

**Experiences of teachers in the implementation of a special school curriculum and
barriers learners face in Vhembe District, Limpopo Province, South Africa:
Towards an intervention strategy**

by

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DECLARATION

I affirm that *Experiences of teachers in the implementation of a special school curriculum and barriers learners face in Vhembe District, Limpopo Province: Towards an intervention strategy*, submitted for the fulfilment of *Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of Education Studies, School of Education at the University of Limpopo*, is my own work.

I, Mathoni Tsumbedzo Jonas, solemnly declare that all sources used as references have been acknowledged.



T.J. Mathoni



Date:

DEDICATION

This piece of work is devoted to my late father, Bishop Mathoni Makondelele Moses.

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A special word of gratitude and appreciation to my Creator, who provided me with wisdom to finalise this research.

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the participation of teachers in the implementation of the special school curricula and barriers learners face in Vhembe District Special Schools. Qualitative research design was adopted wherein nine (9) teachers and seven (7) departmental heads were interviewed from schools A to E. Class observation, consulted official documents to support the implementation of special school curricula, school profile instrument and structured interviews were used to gather information. Analysis of information was performed through narrative and thematic content analysis.

The study discovered that roles of teachers and departmental heads varied in terms of implementing curricula. There is a lack of comprehensive training towards empowering departmental heads and teachers in special schools. The results revealed that there are many barriers that prevent learners from learning effectively in the classroom settings. Some of the barriers range from learners' conditions to teachers and language issues. Furthermore, there are limitations that are hindering the execution of special school curricula such as lack of resources and insufficient workshops. The research discovered that it is crucial to involve teachers in curriculum development and design as it encourages them to cultivate self-identification in the process of implementing such a programme. The study proposed that collaborative approach is key in combating barriers experienced by special schools. Research recommends that the DoE should conduct comprehensive training as a way of empowering the participants in the accomplishment of the special schools' curricula. Findings proposed that adequate facilities and resources be provided as prerequisites for the successful operation of special school curricula. Furthermore, special schools should build partnerships with parents and develop mutual responsibility to successfully meet special needs learners in the educational system.

The educational structures should involve teachers and departmental heads in curriculum development and design. All special schools may be encouraged and be motivated to start a support team. The SBST must help in training teachers and solve problems that teachers and learners experience in their schools. Special schools may be encouraged to establish reading and writing programmes. Based on challenges and gaps identified in this study, a Curriculum Implementation Model for Special Schools was developed.

Key words in this study: Inclusive Education, Special Education, Special School, Curriculum, Learning Barriers, Intervention and Learners with Learning difficulties.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

CAPS	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement
DH	Departmental Head
LSPID	Learners With Intellectual Disabilities Curriculum
NCAP	National Curriculum Assessment Policy
NCS	National Curriculum Statement
SBST	School-Based Support Team
SEN	Special Education Needs
T	Teacher
TAC	Thematic Content Analysis
TOC	Technical Occupational Curriculum

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CHAPTER 1

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The world is propagating the notion of spreading inclusive education. This was spread through the International Conventions focusing on the privileges and rights of physically challenged learners. The international conventions emphasised the provision of education to all as it is linked to the objective of the UN Convention to cater for special needs learners. As a way of encouraging its implementation, policies to implement inclusive education were introduced (Mugambi, 2017). Furthermore, inclusive education echoes the global responsiveness and support for the special needs learners to be part of normal education (Lampen, 2014; Evans & Lunt, 2012; Reay, 2014; UNESCO, 2007). In the recent past there have been movements towards promoting inclusive awareness in countries all over the world (Lampen, 2014; Evans & Lunt, 2012; Reay, 2014; UNESCO, 2007). This awareness is aiming to promote the philosophy and policy of special needs. All countries including South Africa were expected to adhere to the precepts of international conventions.

Literature suggests that prior to democracy in South Africa, the dominant educational system for special needs learners was based on the therapeutic approach (Terzi, 2014). Although this may be true, research argued that the medical model was regarded as a medical deficit because it assesses children's restrictions contrary to progressive and practical standards (Hodkinson & Vickerman, 2009). For that reason, Naicker (2018) argued that being a shortfall prototype, it discriminates in that learners' needs are preserved separate from the systematic education settings. Naicker (2018) further highlighted that the practices of the medical model in inclusive education discriminated against learners who are physically impaired. Indeed, the advocators of the therapeutic model propagate that a complete analysis of physical and neurological illnesses should go before interposition in instructive surroundings (Adam, 2014; Degener, 2017).

Another source for insight on the medical model states that it is critical for medical practitioners to treat children with disabilities in society (Degener, 2017). For this reason, I argue that the influence of medical practitioners creates a bias in terms of handling children with disabilities. It has been argued that medical professionals and scientists operate as doorkeepers in society and use their analyses to label children to regulate which individuals obtain educational amenities that are appropriate to inclusive education (Walton, 2018). It has been claimed that through medical approach learners with minor challenges were also placed in inclusive education.

Terzi (2014) firmly acknowledges that the birth of liberation led to the advent of activists for the physically challenged to propagate values of societal fairness as opposed to the therapeutic approach. The studies reviewed here suggest that the therapeutic approach is rooted in physically challenged movements. According to Schugurensky (2010) the emergence of movements encouraged ideologies of fairness and cohesion.

South Africa adopted the social model for inclusive education because it does not discriminate against disability but places it in the social order (Terzi, 2014). Furthermore, the social model removed the barricades produced by medical theorists (Massoumeh & Jamshidi, 2012). In this study, social theory was used as an overarching model because it ensures fairness in education and achieves independence from discrimination.

Ahmad, Abiddin, Jelas and Saleha (2011) acknowledge that successful implementation of special school curricula requires facilities and infrastructure which are relevant to support learning. However, some of these critical facilities and infrastructure are lacking in some of the schools (du Plessis & Mestry, 2019). In addition, inadequate personnel training programmes, lack of educational specialists, unqualified teachers, and lack of educational equipment are among the blockades for proper implementation of special school curricula (Zwane & Malale, 2018; Khoane, 2012).

