from within Europe that may provide good models for when and how to switch English as Language of Learning and Teaching (LOLT). The quality of teaching of English as First Additional Language in the Foundation Phase is a cause for exclusion from the system. A recent literacy survey by Spaul¹⁶¹ revealed that 58 per cent of Grade 4 learners cannot read with comprehension and 29 per cent cannot read at all. This means that, in total, 87 per cent of learners in Grade 4 experience challenges in reading.

The Constitution supports the rights of the learner to receive education in their own language,¹⁶² and active policy typically results in first language being used as the medium of instruction only for Grades 1 to 3. Evidence suggests that switching language pre-literacy becomes problematic as it limits literacy outcomes. The 2013 ANAs show that approximately 70 per cent of all learners in Grades 1 to 3 were learning in an African language. But in Grade 4, 90 per cent switched to learning in English.¹⁶³ Therefore, some of these learners never became literate in their mother tongue yet were expected to transition to literacy in a second language.

2.1.3 Conclusions

While excluded learners and repeat-year learners *are* included in enrolment statistics, accurate statistics are sometimes difficult to obtain. Furthermore, there are different interpretations of inclusive education used by stakeholders in the system,¹⁶⁴ resulting in the assumption that all learners are included in education when they are not. The literature reveals that, despite the comprehensive policies of inclusive education in South Africa, the system itself experiences challenges.^{165,166}

The reviewed literature suggests that for learners from low-economic backgrounds,¹⁶⁷ or those with physical challenges, there is extensive exclusion from and within the South African education system. While well-resourced, high socio-economic status schools may provide quality education, former 'black schools' often have low socio-economic status and are still disadvantaged. Learners in such schools tend to have low literacy and numeracy levels. In addition, teachers have also been found to lack content knowledge, especially in Maths. Learners are expected to attend schools closest to their homes, thereby reinforcing corralling of learners according to their socio-economic status. South Africa therefore faces the challenge common to many schooling systems – that is, that schooling by socio-economic status is, by its nature, segregational.^{168,169}

Despite a generally low level of attainment in the primary and secondary phases, it is likely that high rates of grade progression lead to substantial drop-out prior to the standardised Matriculation examination, or failure to pass the exam.¹⁷⁰ Thus, focusing on physical inclusion in school while ignoring all the issues that surround the effects of mother tongue, model of inclusion and socio-economic status in relation to educational attainment could misinform and misdirect policy decisions.¹⁷¹⁻¹⁷³

2.2 Current policies on inclusive education

2.2.1 Introduction

The first component of research sub-question two asked: *What are the current policies ... on inclusive education?*

To address this component of this question, research was undertaken to examine the literature documenting the current policies that influence and direct inclusive education in South Africa.

2.2.2 Legislation and policy commitment

The field of inclusive education is informed by many local and international policies. The purpose of this review is to engage with this mix of policies in terms of (i) how each policy defines inclusive education; (ii) the main focus of the policy; (iii) the extent to which a particular policy speaks to broad principles of inclusion; and (iv) possible unintended limitations that are embedded within articulation or silence in a policy. This review therefore first traces influences that have given rise to worldwide conceptions of good inclusive practices. Regional manifestations are explored, followed by ways in which inclusive education policy is driven, and positions the current efforts towards inclusive education in South Africa.

According to the Child Justice Act, a child is a person under 18, and every child has the right to basic education in formal public schools until the end of the compulsory phase – that is, the first nine years of primary education.¹⁷⁴ The DBE comprises a school system of early childhood development (ECD) and primary and secondary school levels.¹⁷⁵ This education may be accessed within both mainstream and special schools; it includes the Foundation Phase (Grades 1-3), Intermediate Phase (Grades 4-6) and the Junior Secondary Phase (Grades 7-9). This means that all primary schooling and the first two years of secondary education are compulsory, and every child in South Africa has the right to that. Motala et al. (2009) argue that South Africa has “near universal access to formal public schooling”.¹⁷⁶ Inclusion, however, is more than placing every child in the public school: it must extend to meaningful inclusive practices and structures that would enable all learners to access education.¹⁷⁷⁻¹⁸¹

Human rights as the underpinning principle: international influence

Inclusion and inclusive education enjoy worldwide prominence through the advocacy they receive from the United Nations (UN). This includes such instruments as UN pronouncements on various aspects of human rights that set the tone for all matters related to inclusion. Examples of such tools include:

- (i) Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Declaration (1948);¹⁸²
- (ii) International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965);¹⁸³
- (iii) Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990);¹⁸⁴
- (iv) International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1976);¹⁸⁵
- (v) Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1981);¹⁸⁶
- (vi) The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education (1994);¹⁸⁷
- (vii) Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (2006);¹⁸⁸ and, most recently,
- (viii) the Sustainable Development Goals (2015).¹⁸⁹

Stemming from various initiatives spearheaded by the UN, education is recognised as a fundamental human right. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child requires that signatories monitor and enforce access of all children to free and basic education regardless of any identity stipulations, such as gender, citizenship, language, culture, ability or economic status. The deliberations of the 1994 United Nations' Education for All conference, which took place in Salamanca, were foremost in compelling Member States to produce policies through which inclusive education for all could be realised. UN tools therefore serve as universal standards through which countries can set out and monitor their efforts in creating inclusive practices in education and other arenas. However standards, while well intentioned, are sometimes perceived suspiciously because of their inherent ability to ignore context-specific attributes that could render them irrelevant.¹⁹⁰

This is specifically linked to the recognition that a ‘right’ does not necessarily mean that right exists. To a large extent, rights are political rhetoric and may represent an ideology that is yet to be implemented. Compounding the issue are the contradictions within these international human rights instruments. Inclusion is embedded in competing discourses and therefore may be portrayed as a basic right or as privilege and be perceived differently within various instruments.

Many definitions of inclusive education have emerged from the human rights discourse. To some, inclusive education “refers to a wide range of strategies, activities and processes that seek to make a reality of the universal right to quality, relevant and appropriate education.”¹⁹¹ A definition that is this encompassing allows for interpretation of any efforts, no matter how minute, as a manifestation of some form of inclusion.

Other definitions are more specific to a particular group of people; for example, a disability-engaged inclusion as the opening of regular school access to disabled persons; a gender-driven inclusion as protecting and implementing the rights of a girl child to education;¹⁹² or religion-conscious inclusion as respect of different religious positions of all members of society.¹⁹³

The following factors influence policy development and implementation:

- Policy development and ensuing policies are not neutral processes, as they include contestations by different interest groups, each embracing different ideological positions.

As a result:

- Policies are never all-inclusive as they are intended to meet particular interest groups’ needs within a specified socio-historical context
- Interest groups will have varying degrees of agreement about policy intention and methods of implementation
- There will always be the risk that some groups will be ‘excluded’ as an unintended consequence of policy¹⁹⁴

It is with these factors in mind that the predominant policies on inclusive education in Sub-Saharan Africa, with an emphasis on South Africa, are reviewed below.

Influencers on inclusive education policies in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Africa

Following the worldwide call for inclusive education, countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, including South Africa, have (similarly to their counterparts in the North) developed policies intended to address many challenges to inclusion.

Behind many regional policy and practice initiatives are interest groups that are concerned with the exclusion of some people from mainstream activities. Continental organisations such as the Secretariat of the African Decade of Persons with Disabilities, Communities of Practice in Disability Advocacy for Mainstreaming and The Africa Alliance and Disability Rights Programme are concerned with promoting the inclusion of people with disabilities. But as noted in Section 2 Status of inclusive education in South Africa, inclusion in schools does not necessarily translate to inclusion in learning. Thus, concerns extend to participation, achievement and support, among other issues.

Many organisations concerned with inclusive education continue to report the lack of support for children experiencing barriers to learning in schools.¹⁹⁵ The Southern African Development Community (SADC) Care and Support for Learning and Teaching (CSTL) framework (2014) is more inclusive in its approach, as the instrument addresses various manifestations of barriers to learning, including “poverty; hunger; poor health; lack of access to services like water, sanitation and energy; gender bias and other forms of inequality; parental illiteracy; orphaning; rural residency; and numerous other factors that remain barriers to education for thousands of vulnerable children and youth.”¹⁹⁶

Important policies addressing inclusive education in South Africa

The following policy documents were identified as the most influential with regards to providing directives on the rights of the individual and direct implementation of inclusive education:

- a. Constitution of South Africa (No 108 of 1996)¹⁹⁷
- b. National Education Policy Act (No 27 of 1996)¹⁹⁸
- c. South African Schools Act (No 84 of 1996)¹⁹⁹
- d. White Paper 5 on Early Childhood Education (2001)²⁰⁰

- e. White Paper 6 on Inclusive Education (2001)²⁰¹
- f. Curriculum Statements Gr R–12 (1997; 2002; 2012),²⁰² Guidelines for Responding to Learner Diversity in the Classroom²⁰³
- g. National Strategy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS) 2014²⁰⁴
- h. National Policy Framework for Teacher Education (2007),²⁰⁵ and Revised Policy on the Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications (2015)²⁰⁶
- i. SADC Care and Support for Teaching and Learning Framework (2014)²⁰⁷

A brief review of the area of influence will be provided for each, as well as an analysis of the strength and weaknesses of these policy mechanisms.

a. *South African Constitution and Bill of Rights (Act No 108 of 1996)*

The South African Constitution is the foundation on which all legislation and policies around education are instituted.²⁰⁸ Chapter two of the Constitution (Bill of Rights) sets out the fundamental rights of all South Africans, but also states when rights may be restricted. All the ensuing education policies are premised on the principles well established in the constitution. Developed within a human rights discourse, the policies support the rights:

- To basic education
- Not to be unfairly discriminated against
- To life and integrity, privacy; freedom and access to information
- Of freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief and opinion
- Of freedom of association
- To a safe environment
- Of the best interest of the child

b. National Education Policy Act (No 27 of 1996)

The main purpose of the National Education Act of 1996²⁰⁹ is to redress the educational inequalities of the past discriminatory apartheid government, through the introduction of a transformative education system. At the inception of this policy (two years after the first democratic elections), exclusionary factors in education were conceptualised primarily in terms of the prevailing inequalities in the socio-political climate that were inherited from the apartheid regime and its associated policies. Through the policy, provision of equitable opportunities and equal access to basic education for all children is held paramount. In this policy framework, therefore, the response to inclusive education is through ensuring that all children's basic right to education and the need for equitable and equal access to education are addressed.

At the time of its inception, the focus was to ensure that all children are part of the schooling system. In a sense, this policy addresses one aspect of exclusion (the out-of-school child), while remaining silent on the exclusionary impact of systemic barriers to learning that may exist.

There are three problem areas implicit in this policy that could *unintentionally* promote exclusion.²¹⁰ Firstly, the policy's focus primarily on one aspect of the risk chain (the child) in educational exclusion results in a limited response to the reality of excluded children.

Secondly, the policy overemphasises the rights of individual schools to make choices about, for example, the language policy of the school and admission strategies. This, in turn, has unintended outcomes of creating mechanisms for schools to maintain the status quo, thus perpetuating and deepening, rather than eliminating, unequal opportunities. The policy does not allow for critical questions about who gets elected into school governing bodies; representation of the learner-parent body; whose interests could be privileged; or whether all the voices in the school community are afforded an equal position in decision-making.