1.2 RATIONALE TO THE STUDY

Swart and Pettipher (2015:03) indicate that inclusion education is a complex, multidimensional and controversial concept. This became evident when different countries adopted contrasting approaches in the implementation of inclusive education (Seedet, 2018:20). Subsequently, it was observed that implementers of inclusive education identified many challenges and gaps (Donohue & Bornman, 2014; Murungi, 2015). Therefore, the Education White Paper 6: Building an Inclusive Education System acknowledges the need for further research on inclusion (Department of Education, 2001). It emphasises that key levers for change must be identified. The Department of Education (2001:20) indicates that the successful implementation of inclusive education depends upon substantive understanding of the real experiences and capabilities of systems, institutions and settings.

It states that the success of the approach depends upon the school managers and teachers (DoE, 2001:29). Despite the possibility of support and training by the DoE for the implementation of inclusive education, challenges and barriers for implementation are recurring. With regard to the inclusive education in special schools, the study will show the achievements and challenges in the implementation process. The study will identify a gap in the current body of knowledge and propose an implementation model that should be adopted to solve challenges identified. The study will inform policy makers on the implementation model suggested to address limitations for the implementation of special school curricula.

1.3 RESEARCH PROBLEM

The inception of Education White Paper 6 warrants a paradigm change on how schools operate and are managed in terms of supporting learners. The paradigm shift suggests that the way in which teachers used to teach, should change and that they have to acquire appropriate knowledge to teach learners. However, research conducted in South Africa associated with all-encompassing education is particularly relevant for the support

provided by professionals such as psychologists to learners with special educational needs (Allam & Martin, 2021). Therefore, there is a need for the policy formulators to be conscious of gaps in the implementation of inclusive education in special schools. Despite that, I have observed that schools work in silos in terms of implementing inclusive education. However, Majoko and Phasha (2018) emphasise that the collaborative approach is the key for the successful implementation of inclusive education.

I have noticed that teachers are the cornerstone for the implementation of inclusion education. Therefore, their knowledge of inclusive policies will determine success or failure in the implementation process. Literature revealed that special schools' teachers did not acquire knowledge on cascading special school curricula in classroom settings (Hodgson & Khumalo, 2016). This was due to the fact that inclusive education policy brought changes on how schools should be run and managed (Ndinisa, 2016). Khoane (2012) indicates that teachers must have a basic background for special needs learners and its usefulness in accommodating special school learners. Research conducted by Muzata (2017) reveals that teachers experience many barriers during the implementation of special school curricula. The DoE (2001) confirms that the needs of special school learners were only partially realised as teachers were not properly capacitated and trained.

The DoE conducted trainings nationally that were aimed to empower teachers to implement inclusive education, however, the implementation gap still exists in special schools. There is also a lack of an implementation model that could combine different structures to effectively prepare teachers to implement inclusive education effectively and efficiently. This study aims to develop the curriculum implementation model to address challenges experienced by special schools in the implementation of inclusive education.

Reflecting on challenges highlighted above, the question arises as to how special schools are implementing inclusive education in Vhembe District Special Schools. Furthermore, nineteen (19) years after its implementation, the question arises again on how Vhembe District schools are realising the objectives of inclusive education. While the existing body of knowledge focused on teachers' perspectives towards implementing inclusive

education, less research has been done on the practices of teachers in teaching physically challenged learners. The study scrutinises teachers' practices in educating physically challenged learners and to suggest possible execution interventions.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research was directed by the following research questions:

- What is the role of teachers in supporting the implementation of special school curricula and dealing with learning barriers learners face?
- What are the experiences of teachers in the implementation of special school curricula?
- What are the attitudes and perceptions of teachers in the implementation of special school curricula and how do they deal with learning barriers learners face?
- What are the challenges and learning barriers faced by teachers in the implementation of special school curricula?
- What are the interventions which may assist in addressing limitations associated with the implementation of special school curricula and learning barriers learners face?

1.5 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

1.5.1 Aim of the study

The aim of this research is to investigate experiences of teachers with regard to the implementation of the special school curricula and learning barriers learners face in Vhembe District special schools with the purpose to develop interventions that may assist in curbing limitations associated with the execution of special school curricula and learning barriers learners face.

1.5.2 Objectives of the study

In order to achieve the aim of the study, the following objectives are suggested:

- To examine the role of teachers in the implementation of special school curricula and learning barriers learners face.
- To determine the experiences of teachers in teaching special school curricula and managing learning barriers learners face.
- To explore attitudes and perceptions of teachers in the implementation of special school curricula and learning barriers learners face.
- To investigate challenges and learning barriers faced by teachers in the implementation of special school curricula.
- To propose interventions which may assist in addressing limitations associated with the implementation of special school curricula and learning barriers learners face.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The accomplishment of any special school curriculum depends on the involvement of principal implementors (Alsubaie, 2016). Therefore, the participation of teachers is essential for the realisation of special school curricula. Tabulawa (2013) acknowledges that teachers should have a voice in the development of special school curricula. Without reservation, the most significant personnel in the curriculum implementation process are teachers. Ramparsed (2000:34) confirms that “better teacher support means better learning because they are most knowledgeable about the practice of teaching and are responsible for introducing the curriculum in the classroom”. Carl (2012) supports that teachers must be at the centre of curriculum development.

This can be enhanced through employing a bottom-up approach in terms of developing a curriculum (Skedsmo & Huber, 2019). The researcher observed that the involvement of teachers in curriculum development aids them to have a sense of ownership and that

they can therefore easily implement it, as affirmed by Mikser, Karmer and Farel (2016). Carl (2012) perceives that supporting teachers with relevant information and skills in terms of implementing a curriculum contributes to increased teacher job performance and productivity. Furthermore, Carl (2012) emphasises that it also boosts the morale of teachers, increases knowledge and understanding of the curriculum to be implemented.

1.7 OUTLINING THE CHAPTERS OF THE STUDY

The research is ordered in six chapters as follows:

Chapter 1: This chapter provides the background and rationale to the study, the research problem and research questions, the purpose of the study with its aim and objectives and lastly, the significance of the study.

Chapter 2: The chapter presents a literature review on inclusive education. The country's position on all-encompassing education is discussed taking into cognisance the current challenges in the execution of all-encompassing education. Thereafter, the special school curriculum and its background are introduced, followed by challenges linked with the execution of special school curricula and dealing with barriers learners face. In addition, the role of teachers in supporting the execution of special school curricula and addressing barriers learners face is discussed, taking into consideration their experiences and perception. This is followed by a discussion of the theoretical framework which underpinned this study, such as behaviourism, cognitivism, constructivism and their relevance to inclusive education.

Chapter 3: This chapter provides a detailed account of the research design, methods and procedures that were followed in conducting the study. It also outlines research instruments that were used to elicit data for this study.

Chapter 4: This chapter presents and discusses the profile of schools selected for the study and resources to support the execution of inclusive education.

Chapter 5 presents a discussion of the findings.

In Chapter 6, the findings, conclusions and recommendations are presented.

1.8 CONCLUSION

This chapter introduced to the reader a global plan for propagating the notion of spreading access to education to all. It further presented the background, rationale for the study and problem statement. In addition, challenges pertaining to the execution of all-encompassing education were presented. As the research progresses, the objectives of the study will be achieved through addressing the research questions.

Chapter two provides a literature review on inclusive education globally and regionally. The chapter also reviews the literature that addresses barriers related to the execution of special school curricula. It highlights barriers learners face, and the role, experiences, attitudes and perception of teachers in the execution of a special school curriculum. Lastly, the chapter expounds the theoretical framework which supported the study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a review of existing literature on all-encompassing education. It begins with the definition of concepts followed by an overview history of inclusive education and its challenges both globally and locally. This chapter also addresses the Department of Education's policy on inclusive education taking into consideration the current challenges on its implementation. Thereafter, the special school curriculum and its background are introduced. This is followed by limitations associated with the execution of the special school curricula. The importance of teachers in supporting the implementation of a special school curriculum and barriers learners face are discussed with due consideration of their experiences and perception with regard to the implementation of a special school curriculum. The chapter concludes by looking briefly at a theoretical framework on inclusive education such as behaviourism, cognitivism, constructivism and its emphasis on inclusive education. All three theories were applied in this study because each of them focuses on and contributes towards strategies for supporting learners with special educational needs.

2.2 DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

2.2.1 Inclusive education

Madhesh (2019:67) explains the term inclusive education as "education that is inclusive on the grounds of disability, culture, gender or any other aspects of learners with special needs". Adams, Harris and Jones (2016) further add that inclusive schools employ individualised instruction to meet and support the needs of all children. They elaborate that the learners in inclusive education are provided with a chance to learn about the diverse differences of special needs learners. In this research, inclusive education refers to the participation of physically challenged learners in a regular school. To realise this

objective the school should remove all the barriers for learners. This advocates that every learner, regardless of his/her differences, has an equal right and opportunity to participate in education. However, for inclusive education to be more effective there should be collaboration between different stakeholders.

2.2.2 Special education

According to Allam and Martin (2021) special education is the processes whereby teaching accommodates physically challenged learners. They further explain that special education is for different categories of handicaps, such as blindness, deafness, hardness of hearing and social maladjustment. In this study, special education means accommodating learners with special educational needs.

2.2.3 Special school

According to Farrell (2012) a special school is an institution which is intended to accommodate physically disadvantaged learners. The DoE (2005a) indicates that in a special school, training is custom made with the intention of providing education to intellectually disabled pupils. In this study, a special school refers to the institution that is dedicated to a special category of learners.

2.2.4 Curriculum

Curriculum is a designed plan of learning and teaching activities to be implemented in the classroom settings (Offorma, 2014). According to Mulenga (2018), curriculum refers to organised learning and teaching activities that should be implemented in schools. In this study, curriculum means a series of planned learning activities that are intended to help special needs learners to learn. This curriculum should include content and teaching and learning activities, relevant teaching methodologies and forms of assessment procedures to be employed for special needs learners.

2.2.5 Learners with learning difficulties

According to Prasad and Murty (2022) learners with learning difficulties, in general, refer to learners with challenges of learning due to their physical condition. Their conditional situation makes it difficult for them to learn properly. Learning difficulty affects reading, writing, listening, speaking, reasoning, and performance in different learning areas. The special schools were designed to cater for special needs learners. Furthermore, the special school curriculum was designed to teach pupils with learning complications. In this study, 'learners with difficulties' refers to those who are severely impaired, blind and deaf, mild to moderately intellectually impaired and physically impaired who experience difficulties in learning, especially in a traditional classroom learning context.

2.2.6 Learning barriers

Ndinisa (2016:53) lists barriers to learning such as teacher's language, physical, emotional and socio-economic factors. In this study a learning barrier is defined as anything that inhibits a learner to learn effectively throughout the school years.

2.3 HISTORY OF SPECIAL SCHOOL EDUCATION AND ITS BARRIERS GLOBALLY

Currently, inclusive education has turned out to be a vital point of attention within the universal education field (Kuyini & Desai, 2018). As a matter of fact, inclusive education was propagated through legislations and policies with the intention to spearhead special school education. Through policies introduced to propagate special school education, countries were required to prioritise their budget to expand the education systems for children irrespective of individual differences. In order to realise that, countries were encouraged to develop inclusive policies to accommodate children in regular institutions. As a result, the Council of Europe Political Declaration (2006:26) endorsed that "education is a basic instrument of social integration". Therefore, countries were

encouraged to provide opportunity to disabled learners to attend mainstream schools (National Council for Special Education, 2013).

Subsequently, Hodgson and Khumalo (2016) endorsed that member states should ensure that special school learners are registered in normal schools. Based on the importance of international policies and legislation on inclusive education, member states were expected to implement inclusive education in their countries with the purpose of catering for physically challenged pupils.