Finally, because the policy is deeply entrenched within a legalistic discourse, a focus on inclusion strategies may potentially obscure the reasons why such children are not at school, are out of school or drop out in the first place. For example, those entrusted with the powers to set physical access strategies might not see a need to critique their efforts provided they are aligned to legal dictates of this policy.

c. South African Schools Act (No 84 of 1996)

This is a multi-pronged policy²¹¹ with six chapters that establish guidelines to schools with regards to:

- Compulsory attendance, admission to school and exemption from compulsory attendance
- Suspension and expulsion from school
- Code of conduct including disciplinary parameters within which schools should operate
- Language policy
- Governance and professional management of schools
- Funding
- Establishment of governing bodies, including terms of reference, roles and responsibilities
- Rules for the establishment of independent schools
- Transition issues
- General provisions

The policy is inclusive in its orientation and clearly articulates the roles and responsibility of public schools to ensure an environment conducive to teaching and learning. In concert with Act 27 (National Education Policy), this Act is positioned within a social justice and transformative framework and seeks to promote equality and create equitable opportunities to schools.

The negative offshoot of the policy is the presumption that schools are 'equivalent' and 'even', and that implementing the policy is therefore doable and desirable. This in turn ignores prevailing attitudes of those in positions of overseeing the implementation of the policy. For some schools the provisions are already part of their everyday practices. For many others, however, taking responsibility and operating at the expected level presupposes a level of capacity, equal distribution of decision-making powers, competency, willingness, availability of resources, etc., much of which might be absent. The policy is silent on mechanisms and strategies to address the huge disparities, including attitude barriers that undermine delivery of inclusive education by and within schools.

The policy is vague on how to implement policing and monitoring mechanisms to ensure that all children are indeed in school, or indeed that they are in the position to attend school. The ideal of compulsory schooling for all learners may be seriously compromised in the face of prevailing class and economic challenges that many families, schools and communities are confronted with. Extrinsic challenges run at several levels which include circumstances beyond the control of children and their caregivers, for example, in communities where families have been severely affected by HIV and other diseases. Children who should otherwise be in school may have no choice but to take on added and adult responsibilities such as providing livelihoods for their siblings in child-headed households.²¹²

d. The White Paper on Early Childhood Education (2001)

Education White Paper 5 on Early Childhood Education is among a series of white papers that articulate transformation and equality as underpinned in the National Education Act of 1996.²¹³ The focus of this policy is on how to promote and implement school access for children aged up to nine during the early years of schooling. In recognising a need for a uniform approach to education in early years, the policy identifies existing systemic challenges that may continue to exacerbate the inequalities and challenges it is meant to eradicate. Disparities between rural and urban, attitudinal challenges, unequal Grade R access, etc. represent the bulk of challenges targeted by this policy. The strength of this policy lies in the formulation of a timeline along which the intended achievements will be tracked; and recognition of the need for an interdisciplinary approach (for example, Education, Health and Social Development) in engaging with children's issues, given the interrelatedness of these disciplines in creating a healthy and inclusive education system for all children.

However, a challenge that might unintentionally create exclusion is a uniform approach to ECD that does not accommodate specific contextual differences between the three different types of "reception year centres" mentioned in the policy. In addition, neglecting to subsidise independent providers in areas where these are the only available service providers of ECD could exacerbate the divide between the *haves* and *have-nots*.

e. Education White Paper 6 on Inclusive Education (2001)

Education White Paper 6²¹⁴ focuses on creating an inclusionary education system in which all learners have equal access to quality educational opportunities. It aims to change the following so as to meet the needs of all learners:

- Attitudes
- Behaviour
- Teaching methods
- Curricula
- Environment

The basic premise of the policy is that it assumes systems, and not people, are lacking and deficient. As such, what is suggested is a major systemic and institutional adjustment to structures and mechanisms that will facilitate access, particularly for those learners not previously accommodated in 'mainstream' schools. The primary focus is on those learners previously perceived as deficient, lacking (cognitively, sensorial, etc.) or disabled which are now understood to have diverse learning needs.

While limited on a clear pathway on inclusion, the policy provides a strong foundation for 'how to' follow-up policies that articulate conceptual and operational guidelines for the implementation of inclusive education such as full-service schools, district-based support teams and special schools as resource centres.

f. Curriculum Policy Statements (1997; 2002; 2012) and Guidelines for Responding to Learner Diversity in the Classroom (2011)

While respecting the rights of all children to education has been the main driver of policy changes in South Africa, an equally pressing matter has been whether all children receive quality education once they are in schools. Alongside the development of policies reviewed above, the curriculum project has been critical in creating inclusive schools for all. This has been witnessed through several curriculum renewal instruments such as the first unifying curriculum after the democratic elections Curriculum 2005 (1997);²¹⁵ the National Curriculum Statement (2002);²¹⁶ the Revised National Curriculum Statement (2004);²¹⁷ and, currently, the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (2012).²¹⁸

Equity, redress and equality are the main principles informing all curriculum developments since the first statement (Curriculum 2005²¹⁹) aimed to ensure that all South Africans were provided education not demarcated along racial lines. However, the disheartening performance of South African learners on crucial measures testing, for example, competency in literacy, have since revealed a need for a curriculum process that engages with quality learning opportunities. Ignoring the micro-processes in and around classrooms widens the achievement gap between learners who experience barriers to learning and those who do not. It is this realisation that has informed the development of guidelines for responding to learner diversity in the classroom by the DBE. The Guidelines for Responding to Learner Diversity in the Classroom²²⁰ are intended to be used by teachers alongside the Curriculum Policy Statements.

These guidelines represent the DBE's recommended response set to meet the diversity of learner needs in the classroom. In it, they propose strategies for differentiation in delivery of the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) curriculum. Throughout, it is emphasised that all schools are required to offer the same curriculum to learners, while simultaneously ensuring variations in mode of delivery and assessment to accommodate all learner needs.

However, there are three main problem areas implicit in this policy that could unintentionally promote exclusion. Firstly, there is clear evidence of a silo philosophy towards inclusive education within the document. For example, consider how the case study of Brenda, a visually impaired child, is presented: "When it was time for her to attend high school, her parents could not afford to send her to a boarding school catering for partially sighted children in Johannesburg." Implicit in the message is that silo education is the preference, but in the absence of this 'solution', teachers are encouraged to consider how to include Brenda within their mainstream classrooms.

The second issue is that there are no practical mechanisms proposed to accommodate the extrinsic resource challenges that arise from mass differentiation. For example: "Learners who experience significant barriers to learning must also have the possibility of straddling grades, which allows them to take certain subjects at grade level and others at a different level."²²¹ The timetabling challenges to such a proposition are immense within the current paradigm, and yet no mechanisms are proposed that would allow such a revolutionary strategy to be implemented.

Finally, the approach to support is one that assumes that such responses are barrier free; it provides no agency to mitigate the various barriers that confront learners in schools and beyond. By failing to address the complexity of challenges teachers experience in their attempts to differentiate, the guidelines lend themselves to being dismissed.

Together, both the curriculum statements and these guidelines promote a 'one-outcome-fits-all' perspective driven by the agenda of equal access to education. They fail to support meaningful solutions as to how to provide the opportunities to schools, teachers and learners to truly differentiate access to the curriculum in a way that accommodates the diversity of the learners.

g. National Strategy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS, 2014)

The barriers to learning experienced by many learners have necessitated support instruments, from screening for such barriers, to identification of specifics of each case, up to assessment strategies that can clearly provide guidelines on support that responds to the specific needs of learners. The purpose of the SIAS document²²² is “to provide a policy framework for the standardisation of the procedures to identify, assess and provide programmes for all learners who require additional support to enhance their participation and inclusion in school.”²²³ Through this policy, the DBE acknowledges the value of inter-sectorial support; for example, with departments that offer therapies and health services for learners experiencing barriers to learning.

One of the questions that a policy such as SIAS raises is on the capacity of stakeholders (for example, teachers) to participate at the different stages of the designated support initiatives. A policy such as this creates a need for teacher support that should be facilitated during training – both at PRESETT and CPD levels. However, a school system so saturated with challenges that prevent it from meeting the basic education needs of learners may not be sufficiently resourced to place a heavy emphasis on ongoing professional development of teachers.

h. National Policy Framework for Teacher Education (2007) and Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications (2015)

A common thread that runs through the literature on teachers' roles in different aspects of education is the positioning of teachers as agents of change.²²⁴ It is not surprising, therefore, that in South Africa teacher education has been at the heart of the transformation and renewal agenda since the inception of democracy in 1994. The National Policy Framework for Teacher Education was "designed to equip a teaching profession to meet the needs of a democratic South Africa in the 21st century. It brings clarity and coherence to the complex matrix of teacher education activities, from initial recruitment and preparation to self-motivated professional development."²²⁵ The policy responds to limitations identified in earlier policies (for example, Norms and Standards for Educators) in how they allowed multiple interpretations of a competent, and by extension, inclusive educator, by being silent on curriculum content in teacher education. The framework bridges this gap by vocalising and quantifying envisaged teacher qualification in terms of credit bearing of programmes and typology of knowledge teachers should have.

The framework stipulates that the identification and addressing of barriers to learning should be a key component of all teacher education at PRESETT and INSETT levels. Furthermore, the policy places some emphasis on a collaborative approach in teacher education that involves HEIs, qualification framework bodies and the South African Council for Educators. The Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualification²²⁶ emphasises the critical need for all teachers to be conversant with the requirements of implementing inclusive education practices. As a guiding framework for teacher education curriculum, the policy transcends a wish-list suggested in the 2007 Framework for Teacher Education, by outlining a set of knowledge mix that new teachers should have, and that will enable them to engage with issues of inclusion.

However, a limitation of the policy is its noticeable silence about envisaged attributes that newly qualified teachers should have in relation to their knowledge mix. This silence could lead to multiple interpretations and possible fragmentations in how HEIs offer inclusive education.

Graduating teachers will then enter schools with fragmented conceptualisations of (i) what inclusive education entails; (ii) their own identities, roles and functions regarding inclusion of all learners; and (iii) without the competence to address barriers to learning.

i. SADC Care and Support for Teaching and Learning Framework (2014)

Described as neither, “a policy or programme in itself” that is not intended to replace care and support initiatives in SADC countries, CSTL is a comprehensive multi-sectoral framework on care and support in education. Its main purpose is to provide guidance for SADC Member States on how to plan and implement inclusionary practices in the care and support of vulnerable youth and learners. The document is both ambitious and self-critical, as it illuminates possible barriers that could defeat its purpose.