2.3.1 Execution of special education globally

Kuyini and Desai (2018) confirm that the inception of the inclusive education policy challenged the world to offer excellent schooling to all pupils. However, its implementation presented challenges to countries around the globe. Researchers around the world discovered that its implementation differs across countries (Lee & Low, 2013). Apparently, each system of education interpreted all-encompassing education differently with due consideration of its own history, principles and background. With this in mind, a brief summary of the Netherlands, Italy, Sweden, America, Canada, India, Australia and the United Kingdom in terms of implementing inclusive education is presented.

2.3.2 Netherlands

The Netherlands outlined and developed policy measures to support all-encompassing education for physically disadvantaged learners. In addition, the Netherlands enacted inclusive education as article 23 in the Constitution for freedom of education (Gubbels, Coppens & de Wolf, 2018). As a way of adhering to the call for educational changes, the Netherlands adopted the District Model Approach to propagate inclusive education. Subsequently, the Netherlands encouraged collaboration between regional levels and school boards to work together in providing learners with care they need. In addition, schools were provided with additional funds to support disadvantaged learners. The

Netherlands also encouraged involvement of learners in early childhood programmes and quality education for all (Pijl, 2014).

2.3.3 Italy

Amor, Hagiwara, Shogren, Thompson, Verdugo, Burke and Aguayo (2019:15) confirm that Italy introduced inclusive education in the 1970s. It was structured around the therapeutic approach. This suggests that the provision of inclusive education was entrenched in an individual assessment of physically challenged pupils and even today it still remains visible in current regulation that administers all-encompassing education.

2.3.4 Sweden

Sweden also adopted a strategy of inclusive education for physically challenged learners and emphasised their integration into the society and schools. Apart from this inclusive education in Sweden, it was centred on transforming the system of education in the country (Magnússon, 2016 and 2020). However, Jerlinder, Danermark and Gill (2010) criticised the fact that the developments in their educational system did not match its implementation in school level. Furthermore, the social model was introduced to address the shortcomings of the medical model (Heyer, 2015). The social model approach not only improves accessibility to school structures and facilities but calls for more learners to be included in inclusive education (Brennan, Traustadóttir, Anderberg & Rice, 2016).

2.3.5 United States of America

Like in some other countries, the history of education in America reveals that learners with disabilities were discriminated against and excluded from public schools. Bacchi and Goodwin (2016) point out that numerous judicial acts were enacted to promote equal access of education taking into cognisance learners with barriers to learning. In addition, the American Educational System capacitated schools with a team of professionals to convene with the learners' parents and classify the learners' unique educational needs.

This consultation was done to develop “what learners should achieve, determine the placement, programme alteration, testing accommodations, counselling, and other special services that the learner needs” (Landin, 2010:46). Lastly, the Department of Education in America introduced inclusive curricula which are considerate of physically challenged pupils in the common education setting (Bacchi & Goodwin, 2016). However, the American Education System adopted the medical model approach for the implementation of all-encompassing education.

2.3.6 Canada

Canada like the Netherlands, Sweden and America enacted the execution of all-encompassing education through legislation. Andrews, Drefs, Lupart and Loreman (2015) indicated that all-encompassing education is controlled by provinces and territories, Ministries and Departments of Education. Due to this freedom, territories have established their own terms of all-encompassing education. Therefore, there was no consistency in terms of defining and implementing inclusive education (Bunch, 2015).

Therefore, there was no uniformity in terms of implementing inclusive education in different provinces (Sokal & Katz, 2015). Researchers reveal that Canada is still far from realising the objectives of inclusive education although there is a remarkable parental participation including all key stakeholders in supporting the execution of all-encompassing education (Bunch, 2015). In addition, provinces and territories have established their own policies of integration on inclusive education. Like any other country that is implementing inclusive education, Canada adopted the medical model in terms of implementing inclusive education (Hogan, 2019).

2.3.7 India

India like other countries passed an act to motivate the provinces to implement inclusive education. According to Sharma and Das (2015:12) the act manifests “a new epoch of adjustment for education of children with disabilities”. In addition, India introduced various

policies to support the execution of all-encompassing education (Sharma & Das, 2015). It was discovered that a common approach was not relevant for the implementation of inclusive education. Therefore, some provinces used the communicative approach whilst others used the collaborative approach. These two approaches are highly supported by principals, school management and the teachers. However, there are still physically challenged pupils who experience challenges to learning who require supplementary care that falls outside the schooling system. Therefore, the study conducted by Sharma and Das (2015) concludes that India is still far from realising the objectives of inclusive education. India like many other countries adopted the medical model in implementing inclusive education. In addition, research conducted in private schools that are providing inclusive education reveals that some of them utilise the communicative, collaborative and cultured complete school strategy to implement all-encompassing education (Seedet, 2018:19).

2.3.8 Australia

In Australia, the educational system is decentralised to provinces. Therefore, each province has its own education act to manage and to control the education of learners with special needs (Lee & Low, 2013). The changes in educational systems in Australia paved the way for special educational needs learners to be registered in their local regular schools. In Australia, as in India, Sweden, the Netherlands, America and Italy the medical model was developed to propagate inclusive education for special needs learners. However, due to political changes in Australia, a radical group emerged that proposed the inception of a social model of all-encompassing education because there were many critiques and limitations associated with the medical model (Lee & Low, 2013).

2.3.9 United Kingdom

Like many other countries, the United Kingdom signed up to the Salamanca Statement (De Anna, 2015). The Salamanca Statement suggested that all children must be enrolled in mainstream institutions, unless there are convincing motives for doing otherwise

(UNESCO, 1994:09). The Statement encouraged educational reform in the UK within a broader social agenda. As a means of propagating inclusive education, the UK introduced the Education Act of 1996 and certain other enactments relating to education (Cottini & Morganti, 2015). The UK employed the medical model approach for the execution of all-encompassing education. According to Angela (2012) this approach clashes in terms of promoting inclusion as comparable to the social model.

2.3.10 Barriers of implementing all-encompassing education globally

The implementation of all-encompassing education presented numerous barriers across the globe. These challenges are discussed below.

2.3.10.1 Lack of uniformity

In countries like India, it was discovered that the one-size fits all approach was not relevant for the execution of all-encompassing education. Therefore, provinces in the same country used different approaches for implementing inclusive education. In India some provinces used the communicative approach whilst others used the collaborative approach (Sharma & Das, 2015). Nel, Müller, Hugo, Helldin, Bäckmann, Dwyer and Skarlind (2011) show that the execution of all-encompassing education varies across countries.

2.3.10.2 Lack of teachers' preparedness

Teachers are the crucial stakeholders of the execution of all-encompassing education. In many countries empowerment and development of teachers was neglected (Andriana & Evans, 2020). Concerning the learning results and capabilities of inclusive teachers, many countries have not yet thrived in building an all-encompassing school system that is required by international organisations (Andriana & Evans, 2020).

2.3.10.3 Converting mainstream school to inclusion education is a challenge

Rao (2002) states that converting a mainstream school to a special school is the most daunting mission. This is due to the fact that such a school is expected to familiarise itself with the new approach of teaching, new class arrangement and to adjust the curriculum.

2.3.10.4 Changing the whole educational system

According to Rao (2002) inclusive education will require schools to transform their system of education. This means that the mainstream schools' approach to teaching should be completely transformed to accommodate physically challenged learners. In addition, school buildings, classroom settings and school surroundings should be adjusted to accommodate physically challenged learners.

2.3.10.5 Taylor made curricula

Abhiyan (2016) states that the execution of an inclusive system demands the adaptation of curricula and this demands more attention and involvement of key stakeholders. These tailor-made curricula should include appropriate representation of people with a disability. In addition to the above, a tailor-made curriculum should accommodate the needs of physically challenged learners with the intention of achieving the objectives of all-encompassing education.

2.4 IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN THE AFRICAN REGION

African nationalities followed the international communities in terms of the execution of all-encompassing education. In this section, lessons from Lesotho, Ghana and Tanzania were drawn.

2.4.1 Lesotho

Maqelepo (2008) indicates that Lesotho introduced a special unit to implement all-encompassing education. The intention of introducing inclusive education was to promote the involvement and participation of physically challenged learners in mainstream schools. Furthermore, inclusive education enables learners to acquire appropriate life skills (Maqelepo, 2008). To realise the objective of inclusive education, the Lesotho government encouraged stakeholders to work together. Chitereka (2010) mentions that religious/charitable/social welfare model, the therapeutic model and the societal model were the dominant models in Lesotho. The models have made a major contribution to the development of all-encompassing education and describe potential approaches of dealing with it (Chitereka, 2010:83). However, there were many setbacks associated with the execution of all-encompassing education, one major impediment being the failure to professionally evaluate disabled learners. This is due to the lack of non-teaching professionals to execute such evaluation (Lesotho Ministry of Education and Training, 2009).

2.4.2 Ghana

It should be stated that learners who are physically challenged are entitled to proper education. Implementing all-encompassing education in Ghana adheres to the precepts of inclusive education (Agbenyega, 2007). The overarching goal of the Inclusive Education (IE) policy is to ensure that schools identify children with different learning needs and adopt appropriate curricula that will meet their learning requirements (Ofori, 2018). However, like other countries, Ghana adopted the medical model of implementing inclusive education (Lebona, 2015; Avoke, 2002; Ghana Education Service, 2004).

2.4.3 Tanzania

In 2009, the Government of Tanzania developed the strategy to implement inclusive education. The intention of the strategy was to respond to educational needs of physically

challenged pupils. In a broad sense, the strategy aimed to guarantee that physically challenged pupils would have unbiased admission to mainstream schools (Shirima, 2017:02). Like other countries, Tanzania adopted the medical model in terms of implementing inclusive education. However, Tanzania, like its counterparts, is shifting from the therapeutic approach to the social model approach of implementing inclusive education.

2.4.4 Barriers in the execution of all-encompassing education regionally

Regionally countries were not exempted from barriers of executing inclusive education. Most of these challenges are teacher-centred as teachers are important personnel in the execution of all-encompassing education.

Some of the barriers experienced are the following:

2.4.4.1 Poor collaboration

Literature reveals that in countries like Ghana, Lesotho and Tanzania there is lack of collaboration among key stakeholders in working together to comprehend the objectives of inclusive education. To exacerbate the situation in Tanzania in particular, there is a failure by parents to participate in supporting their children and by key stakeholders in participating in educational needs of physically challenged pupils. However, some of the parents alienate themselves from special school activities because they believe that it is the sole duty of teachers to deal with learners in inclusive education (Senge, 2000). However, their participation in education for physically challenged pupils helps the educator to plan teaching and learning accordingly and this can help learners to achieve what is expected of them. Another way of improving collaboration according to Kirk (2011) is when key stakeholders collaborate with counsellors and improvise a way of helping the child socially and emotionally.

2.4.4.2 Lack of support for teachers

Calitz (2000:16) defined support as “all activities that increase the capacity of a school to respond to diversity”. Ndinisa (2016:65) reveals that “inadequate support for teachers is a big challenge because if they are not supported they cannot be able to support learners”. He further argues that “teachers always feel inadequate themselves if they do not get support”.

2.4.4.3 Lack of proper knowledge on inclusive education

Knowledge acquired by teachers is critical for the implementation of inclusive education. However, the lack of proper knowledge by teachers negatively affects the execution. Bourke (2010) reveals that there is a lack of proper knowledge by teachers about the implementation of inclusive education. Donohue and Bornman (2014) endorse that lack of proper knowledge makes it difficult for teachers to effectively support physically disadvantaged learners in school settings. Furthermore, lack of proper knowledge makes teachers to fail in adapting the values of all-encompassing education in the classroom settings (Mpu & Adu, 2021).