Given the uniqueness and independence of each SADC Member State, a framework this ambitious raises questions on attainability of objectives, monitoring and accountability. Despite clearly set-out procedures for implementation, it is likely the programme’s success will not be uniform across the region. A scrutiny of the document also presents some unintended deficit descriptions, such as in the case of customary practices and rural homes as intersecting vulnerabilities that impact on educational objectives. But not all customary practices and rural home settings are disablers for child development; rather they often provide the commendable essence of an African way of life. Qualifiers such as “under-resourced rural home settings” may make the content accessible, modifying the negative tone in which other factors are presented. Overall, however, CSTL is an exemplary framework on which to model care and support initiatives that speak about holistic, as opposed to fragmented, inclusion of those at risk of marginalisation.

Conclusion

International policy agreements undertaken by South Africa reflect the growing consensus, throughout the world, that all children have the right to be educated together and affirm the principle of inclusive education and the importance of “working towards schools for all – institutions which include everybody, celebrate differences, support learning and respond to individual needs”.²²⁷

Deeper analyses of local policy reveal a lack of cohesion in terms of inclusive developments. Previous research suggests that both cultural bias and a lack of clarity regarding roles and responsibility for policy implementation create ambiguity that filters down through the system.²²⁸ There is often a lack of clarity as to who is responsible for implementation for the various outcomes that arise from accepting a philosophy of inclusion: for example, the vision envisaged by the DBE that learners may straddle grades according to ability, without a parallel vision of how to engage stakeholders, or capacitate the system to implement such accommodations.

Together with the identified gaps in some of the policies, mixed messages permeate the policy landscape, from a lack of consensus on who holds responsibility, to a lack of capacity in the stakeholders assigned. Furthermore, there is no real consensus as to what form inclusive education should take. At no time is there an explicit commitment to attempt to offer mainstream education as the default for all learners.

2.3 Status of HEI teacher training

The second part of research sub-question two asked: *What are the current ... teacher training programmes on inclusive education?* Desktop research was conducted to identify all the HEIs providing teacher training and to examine the content and structure of their courses with regards to their provision for capacitating trainee teachers to facilitate provision of inclusive classrooms.

Data was collected or requested from all South African HEIs that provide teacher training. Their websites, responses and course documentation were analysed with respect to the course content of their qualifications. Data about teachers' experiences of training in inclusive education was also obtained from the open-ended interviews (see Appendix): relevant quotes are included below to provide further context to the desktop research.

All research was conducted under the same ethical approval as applied to the other data collection process.

2.3.1 HEI teacher training programmes

Institutions vary with regard to duration, type of module and mode of delivery in how they expose trainee teachers to the philosophy and strategies to facilitate inclusive education. These impact the depth and breadth of content to which PRESET teachers are exposed.

Of the 21 HEIs that offer teacher training, 17 address inclusive education (see Appendix).

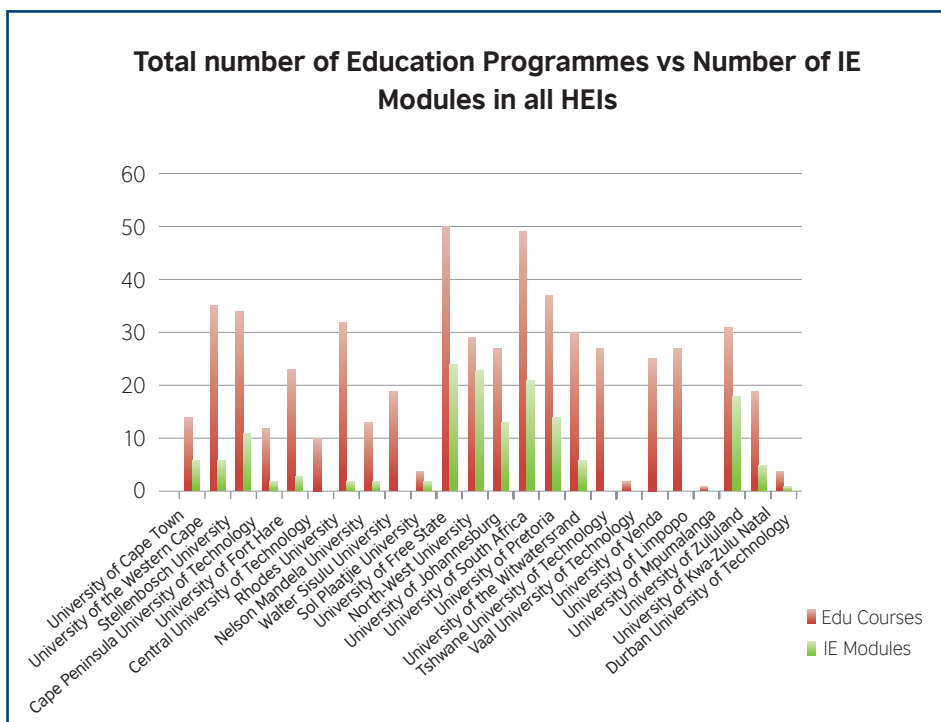


Figure 8: Inclusive education as a component of education courses

Within these HEIs, 554 separate teacher training courses were identified, of which 159 (28 per cent) included modules that address teaching inclusive education.

The approach of the HEIs to teaching inclusive education was broadly categorised into two types: a ‘silo approach’ (a particular module or part of the programme focused on distributing knowledge and skills pertaining to the delivery of inclusive education) versus an ‘integrative approach (presentation of inclusive education permeates the course). Of the 159 courses identified that included some component of inclusive education, 21 per cent have programmes integrated into the course (as illustrated in Figure 9).

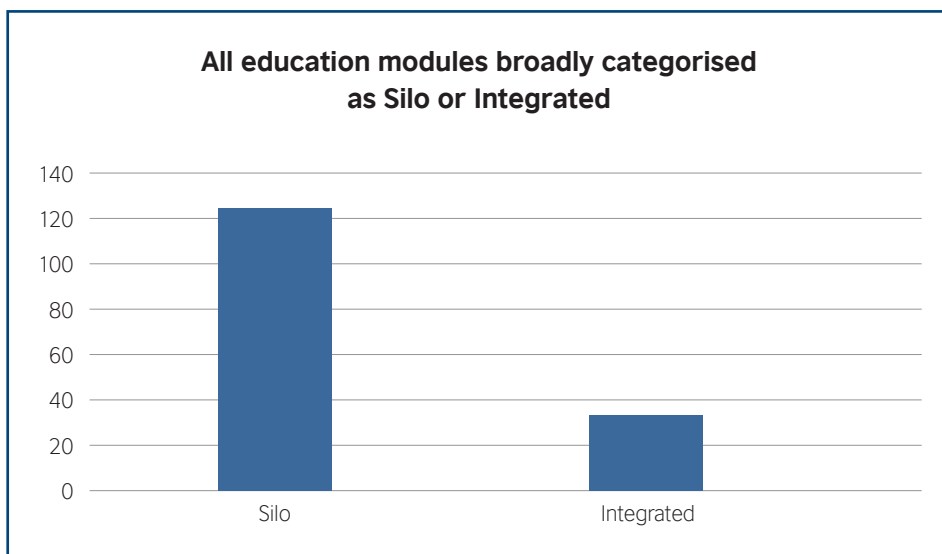


Figure 9: HEI approaches to inclusive education

Stakeholder observations about teacher training programmes

The statements of PRESET teachers confirmed the observations from analyses of HEI course content; that is, that there are two modes of delivery: integrative and silo. A selection of verbatim responses from Higher Education Focus Group (HEFG) participants is included below.

a. Integrative descriptions

Some of the PRESET teachers interviewed expressed an integrative approach, but with a lack of depth to the content. For example:

HEFG106P2: *“We have a subject called school guidance and support, and I partake in the class and the module and basically, even though it refers to guidance and support, it includes some aspects of inclusive education as well, basically all that we handled about inclusive education.”*

b. Silo descriptions

Some pre-service teachers described their experience of inclusive education training as a separate module in their institutions. For example:

HEFGP102P1: *"We've got inclusive education on its own and education on its own."*

HEFG103P1: *"The thing is the inclusive education at this institution, especially fourth year's, is still new. We only did inclusive education this year."*

c. Core modules

Across the focus group interviews, participants revealed different types of module used in preparing pre-service teachers for inclusion. Some institutions offer inclusive education as a core module and student teachers are mandated to take the course during their preparation. For instance:

HEFG102P3: *"[Inclusive education is a] Core module, Yes, it's compulsory we do it from first year to fourth year."*

d. Optional modules

Many participants claimed that inclusive education is not compulsory and suggested that students are not obligated to take the module. For example:

HEFG109P3: *"Doing inclusive education is optional. It shows that ... what they're saying is it's up to you as a teacher to actually want to be inclusive. It's not like it's compulsory so it's not like it's for everyone. So, it's fine if you don't want to be inclusive, then don't take it; if you want to then you can take it. It's more of like you have a vision but you have no way to get to it."*

Conclusions

There is clearly no consensus among the HEIs as to how to facilitate inclusive education at the trainee teacher level. Where instruction is explicitly provided, the most common model is a silo approach; that is, it is taught as a separate topic rather than as a component of lesson planning, student assessment or other step in the pedagogy. Similarly, there is no consensus as to whether training in inclusive education is or should be a core component of teacher training courses.

2.4 Attitudes to teaching inclusively

Research sub-question 3 asks: *What are the attitudes of pre-service and in-service teachers towards inclusive education?*

To answer the question, three research tools (comprising questionnaire sets) were developed, and research took place under ethical clearance provided by the various HEIs (see Appendix). One study used a tool sampling pre-service teachers concurrently at various HEIs, representing a range of institution types. The other tool elicited responses from UNISA 2017 final year PRESET students. To distinguish between the two groups analysed, the first is referred to as the ‘concurrent analyses’, and the second the ‘UNISA analyses’. Finally, focus group interviews were conducted with in-service teachers.

2.4.1 Limitations arising from multiple comparisons

Questionnaire-set analyses such as these provide large datasets allowing multiple comparisons between variables. However, as the number of comparisons increases, the likelihood of committing a Type I error increases – that is, as more data is examined the chances increase that spurious statistically significant results may be found.

Rather than apply multiple comparison strategies that reduce Type I errors but raise the Type II error rate, a more cautious philosophical approach was taken. By having two separate data sets from different respondent groups available, a new opportunity arose, that is of finding significant relationships that indicate common effects at work in both groups. Where there is a convergence of findings, the risk of a Type I error is reduced. It is this approach that provides a cautious response to the multiple comparisons issue.

2.4.2 Attitude to inclusive education

A philosophical willingness to develop inclusive classrooms was present among the concurrent group of pre-service teachers. For example, the overall-positive response rate to Q5, *I am willing to make needed instructional modifications for learners who experience barriers to learning in my classroom*, was 96.4 per cent. However, deeper analysis of individual responses suggests that these trainees do not yet feel capacitated to manage one of the most challenging aspects that arises from the current paradigm: that of facilitating the education of 30 to 40 or more learners in one class. The positive response rate to Q7: *I am comfortable with behaviour management in inclusive classrooms*, dropped to 80.6 per cent.