2.4.4.4 Negative attitudes of teachers

The attitude of teachers plays a major role in the success of special education curricula. However, the study conducted by Mulenga (2018) reveals that teachers show a negative attitude towards the implementation of inclusive education. It is discouraging to find that some of the key stakeholders like teachers are inclined to label the learners in terms of their physical disadvantaged traits.

2.4.4.5 Infrastructure not conducive to the needs of learners

I have observed that in some of the schools the infrastructure and the structure of classroom settings were not conducive to the desires of special needs learners. It was revealed that some of the school buildings have stairs which makes it difficult for the

mobility of pupils with physical challenges. In addition, in some of the schools physical and social conditions are unpleasant and not conducive to an environment for proper learning.

2.4.4.6 Expensive learning resources

According to Ndinisa (2016) the resources to enhance the operation of inclusive education are expensive. He indicates that the cost of buying resources such as braille machines and textbooks relevant to inclusive education is high and expensive. This finding is supported by Eleweke and Rodda (2002:133) who state that “the estimated cost of providing educational and other services to learners with special needs could be two (2) or three (3) times greater than the cost of providing for learners without special needs”.

2.4.4.7 Inadequate professional personnel

Insufficient professional personnel are another hindrance to realising the objectives of all-encompassing education in different countries (Ainscow, 2012). Ndinisa (2016:63) states that “teachers feel that they are left alone to deal with learners with no support from the DoE”. In addition, Skinner (2016) found that in special schools there are shortages of professional support.

2.5 INCLUSIVE EDUCATION POLICY IN SOUTH AFRICA

This section introduces the inclusive education Policy in South Africa as well as special school curricula and challenges teachers face regarding their implementation. Furthermore, the section presents the responsibility of teachers in supporting the execution of a special school curriculum. The section concludes by presenting the involvement of learners in teaching a special curriculum in classroom settings and managing barriers learners face.

2.5.1 History of inclusive education in South Africa

During the epoch of apartheid, South African educational systems were divided according to racial lines. This is confirmed by Nel, Engelbrecht, Tlale and Nel (2016) who argue that the structures of education were based on separate development. However, after the birth of democracy in 1994, there was a transformation in the educational system and a move towards education which is more inclusive. Furthermore, the development and implementation of all-encompassing education was endorsed by the introduction of various legislations and policies.

The policies introduced by the DoE call for a substantial theoretical change that is based on the following grounds:

“all children both youth and adults have the potential to learn especially if given the necessary support, and the system’s inability to recognize and accommodate the diverse range of learning needs results in a breakdown of learning” (DoE, 2001:24).

Research reveals that inclusive education warrants external support services from various agencies like school psychologists, speech and occupational therapists. Furthermore, South Africa like other countries adopted a collaborative approach in implementing inclusive education.

Through inclusive education South Africa planned to strengthen special schools rather than to abolish them. The DoE (2001) confirms that inclusive education is appropriate as it encourages participation for learners. In addition, South Africa emphasised that inclusive education should take cognisance of psycho-social needs of the learners. However, it was discovered that inclusive education is not problem free and therefore different structures would be needed for its successful implementation and to solve the problems. This should be enhanced through collaboration of different structures including non-governmental organisations, faith-based organisations and the Department of Education at different levels.

However, it should be noted that the country has experienced many changes in the introduction and inception of Outcomes Based Education, CAPS and the inception of the all-encompassing educational system. Therefore, when one contemplates the reforms that education has undergone, one should consider whether these changes are convincing and implementable in South African settings. Consequently, many challenges were experienced during the execution of all-encompassing education.

2.5.2 Hindrances in the execution of special school curriculum

There are similarities between the international communities and South Africa in terms of the hindrances experienced in the execution of special school curricula. These barriers to learning can significantly deter the learning progress of special needs learners.

The following barriers were identified and are discussed below:

2.5.2.1 Demands for extensive transformations

The execution process demands extensive transformation in the system of education. Therefore, the situation of physically challenged learners and marginalised groups in society needs a fundamental democratic reform. Studies conducted by Madrid (2015), Peacock (2016) and Calero and Benasco (2015) reveal that teachers concur that inclusion education makes too many demands on teachers.

2.5.2.2 Lack of teacher development

Lack of teacher development remains the key obstacle to the improvement of South African education. Teachers are the determinants of effective and efficient special school implementation. This implies that the teacher should be knowledgeable, effective, always available and should enjoy job satisfaction. All these traits are attainable through teacher development. However, literature reveals that the implementation of special school curricula was hindered by the lack of teachers' access to appropriate knowledge, skills

and training opportunities (Adewumi, 2019). In addition, some of the teachers were unprepared to implement inclusive education in overcrowded classrooms.

2.5.2.3 Physical settings

It is critical for the educational structures to make sure that all learners are placed in a conducive setting where they are able to learn. Subsequently, a positive conducive environment is a vital component for quality education and increased access to schools. However, research reveals that a substantial number of institutions are physically unreachable to many learners, exacerbated by overcrowded classes and lack of physical space for learners to learn effectively. I have observed that some of the school environments are not suitable for the adoption of physically challenged learners.

2.5.2.4 Rigid curriculum

The DoE (2001) reveals that the developed curriculum is rigid in its nature and does not allow for individual diversity. Therefore, the rigid curriculum keeps physically challenged learners from realising their potential. In addition, insufficient provision of learning materials affects the delivery of special school curricula.

2.5.2.5 Absence of parental involvement in inclusive education

The study conducted by Ndinisa (2016) reveals that parents show negative attitudes towards inclusive education. Ndinisa (2016:59) further states that “teachers have a challenge with the lack of parents’ involvement in their children’s learning or helping them with homework at home”. Ndinisa further argues that motivation from home is crucial in making the learner confident and to perform better in school. However, if they lack motivation, even if they have the potential of improving their performance, it will not happen because there is no one at home encouraging them to do well in school (Ndinisa, 2016:61).