When specific reference to barriers to learning was raised, it split the respondent group almost in half, with 52.4 per cent agreeing with the statement in Q9: *Educating learners who experience barriers to learning in the regular classroom is disruptive to other learners.*

There is also clear evidence pointing towards the concurrent cohort of pre-service teachers not yet being capacitated to provided differentiation of the curriculum, with 65 per cent in agreement with Q14: *Most learners who experience barriers to learning lack skills needed to master the regular classroom content.*

Analysis of the responses by the concurrent cohort exposes a silo mentality towards education, which was demonstrated when attitudes towards including learners with specific physical disabilities in the mainstream classroom were examined. As the description of the physical impairment deepens, the agreement level that the learner may be accommodated in mainstream classrooms dropped away. So, for example, 56.8 per cent of the trainee teachers agreed with Q13: *Most learners can be educated in regular classrooms regardless of their level of barriers to learning.* But with more specific descriptions of the learner's needs, that data reveals the following:

- Q17: *Most learners with physical disabilities should be educated in regular classroom* (49.4 per cent agree)
- Q18: *Most learners with hearing impairment should be educated in regular classrooms* (33.8 per cent agree)
- Q19: *Most learners with visual impairment should be educated in regular classrooms* (39.7 per cent agree)
- Q20: *Most learners with communication disorders should be educated in regular classrooms* (38.3 per cent agree)
- Q21: *Most learners with health disabilities should be educated in regular classrooms* (52.4 per cent agree)
- Q22: *Most learners with intellectual disabilities should be educated in regular classrooms* (41.8 per cent agree)

- Q23: *Most learners with multiple disabilities should be educated in regular classrooms* (25.1 per cent agree)

General 'health' disabilities (Q21) were seen as less of a challenge to inclusion than specific physical challenges (Q17–20, 21–22). Grouping the percentage agreement to those questions that deal with specific, identified learner needs (Q18, 19, 20, 22) gives a rough estimate of the overall average positive agreement response of 38.4 per cent.

From the data it is clear that, overall, trainee teachers have a negative attitude towards inclusive education, with only 18 per cent providing an overall positive response set.

When the responses from the UNISA cohort were examined, a far greater positive response towards inclusive education was revealed, with 99 per cent of the group providing an overall positive response set. There are several factors that may explain this massive difference in attitudes. One overreaching factor is that the UNISA cohort was deliberately selected from those trainee teachers who had finished the compulsory modules in inclusive education. This means that the entire cohort had been exposed to the pedagogical principles of inclusive education practices. However, there is also the confounding factor that the demographic structure of the two groups differs significantly (see Appendix), meaning that it is not possible to make direct comparisons between the two.

The following two factors may influence attitudes towards teaching inclusively.

a. *Prior teaching experience*

There is evidence that the duration of teaching experience influences trainee teachers' attitudes: within the UNISA cohort, the median attitude score is significantly higher among those with more than one year's prior teaching experience (Figure 10): that is, those with more than one year prior experience held a more positive attitude. The data from the concurrent cohort did not provide data with enough variance for robust comparison (less than one per cent of respondents in one category), so there are no corroborating analyses available.

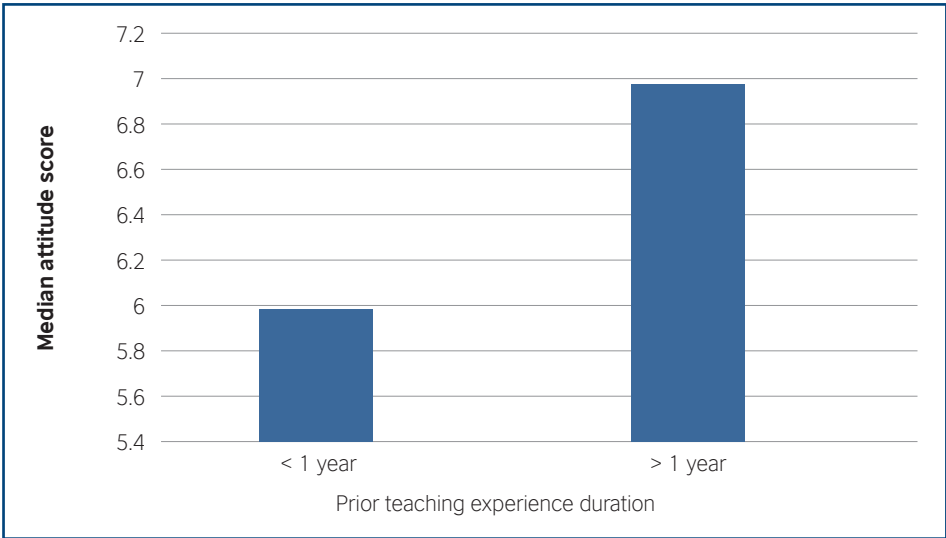


Figure 10: Attitude of UNISA cohort to inclusive education, based on duration of prior teaching experience

b. School practice experience

Trainee teachers from the concurrent cohort who had experience at special schools were less likely to have a positive attitude towards inclusive education (Figure 11).

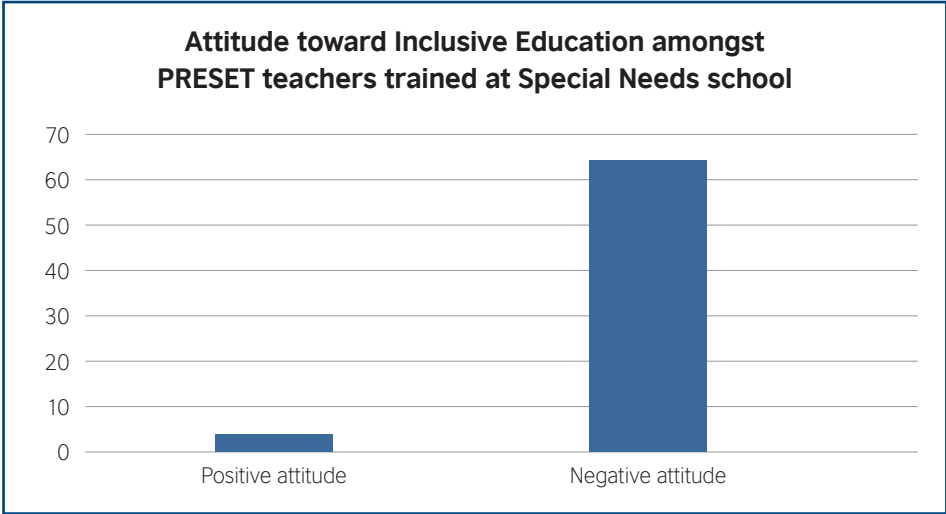


Figure 11: Attitude of concurrent cohort to inclusive education, based on school practice experience at special schools

Respondents who did not teach in special school were four times more likely to have a positive attitude (96.4 per cent) towards inclusive education compared to those whose teaching practice included experience at special schools (3.6 per cent) ($\chi^2=7.45$, $p=0.006$).

Those in the UNISA cohort who had teaching practice experience at special schools held negative attitudes towards inclusive education more often (20.8 per cent) than those who did not (13.3 per cent). The difference is not significant, however (Figure 12).

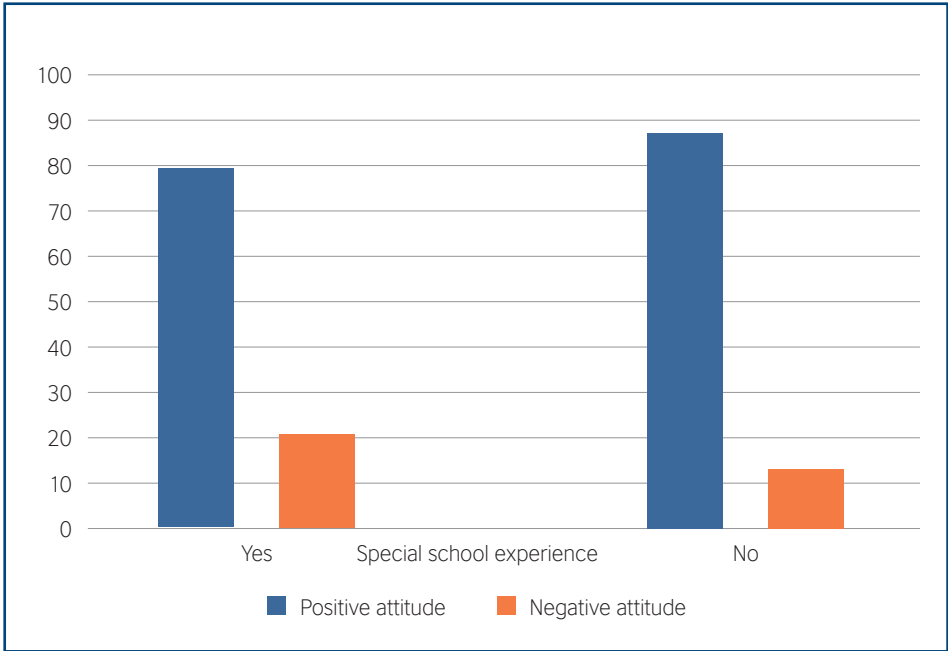


Figure 12: Attitude of UNISA cohort to inclusive education, based on school practice experience at special schools

When those UNISA respondents who had experienced a full-service school were compared against those who had not, a significant difference was found: a significantly lower proportion of those who taught in a full-service school (10.1 per cent) held a negative attitude towards inclusive education compared to those who did not (15.8 per cent), ($\chi^2=4.34$, $p=0.037$). This is illustrated in Figure 13.

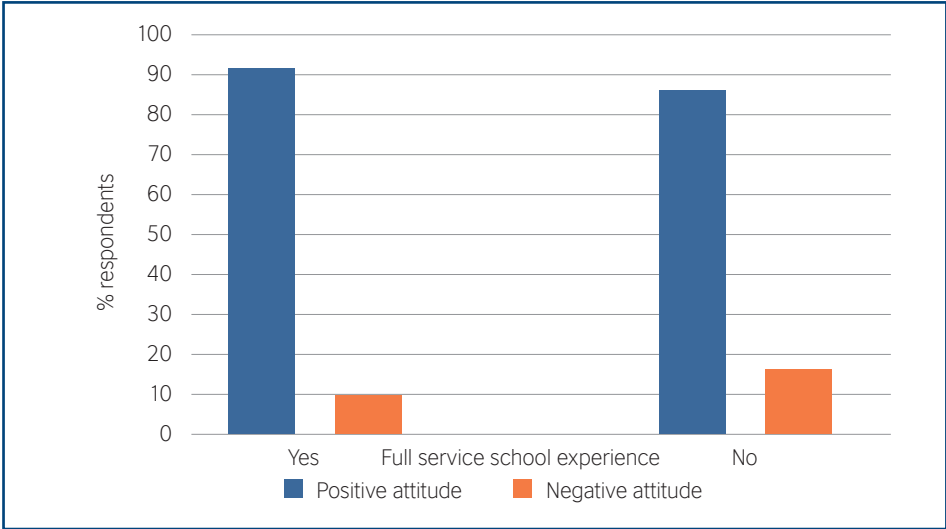


Figure 13: Attitude of UNISA cohort to inclusive education, based on school practice experience at full-service schools

2.4.3 Attitude to preparedness to teach inclusively

Analysis revealed that those from the concurrent cohort teaching in mainstream [OR=0.53] or special [OR=0.10] schools were less likely to agree that their training needs in inclusive education were met, than those whose teaching experience included a full-service school (see Figure 14). Respondents teaching in full-service schools were about twice [OR=1.79] as likely to agree that their training needs in inclusive education were met compared to those who were not exposed to full-service schools. This difference was significant ($\chi^2=7.63$, $p=0.006$).