2.5.2.6 The influence of teachers' attitudes

Attitudes are defined as “a psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favor or disfavor” (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993:01). Literature reveals that some key stakeholders had a negative attitude towards the implementation of all-encompassing education. If teachers are negative towards the implementation of all-encompassing education, the idea of realising the objectives of all-encompassing education cannot be achieved. Therefore, the perception of teachers regarding physically challenged pupils is very crucial. However, addressing negative attitudes of key stakeholders will lead to effective delivery on inclusive education within the school settings (Talmor, Reiter & Feigin, 2005).

2.6 CURRICULUM FOR LEARNERS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION

2.6.1 Background on special school curriculum

The DoE introduced the White Paper to provide directives in terms of executing all-encompassing education in school settings. The White Paper also endorses changes in the school curriculum to cater for physically challenged learners through educational transformation (Department of Education, 2001).

Therefore, all key stakeholders including teachers are expected to support the execution of all-encompassing education. Furthermore, the DoE (2001) curriculum delivery must focus on ensuring differentiation and adaptation of curricula to accommodate physically challenged learners. In addition, content, teaching methods and Learner Support Materials should be differentiated and adapted. Therefore, teachers should plan how to teach the curriculum to diverse learners especially physically in the classroom.

2.6.2 Curriculum differentiation

The DoE (2001) defines curriculum differentiation as the strategy of accommodating all learners with learning barriers. This approach considers and cater for all learners with special educational needs. Consequently, each learner is given a fair chance to learn and not everyone is taught in exactly the same way. Differentiation based on methodology serves as a process (how to teach) through which all learners can access the curriculum without difficulty. However, a differentiated curriculum cannot cater for special needs learners, especially those with severe impairment, sensory impairment and others with physical disabilities (Adewumi, 2019). It should be noted that a differentiated curriculum works perfectly in classroom settings that are quiet and without distraction.

The Department of Education (2001) argues that differentiated curricula must be supported by support structures established at circuit, district and provincial level. In addition, professional support is critical for the effective execution of special school curricula. The following professionals must be provided for specials schools to implement curricula effectively:

- “Guidance and counselling specialists
- Psychologists
- Sign Language interpreters
- Braille and Orientation and Mobility Instructors
- Therapists: Occupational, Speech and Language; Audiologists, Music and Physiotherapists
- Social workers
- Nursing Personnel
- Rehabilitation workers
- Child and youth care workers” (Department of Education, 2001:12).

2.6.2.1 Differentiation teaching methods

Research shows that key stakeholders in the implementation of special school curricula are conscious of the fact that learners attend class with basic information (Alter & Coggshall, 2009). Actually, it is a proven fact that learners come from diverse backgrounds, therefore teachers should employ differentiated teaching methods to cater for learners' diversity. According to Alter and Coggshall (2009) these methods include using various teaching materials, different presentation methods and proper lesson organisations.

2.6.2.2 Lesson plans

Differentiated teaching lesson plans require additional support to accommodate physically challenged pupils. The Department of Education (2010) emphasises that collaboration is critical for the effective execution of special school curricula.

2.6.2.3 Differentiation assessment

Differentiation assessment “involves rethinking the traditional practice of having all learners do the same assessment tasks at the same time” (Department of Education, 2011a:11). This suggests that assessment to be adopted in differentiation settings should be flexible and not rigid. The DoE (2011b) recommends that teachers should adopt the following precepts in executing special school assessment:

- “Every learner should have access to the standard of assessment best suited to his needs;
- Assessment gives information about what the child can do at a particular stage;
- Assessment informs the teacher about what support a learner needs in order to progress to another level;
- Every child can illustrate what knowledge and skills he or she has learned in creative ways; and

- Assessment should be authentic and make provision for multiple abilities, learning styles and levels” (Department of Education, 2011c:11).

2.6.3 Curriculum adaptation

Curriculum adaptations are the alterations or modification of curriculum content to cater for physically challenged learners in classroom settings (Adewumi, 2019). Moreover, the teaching methodologies and assessment practices should be adjusted. For this research, curriculum adaptations refer to the adjustment of a curriculum to accommodate the physically challenged such as severely intellectually impaired, physically impaired, blind and physically impaired, mild to moderately intellectually impaired and blind, deaf and physically impaired learners.

2.6.3.1 Curriculum adaptations for learners with deaf blindness

Research shows that a functional curriculum is relevant to learners with deaf blindness and it helps them to achieve their personal adequacy, social competence and economic independence (Alsop, 2002). Alsop (2002:57) suggests the following as being advantages of a functional curriculum:

- It focuses on the individual needs.
- It uses learners’ interests
- It begins with the learner, family members and the role they play in school settings (Alsop, 2002).

A functional curriculum emphasises the collaborative approach where the parents and the teacher do the activities together and later the learner learns to do it by himself or herself. According to Alsop (2002:58) these activities include “training in cooking, washing clothes, brushing teeth, orientation and mobility among others and maintaining the learner’s own belongings”.

2.6.3.2 Curriculum adaptations for learners with autism blindness

An expanded core curriculum is relevant to special school curricula. The advantage of an expanded core curriculum is that it incorporates the basic subjects. However, additional subjects are added such as “compensatory academic skills including communication modes, orientation and mobility, social interaction, independent living skills, recreation and leisure skills, career education, use of assistive technology and visual efficiency skills” (Mzizi, 2014:04). In addition, learners may use braille, large print, regular print, and recording devices to communicate (Hatlen, 1996).

2.6.3.3 Curriculum adaptations for learners with cerebral palsy intellectual impairment

Curriculum adaptation is also a key for special school learners. It is important for teachers to modify and adjust a curriculum according to the need of the learners (Brown, Long, Udvari-Solner, Schwartz, van Deventer & Ahlgren, 1989). Learners with cerebral palsy intellectual impairment should be provided with enough time to complete their activities, therefore the assistance of a peer or a teaching assistant is critical in the process of learning.