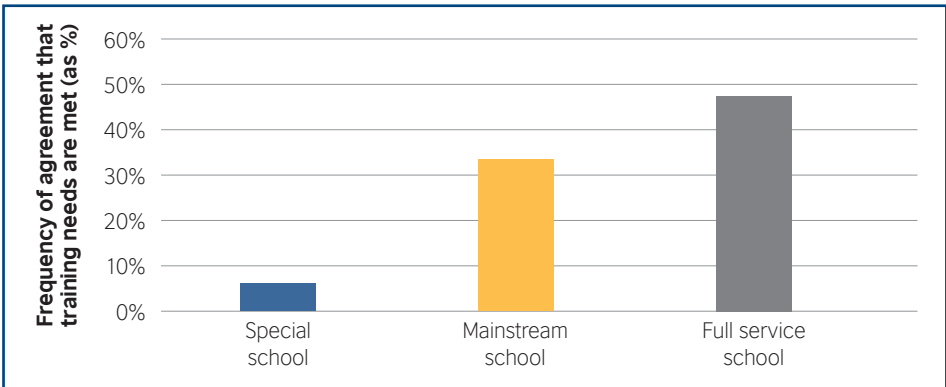


Figure 14: Attitude of concurrent cohort to training needs, based on school practice experience

As shown in Figure 15, respondents from the UNISA cohort with no experience in mainstream schools were significantly more likely to report complete preparedness to teach inclusively ($\chi^2= 9.19, p=0.002$). Where respondents had experienced teaching in a full-service school they were significantly more likely to report feeling completely prepared to teach inclusively ($\chi^2= 79.19, p=0.002$).

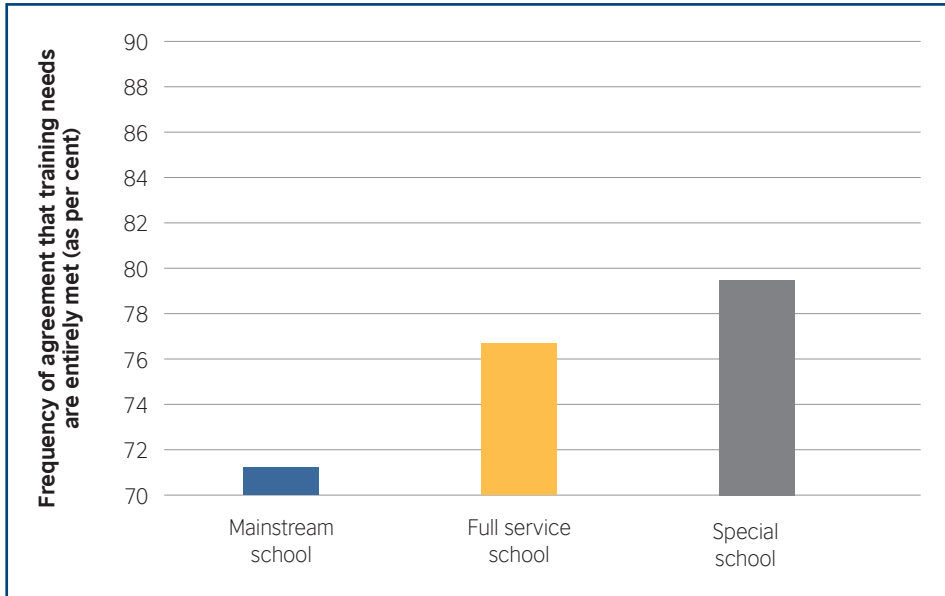


Figure 15: Attitude of UNISA cohort to training needs, based on school practice experience

Again, different coding was required for the UNISA cohort, making direct comparison between the two groups difficult.

2.4.4 Attitudes to inclusive education as revealed by open-ended questions

Certain statements made by the concurrent PRESETT cohort in their focus group interviews revealed intrinsic and extrinsic challenges with regards to implementing inclusive education.

Orientation of the training material content

There are historical parallels between the United States, Australia and South Africa in terms of racial segregation. Furthermore, the United States, Australia and Europe have shared challenges in facing (i) the inherited consequences of socio-economic status and (ii) failings of the education systems to meet these challenges and similar educational reform response sets.^{229,230} Nevertheless, the trainee teachers interviewed rejected materials brought in from these contexts. For example:

HEFG10-10P5: *“Australia, yes, that’s the problem. They are not bringing the reality to us to say, they are not preparing us for the schools, they are just giving us this whole fancy idea of what inclusion is. Because South Africa and Europe are two different things.”*

HEFG102P3: *“Never South African or things that we can relate to always, this is what we do overseas. We have seen videos of how they teach overseas but it is not realistic in South Africa.”*

Lack of relevance of training in inclusive education

Across focus group interviews, participants perceived that they were not being educated on relevant theories on inclusive education.

HEFG105:P5: *“We don’t learn about Maria Montessori theory, they don’t ever talk about it, all they talk about is the curriculum and the White Paper 6.”*

HEFG103P8: *“We are not taught inclusively, not focusing on theory only. And another thing I want the institution to improve in terms of inclusive education is the way of planning a lesson.”*

Trainee teachers also lacked knowledge about assistive devices.

HEFG104P2: *“Names of assistive devices that you are telling us are just Greek. We do not know them.”*

Superficial exposure to policy, legislation and guidelines

In all focus group interviews, participants revealed limited and superficial exposure to national and international policy and legislative framework and guidelines on inclusive education. For example:

HEFG103P7: *“We have only learned about the Salamanca Statement and the White Paper 6”.*

HEFG106P5: *“Basically all that we handled about inclusive education is education in White Paper 6 and the aim of Education White Paper 6, nothing more about implementation thereof, or anything like that, we just need to know what is the year of White Paper 6 was attended to as a policy and what is the aims.”*

Participants stated that they were not exposed to South African guidelines on inclusive education, including SIAS. A participant asked, *“Uhm, what is curriculum differentiation?”* after the interviewer requested him to explain the guideline.

HEFG101P1: *“As for me, I’m just standing on that White Paper 6 and I can’t even tell you any international policy or legislation on inclusive education.”*

Capacity within the HEIs

PRESET teachers expressed doubts with regards to their lecturer’s own depth of knowledge with regards to inclusive education. For example:

HEFG10-11P6: *“You expect this doctor, for example, to teach us about inclusivity. He himself does not know how to work with disabled learners. How am I as a student going to be prepared, how do I start today if the person teaching me does not know that thing, does not specialise there?”*

HEFG108P5: *“They don’t teach you what to do with learners with disabilities. They ask you what are to do. They don’t teach you how to respond to the learners with disabilities.”*

Comments with regards to PRESET teachers’ understanding of inclusive education gave weight to the evidence to the lack of training.

HEFG101P3: *“If the learner can’t see clearly then you must find a way to give that learner an opportunity to see everything properly, or if he has a problem with hearing, then you must find a way to give him or her that opportunity to hear what is going on in the class.”*

Capacity within the HEIs to teach inclusively

The trainee teachers also expressed dissatisfaction about the way they were lectured. For example:

HEFG103P5: *“It is always lecture, lecture, lecturing always.”*

HEFG10-10P2: *“We don’t discuss, they tell us inclusion. And the problem is that there is this, they give us a reading them to say you must read this and all that, when we go to class, the lecturer just present us with a summary of the reading and then you take it down, you are going to produce it again.”*

HEFG108P6: *“You would find that when one applies to go study in that particular university they will stipulate that what disabilities you have and you will write that I am a person that is in a wheelchair but when you go to that university, nothing is accommodated for you. In terms of the university, the residence, you have a problem, in terms of transport we do not have those buses, those fancy buses that they take a wheelchair, we have to push our colleagues to schools. Think of rainy days, windy days, and so forth, we have labs that are not, are, on a platform where it is, learners are able to access, they have to find means to go to our labs because they have a staircase.”*

Deficiencies in the teacher practice experience

Participants in the focus group interviews described the lack of opportunities to teach learners with disabilities, or even teach at all, during their teaching practice. For example:

HEFG106P7: *“We only go to schools whereby you’ll never find, it’s rare to find a learner with sight impairment, or a hearing problem, or someone walking with a wheelchair, so that we at least we get the opportunity to teach these learners.”*

HEFG102P1: *“In special schools, we didn’t teach because we were only there for a week for observation.”*

Perceptions with regards to host teacher capacity

Most participants in the focus group interviews reported that host teachers deprived them of the opportunity to teach learners with disabilities and were non-supportive of these learners. For instance:

HEFG105P5: *“She would go write on the board and this is a Grade 2 class, she would literally write on the board, go sit on her table and sit on her phone. If a child comes and asks her, or that child, that maybe doesn’t understand she would shout at her. Now I tried to walk, I got up and I wanted, started helping this little learner who has got ADD, she shouted at me for helping him, in front of them, in front of everybody.”*

Many participants expressed the view that their host teachers could not implement inclusive education because of a lack of capacity.

HEFG106P1: *“You find that teachers are not well trained for diversity, they do not take diversity into consideration, because they lack information. They cannot implement different strategies in order to accommodate diverse learners.”*

HEFG108P1: *“At times when you get to the classroom, you’d get student teachers who recognises the barriers, but the teacher is so, sorry to say it, but so old school, instead of realising that the child has barriers and try to assist the child, the teacher instead gives labels to the child. They label the child as stupid, not caring, and all that.”*

Appreciation of inclusive education

Remarks provided by the PRESET teachers suggest that there is a level of understanding of inclusive education among the current cohort of trainees. For example:

HEFG107P7: *“[Inclusive education] is trying to build an education system where all kinds of learners are catered for regardless of any challenges or barriers that they might have”. HEFG106P3 further added that: “I think inclusive education is basically being able to accommodate everyone, hence we live in a diverse world, so being able to acknowledge the learners, even people from our communities with their differences according to age and socio-economic status and gender, colour and religion so.”*

HEFG104P7: *“It is very important for all learners in South Africa to be included in our education in terms of the language should be the factor, the facilities”.*

However, other participants expressed negative views towards inclusive education.

HEFG108P1: *“I strongly disagree with inclusive education. I don’t see a problem with children being in special schools, it actually doesn’t undermine them, it actually helps them up. It’s up to the teacher to help them understand that you have this particular gift, so let’s actually work on that gift. But in inclusive classes you can’t do that, because you have to cater for everybody which have different personalities and different experiences and different gifts.”*

HEFG10-10P5: "... having everyone in one classroom I think it's not possible. Someone is going to get excluded. It's either the one who has special needs or the ones who don't have special needs, because we need to consider those learners that we consider normal ... So, I think having all learners in a classroom is not, is not entirely inclusive because someone is bound to get excluded."

Specific requests of trainee teachers

Across focus group interviews, participants revealed that they needed training in lesson planning to implement inclusive education.

HEFG101P1: "You prepare your lessons and then your lecturer maybe have a look at your lessons and also maybe if you can be given a chance to teach these lessons, and also in your lesson looking at the things like how are you going to address the areas of learning, how are you going to address those learners who have got a hearing problem, who cannot be able to see. You see before you can go out there and then when you go out there, you have already been given a foundation of how you should be able to teach outside there."

The UNISA cohort were provided with the opportunity to feedback about which particular areas they required most additional support in, having completed all their modules on inclusive education. Figure 16 shows the top five support needs.

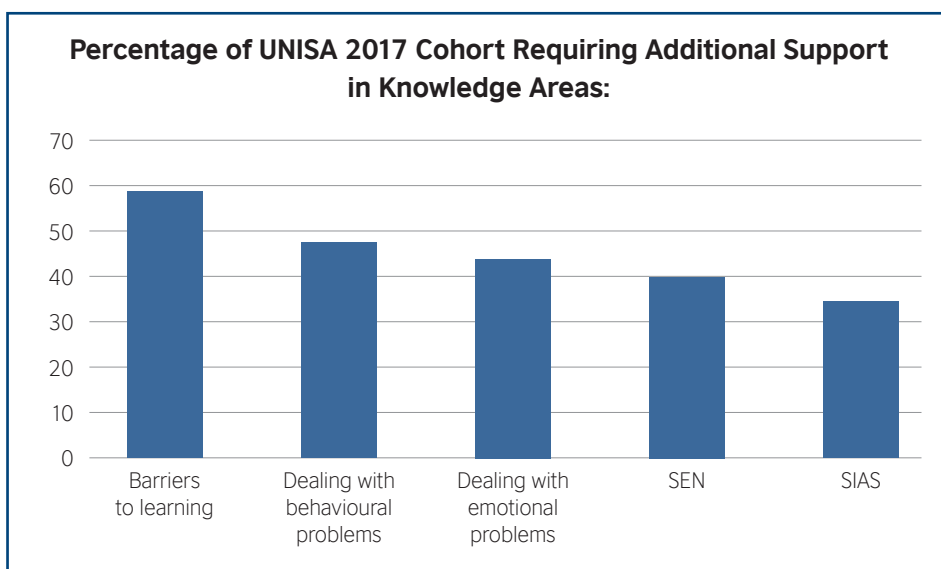


Figure 16: UNISA cohort's top five topics needing additional support

2.4.5 Limitations of the questionnaire-based research

With regards to the implementation of inclusive education, it is the teachers who experience the challenges in the classroom context. Mahlo (2011) argued that one of the limitations experienced in schooling is that teachers were not implementing the strategies provided by learning support teachers to include learners experiencing barriers.²³¹ While such attitudes can be viewed as a problem intrinsic to teachers, they may also result from extrinsic forces applied to teachers.

Consider, for example, just one extrinsic factor common to all schools: South Africa's heavily prescriptive curriculum with its culture of constant assessment. This often requires learners to be silent in classrooms for weeks at a stretch, multiple times through the year, 'studying for' or writing tests. Little time is available to give feedback to learners following assessment: often, at best, only verification of marks may be possible. Assessment is 'of' learning', not 'for learning'. Trainee teachers may already have experienced at least one round of exams by the time of responding to the interview questions. They may have intuited that failing to allow even the brightest, most literate and self-driven of learners' time to reflect upon and learn from their mistakes inhibits those learners' opportunity to learn. If you then ask such a trainee a question about their own ability to facilitate learning within this paradigm, they may provide a negative answer based on their perceptions around just this one issue.

So the passive resistance to existing extrinsic factors may manifest as a negative response to questions of inclusive education. Further analyses would be required to distinguish between the influencing effects of such intrinsic and extrinsic factors; our data does not allow us to reveal the causes for the attitudes held.

2.4.6 Synthesis of the research

The conclusion drawn from our analyses of attitudes towards inclusive education held by PRESET and INSET teachers mirrors that of previous studies – that is, although teachers agree with the concept of inclusion, further probing reveals a philosophy that the needs of learners with disabilities are best met in separate classrooms.^{232,233} This was particularly apparent within the concurrent cohort when questioned about learners with greater needs and more severe physical challenges.

An emergent finding is that the type of school the PRESET individuals experience for their teaching practice may impact their resultant attitude towards inclusive education. This was apparent in both cohorts. The implication is that experience at a full-service school may be the most constructive experience that the HEI may be able to offer the trainee teacher.

With regards to trainee teachers' own perceptions of whether they have been prepared to teach inclusively, respondents teaching in full-service schools were found to be more likely to agree that their training needs in inclusive education are met than those who do not teach in a full-service school.

From analyses of the comments in the open-ended questions, it is apparent that a silo mentality towards inclusive education still dominates the teaching profession, from pre-service to in-service teachers. Several non-exclusive explanations may account for the underlying causes that result in lack of support for an integrative inclusive education. One is that they lack the philosophical framework; another is that the stakeholders involved recognise the extreme deficiencies of the current classroom environment to facilitate education of learners in response to individual needs.

3. Implications of the research for teacher training

3.1 Introduction

The final research sub-question asked: *What are the implications of the current state of inclusive education on teacher training programmes?*

Teacher training is only one component of successful implementation of inclusive education. Other key success factors for inclusive education are committed principals and the involvement of parents and members of the community. Schools assessed as successful often have principals and management teams who are committed: they have been able to dismantle exclusion by mobilising human and material resources to foster a culture of inclusion in their schools. Therefore, for optimum effect, improvements within the teacher training programmes must work in concert with improvement in other extrinsic and intrinsic factors.

The research revealed that PRESET teachers experience challenges in including diverse learners in their teaching because they lack training, and so their efficacy in terms of classroom skills is low. The cohort with least training also demonstrated negative attitudes to inclusive education. While PRESET training is inadequate, graduate teachers are still not fully trained to meet the needs of diverse learners. It is against this background that the recommendations to drive the provision of service by HEIs are made (see Section 3.3 Recommendations for HEI teacher training, below).

Before progressing to specific recommendations, some general concerns are raised in response to needs identified as a by-product of this research.

3.2 General needs analyses

3.2.1 Language

One of the key issues not tied to the original remit of the research but that arose from the literature review is the poor literacy rate among learners (see discussion in 2.1.2.4 Exclusion of learners within the school system). Although active policy results in 70 per cent of all learners in Grades 1 to 3 learning in an African language, 90 per cent switch to learning in English by Grade 4.

Some of these learners never become literate in their mother tongue but are then expected to transition to literacy in a second language.

With nearly 60 per cent of Grade 4 learners unable to read with comprehension, and fully 87 per cent facing challenges in reading, there is an urgent need to address the issue. It is highly likely that failure to address this will perpetuate the high levels of exclusion from learning.

3.2.2 Creating a consensus on inclusive education

The literature indicates that many INSET teachers do not understand inclusive education as an education for all. Eloff and Kgwete's 2007 study²³⁵ revealed that INSET teachers associate inclusive education with disability, and refer to the "physical disabled", or the "deaf" or the "blind" learners, rather than all diverse learners. The use of these terms also indicates that the language of inclusivity has not yet been mastered by teachers. Eloff and Kgwete concluded that in the classrooms of INSET teachers, inclusive education is still viewed as 'special Education'.²³⁶

There are inconsistencies in what is meant by 'inclusion' across the range of stakeholders, including teachers. It is therefore recommended that the HEIs, in collaboration with the DBE and other relevant stakeholders, develop a working and practical definition of inclusion to ensure that teachers have conceptual clarity and can implement inclusion in their classrooms.

3.2.3 Concerns regarding policy support for inclusive education

Analysis of the existing policies shows some shortcomings of current policies, which includes:

- A lack of uptake by HEIs on the policy recommendations (The National Policy Framework for Teacher Education²³⁷ and Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications (Section 3.2.4.8)²³⁸ as per the prevalence of non-compulsory and silo courses on inclusive education)
- A lack of clarity with regards to definitions of disability
- A lack of clarity with regards to who is responsible for implementing inclusive education policies

- Ambiguity with regards to policy wording, particularly within the Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications (2015)²³⁹

Policy can only take the system so far;²⁴⁰ simply teaching policy may create the idea within stakeholders that inclusive education is merely an issue of compliance. There are clear indications that the current framework does not provide a coherent message. However, the philosophies that are required to support meaningful inclusive education do exist, and are reflected in the guidelines provided by the DBE, such as: “Learners who experience significant barriers to learning must also have the possibility of straddling grades, which allows them to take certain subjects at grade level and others at a different level.”²⁴¹ But an effective implementation of the integrative aspects of this philosophy will require a shift in the structure and management of schools and of their timetabling, alongside a reduction of the current, systemic emphasis on assessment of learning.

Policy recommendations must be urgently scaffolded with practical recommendations as to how to implement inclusive education within schools.

3.3 Recommendations for HEI teacher training

3.3.1 Improve the capacity of teachers to facilitate general education

This report confirms the message of key reviews.^{242,243} For example, there are deep-seated concerns about: the capacity of the teachers to teach their subjects; most learners not reading, writing or being numerate at the appropriate grade levels; and 40 per cent of Grade 1 entrants not reaching grade 12 (and of the 60 per cent that do, only 37 per cent pass – with 4.5 per cent attaining university entrance).²⁴⁴ One of the most urgent needs identified is to support teachers in their own grounding in their subjects, both at PRESETT and CPD levels. For in-service teachers, an intensive professional development programme specifically focused on content and pedagogical knowledge should be designed to empower the practitioners.

In the interviews, pre-service teachers reported needs as deep as a lack of capacity in using tools such as chalkboards and smartboards (previous studies had also revealed that pre-service teachers need competencies and skills in using the chalkboard, including avoidance of ‘chalk-and-talk’^{245,246}). Pre-service teachers also reported that they had only superficial training on lesson planning; evidence indicates that lesson planning is a fundamental component to be included in any teacher preparation for inclusive education.²⁴⁷

Lecturers need to equip pre-service teachers with the fundamentals of teaching and learning, including lesson planning. The literature indicates that micro-teaching can illuminate pre-service teachers' strengths and shortcomings in inclusive teaching, which can be used as a springboard for improving practice.²⁴⁸ Through consultation and partnership with schools, HEIs can improve pre-service teachers' micro-teaching.

3.3.2 Improve the capacity of teachers to facilitate inclusive education

Inclusive education requires that the stakeholders are supportive and capable of addressing the diverse needs of the learners and ensuring that education is non-discriminative. The analyses of the trainee teachers' attitudes to inclusion raises concern regarding these aims (see 2.4 Attitudes to teaching inclusively). The negative attitude among PRESET teachers to including learners with specific learning needs or physical challenges suggests that the current cohort of trainee teachers do not yet have the support, capacity or skills needed create an effective inclusive classroom. Thus, ensuring that teachers are not only supportive of inclusive policies, but also capacitated and willing to implement inclusive beliefs and practices is one of the greatest challenges to achieving inclusion.

The National Policy Framework for Teacher Education (2007) and Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications (2015)^{249,250} places the responsibility with the HEIs to capacitate such teachers. Such institutions represent the one comprehensive point of contact with trainee teachers where this philosophy and its pedagogy may be disseminated.

Analyses of the responses of the concurrent cohort of PRESET teachers revealed that as yet they are not prepared by their PRESET training to facilitate inclusive education. The DBE responded to the issue of inclusivity in the classroom with its 2011 policy document.²⁵¹ But it is notable that no reference to this document was made during the focus group discussions. It would be very helpful for HEIs to disseminate this document to their trainee teachers and encourage them to critique it, rather than just to ignore the DBE's expectation that the curriculum should be differentiated at all levels for all learners.

It is recommended that HEIs focus on the following three aspects of the pedagogy of teacher training:

1. Provide inclusive education techniques and philosophy as compulsory material.
2. Nurture inclusive education by providing an integrative approach (rather than a silo approach), so as to shift perceptions that inclusive education is an add-on extra.
3. Emphasise practical applications of how to provide inclusive education, rather than on the policies themselves.

There are several extrinsic factors around the teaching of inclusive education by HEIs that may compound the issue of insufficient capacity within the school-level system. One of these is the capacity challenges within the HEIs that train the teachers (HEIs).²⁵² It is incumbent upon the HEIs to radically improve their own understanding and delivery of inclusive education training. O’Nelly, Bourke and Kearney²⁵³ argued that if inclusive education could be integrated into all courses in the teacher education programme, it would become part of the discourse of teaching.

The HEIs should lead by example and not only teach inclusive education, but they themselves must *teach inclusively*. The literature indicates that lecturers need manageable class sizes for one-on-one interaction with pre-service teachers to ensure their effective preparation for inclusive education.²⁵⁴ A class size of up to 600 compromises lecturers’ one-on-one interactions with pre-service teachers.

The literature and the interview responses suggest that HEIs are unfriendly to learners with disabilities, as they are primarily established for typically developing learners.²⁵⁵ Walton and Rusznyak²⁵⁶ further argue that the development of an inclusive education should not be isolated from professional development and in-service training of teachers. It implies that those teachers already in the service need professional development in inclusive education as well.

In addition to the didactic aspects of empowering teachers to facilitate inclusive education, there are the content aspects of the courses provided by HEIs, which are considered below.

3.3.3 Improve the capacity of teachers to use assistive technologies

Pre-service teachers should not only be made aware of access technology devices but should also be trained on how to use them effectively in their teaching and learning. The DBE provides assistive devices to special and full-service schools, including spectacles, hearing aids, cochlear implants, wheelchairs, Perkins Brailers, white canes, white boards, bookmarkers, and augmentative and alternative communication devices.²⁵⁷ They are intended to support the learning of learners with disabilities. The National Treasury is committed to providing funds to ensure more accessible teaching and learning in ordinary and full-service schools, so as to include learners with visual and hearing impairments.²⁵⁸

However, while assistive devices may be provided in schools, pre-service teachers sampled reported being unaware of them. Similarly, past research established that pre-service teachers are not competent in the use of assistive technology for learners with developmental delays.^{259,260}

3.3.4 Improve teaching practice

HEIs can capacitate teachers to facilitate inclusive education in the classroom by exposing them to the current best practice model of inclusion. The emergent finding from the research was that the nature of the pre-service teachers' exposure to inclusive education influences both their attitude towards, and their sense of preparedness to teach, inclusively in mainstream classrooms. The implication is that experience at a full-service school may be the most constructive experience that the HEI may be able to offer the trainee teacher.

3.3.5 Recognise the diversity of the trainee cohort

Findings from the initial research (see 2.4 Attitudes to teaching inclusively) suggest potential influencing factors on attitudes to inclusive education, such as demographics and prior teaching experience. This suggests that HEIs should consider the prior experiences and background demographics of the cohort and validate their prior knowledge when designing teacher training programmes.

3.3.6 The future of inclusive education in South Africa

South Africa has an education system that is accused of being grossly unequal, inefficient, and which severely under-performs when compared to other countries.²⁶¹ Within an education system that often uses a language for the medium of instruction that is a second or third language for the learner (with the switch from mother tongue occurring pre-literacy for many), it could be argued the system of education in South Africa is predominately exclusive in nature.

Further investigation is required to clarify this, but, it is highly likely that the negative attitudes revealed by the concurrent cohort of trainee teachers are compounded by the inflexibility of the current system to accommodate and effectively implement inclusive education, as well as by the lack of their own training. While it is the scope of this report to re-examine and re-imagine the entire education system, all evidence indicates that the need to do so is urgent.

The current paradigm of South African education is heavily curriculum based and assessment led. In the larger schools, teachers and their classes are expected to 'march in exact time' with other classes being taught in parallel to 'prepare' the learners for upcoming common assessments. One-on-one teacher-learner time at the secondary level is rare – a 'remain-during-break' instruction to a learner may be the only time a teacher has to sit down with and build an individual relationship with a learner that is struggling in some way.

The teacher-to-learner ratio, even in the schools servicing learners with high socio-economic status, typically exceeds 1:30 per classroom, and is often far more in schools serving learners in lower socio-economic areas. However, there is a 'chicken and egg' situation, whereby pre-service teachers are clearly stating that they do not agree that individuals who sit 'outside the mean', in terms of mental, physical, intellectual or social norms, can be accommodated within the current South African education system. However, to amend the culture to be one of inclusive education, extrinsic factors inherent to the education system itself must be adjusted.

It is recommended that the South African education system re-examines the reason for shortcomings in the implementation of outcomes-based education (OBE) and critiques the system – with its rigid adherence to curriculum-based outcomes, emphasis on teaching rather than learning, and assessment for learning prioritised above assessment of learning – used to replace it.²⁶² As Walton argued: "If effective inclusive education is to be implemented, responsible stakeholders should return to the drawing board to rethink a radical inclusive education that could genuinely include all diverse learners in the education system of South Africa."²⁶³

3.4 Concluding remarks

The philosophy of an all-inclusive education is a promise to honour the unique ability and humanity of every individual, and therefore facilitates learning according to each learner's needs. This report demonstrates that South Africa still falls short of the ideal. Effective reform requires clear identification of the problem: this report is a step in that direction. South Africa still has many wounds to heal caused by the harsh discriminatory era of apartheid, and urgently needs to find solutions to solve socio-economic imbalances. Behind the struggle for inclusion and inclusive education lies a continuing war for human rights. Learners do not need to exhibit any special physical or mental needs to be excluded by the current South African education system.

Added to the challenge of providing inclusive education is that of providing an education that is relevant in the 21st century. Several factors, including advances in technology, the global economy and politics, change the landscape in terms of the knowledge, skills and abilities demanded in the workspace.^{264,265} Consequently, the current challenge for education centres around "how to design schools and student learning for the future, how learners with disabilities would fit into this future, and how to make inclusive practices available to everybody, everywhere."²⁶⁶ By designing a system that adapts to learners of varying abilities and needs, it is possible to facilitate learning that will serve all levels of need – thereby helping to ensure a society where all young people feel valued and are enabled.

Fulfilling such a vision means responding to the issues raised within this report – those of: gaps in policy; disjuncture between policy and practice; and issues concerning the classroom environment and training of teachers.

Appendix

1 Access to the data and analyses performed

The questionnaire tools and full analyses sets for Sections 2 (Status of inclusive education in South Africa) and 3 (Implications of the research for teacher training) are held by the British Council and available upon request. UNISA and the British Council are currently investigating ways to make the data, tools and the reports on their analyses available publicly. In the interim, requests to access them may be made to the project co-ordinator, Ms Joanne Newton (Joanne.Newton@britishcouncil.org.za), or to the UNISA coordinator, Professor Phasha Nareadi (phashnt@unisa.ac.za).

2 Summary data and analyses

2.1 Demographics of the sampled populations

Two separate episodes of data collection were conducted, accessing various cohorts. The UNISA 2017 sampled PRESET teachers who had completed their compulsory modules. The concurrent cohort sampled PRESET teachers from the University of KwaZulu-Natal and University of Johannesburg (representing the traditional university/HEI); the University of Fort Hare (representing rural HEIs); and the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (representing the Technical HEIs). Various comparisons were made to determine whether the UNISA and the concurrent cohort populations were similar in composition.

The concurrent cohort differed to that of the 2017 UNISA sampled population. The male-to-female ratio differed significantly because of a higher proportion of females in the UNISA sample ($\chi^2 = 37.54, p < 0.0001$). There was also a significant difference in the age composition of the two cohorts, with more 20–25-year-olds in the concurrent population set ($\chi^2 = 664.85, p < 0.0001$).

There was a significant difference in the origin of the people comprising the two cohorts, with more South African nationals in the concurrent population set, ($\chi^2 = 28.43, p < 0.0001$). There was a significant difference in the racial composition of the two cohorts, with a higher proportion of individuals claiming Black origin in the concurrent population set ($\chi^2 = 131.39, p < 0.0001$). As the two populations are non-homogenous, the UNISA tool targeted a different student sub-set to the concurrent tool run at the chosen HEIs, preventing direct comparisons between the two groups.

2.2 Attitudes of trainee teachers (concurrent tool)

As part of this review of the status of inclusive education in South Africa, the attitudes to both teaching inclusively and trainee teachers' preparedness (in terms of training received) to teach inclusively was examined in over 700 trainee teachers concurrently at various HEIs. For the purposes of the data analyses their responses to each questionnaire were treated as two sets. The first were coded to extract an overall 'positive/negative' attitude (mean of 18 per cent) to inclusive education, and the second into 'agree/disagree' whether they have been prepared to teach inclusively.

2.3 Attitudes of trainee teachers (UNISA tool)

The attitudes towards both teaching inclusively and trainee teachers' preparedness (in terms of training received) to teach inclusively was examined in over 800 trainee teachers who had completed all their compulsory modules while studying with UNISA in 2017. By applying a more conservative coding approach, giving each statement equal weighting, the overall positive attitude towards inclusive education from the UNISA cohort dropped from 99 per cent (when coded as per the concurrent method) to a 67 per cent positive response set; the coding provided enough variance for subsequent analyses.

Similarly, the overall agreement that training had prepared the UNISA group was so high that the data was coded as complete agreement that training needs were met, or not. For the purposes of the data analyses, the responses to each questionnaire were treated as two sets. The first were coded to extract an overall 'positive/negative' attitude towards inclusive education, and the second into 'agree/disagree' whether they have been prepared to teach inclusively.

2.4 Attitude to teaching inclusively

By simplifying the responses of the 716 trainee teachers analysed, it is possible to categorise those with an overall positive or negative attitude to inclusion in the classroom. Quantified in this way, 18 per cent of respondents hold a positive attitude to inclusion in the classroom.

TABLE 2: AGREEMENT ON STATEMENTS ON ATTITUDE TO TEACHING INCLUSIVELY, CONCURRENT COHORT

STATEMENT	STRONGLY AGREE/ AGREE n (per cent)	STRONGLY DISAGREE/ DISAGREE n (per cent)
I was prepared to teach in an inclusive classroom.	599 (83.7)	117 (16.3)
Inclusive education is a desirable educational practice for learners who experience barriers to learning.	654 (91.3)	62 (8.7)
Inclusive education is a desirable educational practice for learners who do not experience barriers to learning.	306 (42.7)	410 (57.3)
Learners who experience barriers to learning are likely to do better academically in inclusive classrooms.	578 (80.7)	138 (19.3)
I am willing to make needed instructional modifications for learners who experience barriers to learning in my classroom.	690 (96.4)	26 (3.6)
I can collaborate meaningfully with other teachers in inclusive classrooms.	678 (94.7)	38 (5.3)
I am comfortable with behaviour management in inclusive classrooms.	577 (80.6)	139 (19.4)
All learners should be held to the same standards of behaviour.	526 (73.5)	190 (26.5)
Educating learners who experience barriers to learning in the regular classroom is disruptive to other learners.	375 (52.4)	341 (47.6)
Improvement in overall discipline has a positive impact on academic achievement.	675 (94.3)	41 (5.7)
I try to support all my learners to find appropriate ways to manage their feelings.	676 (94.4)	40 (5.6)

STATEMENT	STRONGLY AGREE/ AGREE n (per cent)	STRONGLY DISAGREE/ DISAGREE n (per cent)
Learners who experience barriers to learning are likely to improve their social skills when placed in a regular education classroom.	484 (67.6)	232 (32.4)
Most learners can be educated in regular classrooms regardless of their level of barriers to learning.	407 (56.8)	309 (43.2)
Most learners who experience barriers to learning lack skills needed to master the regular classroom content.	465 (64.9)	251 (35.1)
Most learners with learning disabilities should be educated in regular classrooms.	321 (44.8)	395 (55.2)
Most learners with behavioural disorders should be educated in regular classrooms.	303 (42.3)	413 (57.7)
Most learners with physical disabilities should be educated in regular classrooms.	354 (49.4)	362 (50.6)
Most learners with hearing impairment should be educated in regular classrooms.	242 (33.8)	474 (66.2)
Most learners with visual impairment should be educated in regular classrooms.	284 (39.7)	432 (60.3)
Most learners with communication disorders should be educated in regular classrooms.	274 (38.3)	442 (61.7)
Most learners with health disabilities should be educated in regular classrooms.	375 (52.4)	341 (47.6)
Most learners with intellectual disabilities should be educated in regular classrooms.	299 (41.8)	417 (58.2)
Most learners with multiple disabilities should be educated in regular classrooms.	180 (25.1)	536 (74.9)

TABLE 3: AGREEMENT ON STATEMENTS ON ATTITUDE TO TEACHING INCLUSIVELY, UNISA COHORT

STATEMENT	Supportive of inclusive education (per cent)	Not supportive of inclusive education (per cent)
Most learners who experience barriers to learning lack the skills to understand the content of a mainstream classroom.	300 (46)	355 (54)
Learners who experience barriers to learning are likely to do better academically in a mainstream classroom.	311 (47)	344 (53)
Including learners who experience barriers to learning in the mainstream classroom negatively affects the learning of other learners.	389 (59)	266 (41)
Most learners with learning disabilities such as hearing or visual impairment should not be educated in mainstream classrooms.	450 (69)	205 (31)
Learners who experience barriers to learning are likely to improve their social skills in a mainstream classroom.	488 (75)	167 (25)
Inclusive education is a good way to address the problem of racism in schools.	526 (80)	129 (20)
Most learners with health disorders should not be educated in mainstream classrooms.	548 (84)	107 (16)
Inclusive education helps to promote social justice in schools.	610 (93)	45 (7)
Respecting the sexual orientation of all learners is necessary for inclusion in South Africa.	626 (96)	29 (4)

2.5 Preparedness to teach inclusively

TABLE 4: AGREEMENT ON FEELINGS OF PREPAREDNESS TO TEACH INCLUSIVELY, CONCURRENT COHORT

STATEMENT	STRONGLY AGREE/ AGREE n (per cent)	STRONGLY DISAGREE/ DISAGREE n (per cent)
I have knowledge about the characteristics of different barriers to learning and the inclusive practices to adopt.	583 (85.1)	102 (14.9)
I can carry out my role in screening, identification, assessment and support of learners in an inclusive classroom.	528 (77.1)	157 (22.9)
I can differentiate instruction to respond to the diversity of learners in an inclusive classroom.	561 (81.9)	124 (18.1)
I can manage an inclusive classroom to ensure academic engagement and pro-social behaviour of all learners.	541 (79.0)	144 (21.0)
I can collaborate with other stakeholders including peer teachers and parents to meet the diverse needs of learners in an inclusive classroom.	613 (89.5)	71 (10.5)

TABLE 5: AGREEMENT ON FEELINGS OF PREPAREDNESS TO TEACH INCLUSIVELY, UNISA COHORT

STATEMENT	STRONGLY AGREE/ AGREE n (per cent)	STRONGLY DISAGREE/ DISAGREE n (per cent)
I am familiar with the resources that learners with visual, intellectual and hearing impairments need to learn.	554 (85)	101 (15)
I have high expectations and aspirations for all learners.	635 (97)	20 (3)
I have the necessary behaviour management skills to make my classroom more inclusive.	636 (97)	19 (3)
I am able to support learners to deal with difficult/sensitive issues such as racism.	644 (98)	11 (2)
I am able to change my teaching methods to accommodate learners who experience barriers to learning.	647 (99)	8 (1)
I am prepared to teach in an inclusive classroom.	650 (99)	5 (1)
I am familiar with the resources that learners with visual, intellectual and hearing impairments need to learn.	650 (99)	5 (1)

2.6 Homogenous groups, concurrent cohort

The following demographic factors were found to have no significant impact upon the likelihood of the concurrent respondent group providing an overall positive or negative attitude to inclusive education, as demonstrated by their questionnaire responses: age, gender, nationality, educational attainment, teaching practice duration, teaching experience in mainstream schools, teaching experience in full-service schools and previous experience as a teacher.

The following demographic factors were found to have no significant impact upon the likelihood of the respondent providing an overall agreement or disagreement that they have been prepared to teach inclusively, as demonstrated by their questionnaire responses: age, nationality, educational attainment, teaching practice duration and previous experience as a teacher.

2.7 Heterogenous groups, concurrent cohort

Certain demographic factors were found to have a significant impact upon the likelihood of the respondent providing an overall agreement or disagreement that they have been prepared to teach inclusively, as demonstrated by their questionnaire responses. The following effects on attitude to teaching were found within the data:

- Gender: female respondents were about twice as likely to agree that their training needs in inclusive education are met compared to male respondents
- Race: Black respondents are about four times [OR=4.2] more likely to agree that their training needs are met compared to Coloured respondents. Similarly, Black respondents are five times [OR=5.3] more likely to agree that their training needs are met compared to White respondents

3 Further research

When the opportunity arises to analyse both data sets fully, the data from UNISA could be examined to see whether the effect of demographics, such as gender or claimed origin of respondents, may be corroborated. If such effects are found, then more formal research techniques could be applied in future research to investigate the influence of such factors, or such variables may be controlled for when further querying the data. Currently, as per the warning about the limitations of multiple comparisons, such significant results must currently be considered as to be at risk of a Type I error.

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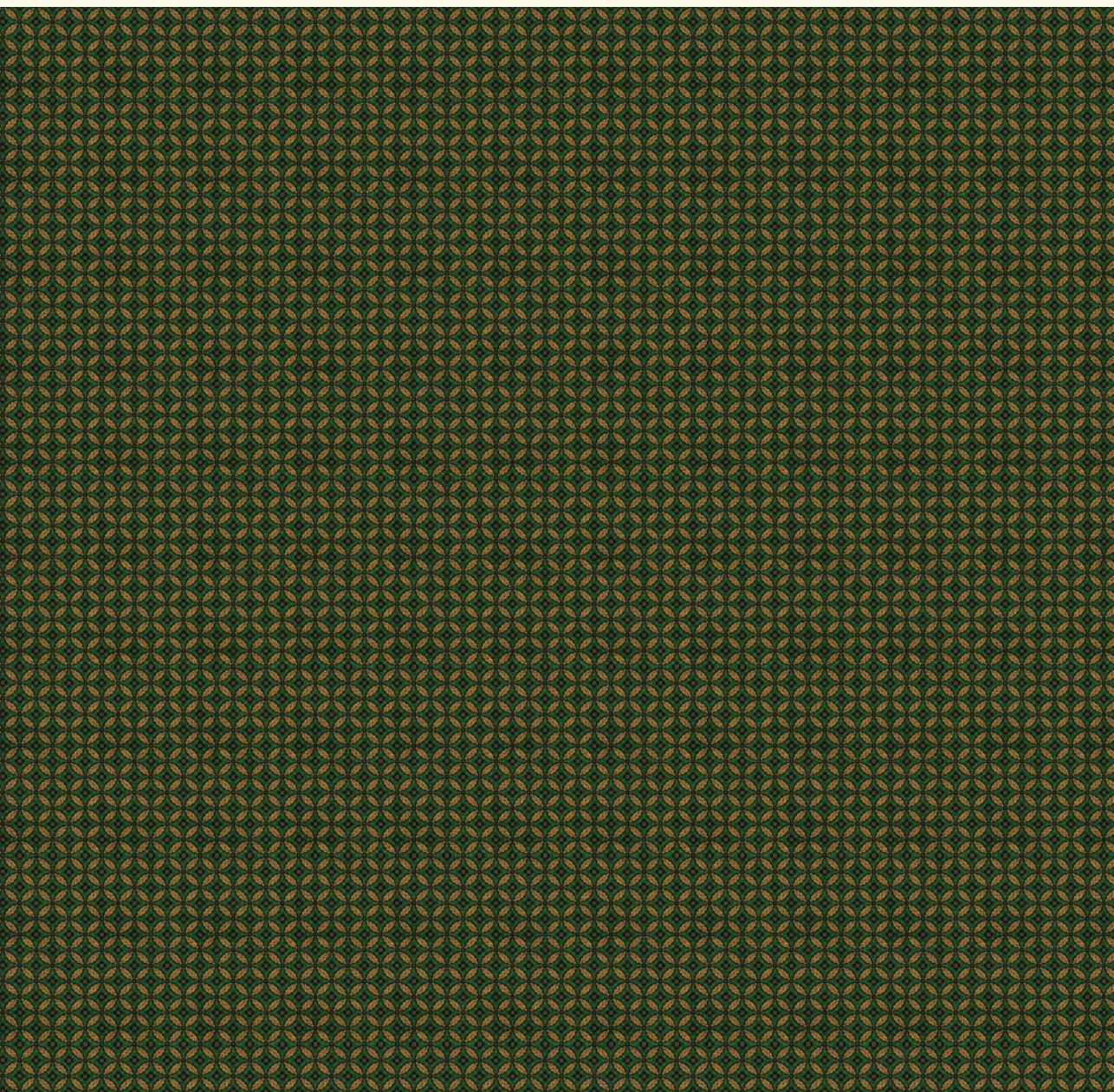
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