2.6.4 Limitations experienced by teachers in the execution of a special school curriculum and dealing with barriers learners face

Many studies confirm that teachers face limitations in terms of executing special school curricula in the classroom setting. Research studies conducted reveal the following limitations for the execution of a special school curriculum:

2.6.4.1 Lack of teacher training

Teacher training is the responsibility of the circuit, district and provincial Department of Education. Consequently, these structures play a pivotal role in shaping the overall

knowledge and understanding of teachers in the implementation process. According to Loreman, Deppeler and Harvey (2005) teachers express distress in terms of teaching special school learners. Furthermore, teachers lack competency and determination to adjust methodology as per the need of physically challenged learners.

2.6.4.2 Employing teacher-centered method

Teachers are expected to employ learner-centered method in terms of cascading special school curricula. However, research shows that some teachers use the teacher-centered method which does not cater for a differentiated curriculum (Mukhopadhyay, Molosiwa & Moswela, 2013).

2.6.4.3 Overcrowded classes

Overcrowding can lead to a disordered classroom setting that is more problematic for the educator to manage. Therefore, an increased number of physically disadvantaged learners can lead to a greater likelihood of troublesome behaviour and fights among learners. In a study conducted by Newton, Cambridge and Hunter-Johnson (2014) teachers raised concern that overcrowded classes deter the progress for the implementation of inclusive education. Therefore, overcrowded classrooms reduce the effective delivery of a curriculum.

2.6.4.4 Lack of access to mainstream schools

I have observed that the majority of special needs learners are rejected in mainstream schools. This suggests that mainstream schools do not show willingness to accommodate physically challenged learners (Draft National Policy on Special Education, 2002).

2.6.4.5 Lack of support

Research shows that teaching in inclusive classes warrants a conducive and supportive environment. Mahlo (2011:27) writes “a supportive environment where there is collaboration among teachers, district officials, principals, parents and learner support for teachers is crucial for successful implementation of inclusive education”. Chimhenga (2016) discovers that there is a lack of support from relevant structures to sustain special school curricula. The information shows that there is a lack of support for teachers to effectively implement special school curricula.

2.6.5 Support of teachers in the execution of a special school curriculum and addressing barriers learners face

The support provided by teachers in executing all-encompassing education in special schools is paramount. Therefore, the teachers should play the following roles in the implementation of a special curriculum for inclusive education.

2.6.5.1 Learning environment and instructional models

Research shows that learning environment and instructional models must be chosen judiciously by teachers to afford strong learning chances for all learners (Sharma & Salend, 2016). This should be enhanced by the support provided to learners by teachers.

2.6.5.2 Mutual respect and open minds

Reddy and Ramar (2006:15) indicate the need for “special education and general education teachers to have mutual respect and open minds toward the philosophy of inclusion, as well as strong administrative support and knowledge of how to meet the needs of students with disabilities”.

2.6.5.3 Curriculum design

According to Tyagi (2016) special education teachers help in the process of designing the curriculum for inclusive classrooms. Therefore, it is critical for teachers to be involved in curriculum design since it provides the opportunity for them to modify lessons.

2.6.5.4 Classroom instruction

Research conducted by Tyagi (2016:115-116) shows that “many inclusive classrooms are based on a co-teaching model, where both teachers are present all day”. He further argues that it is critical to establish extensive collaboration amongst key stakeholders to execute a truly all-encompassing education.

2.6.5.5 Assessing learners

Teachers are expected to conduct assessment of learners to measure whether learners realise the objectives of inclusive education. The teacher should help learners to gain self-confidence and independence in the general education environment (Sharma, 2017).

Tyagi (2016:115) summarises the following roles that teachers should play in the execution of a special school curriculum.

- ✚ Identification of the children with disabilities in the classroom; referring the identified to the experts for further examination and treatment; accepting the children with disabilities; developing positive attitude between normal and disabled children; and placing the children in the classroom in proper places so that they feel comfortable and benefit from the classroom interaction.
- ✚ Tyagi further argues that children with learning disabilities should be involved in almost all the activities in the classroom.

Tyagi (2016) stipulates that schools should make appropriate amendments to the curriculum to enable children with disabilities to study in terms of their capability. In addition, Tyagi (2016:115) emphasises the importance of “collaborating with medical and physiological panels, social works, parents and special teachers, construction of

achievement and diagnostic tool and providing remedial instruction to the children who require it”.

2.6.6 Attitudes and perceptions of teachers

Researchers argue that the objectives of inclusive education can be realised only if teachers believe that all learners can be educated in a regular classroom. However, some researchers found that learners with emotional and behavioural disorders determine the attitude of the teachers (Sharma, Dunay & Dely, 2018). In addition, some of the teachers regard the above category of learners as more challenging to deal with and therefore develop an aversion to accommodating them in their classes. Furthermore, teachers accommodate learners with speech and language disorders more readily than learners with physical disabilities.

2.7 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Theoretical framework is the foundation of this research. There are various theoretical frameworks that have been used to explain strategies to support the execution of all-encompassing education. These include inter alia the following: behaviourism, cognitivism and constructivism (Al-Shammari, Faulkner & Forlin, 2019). In my view, it is important to adopt all three theories in this study because each of them focuses on and contributes towards the execution of all-encompassing education.

These theories are as follows:

2.7.1 Behaviourism theory

2.7.1.1 Background to the theory

Behaviourism theory was developed by John Watson (Nalliah & Idris, 2014; Al-Shammari, 2019a; Krapfl, 2016 and Kaplan, 2018).

2.7.1.2 Objectives and principles of the theory

Plotkin (2003) indicates that to behaviourists, learning comes from observation of cultures. Furthermore, he emphasises that learning comes from the environment and there must be some incentive to create a certain response.

2.7.1.3 Relevancy of the theory

Behaviourism theory aligns with inclusive education because teachers share learners' knowledge of reality (Hickey, 2014). For this reason, I felt it important to apply behaviourism theory as its emphasis is on the direct instruction method that has shown positive results for special needs learners (Al-Shammari, 2019b). Notably, behaviourism theory is relevant to inclusive education because its focus is on formative assessment which is currently adopted as one of the crucial methods of assessment in the educational system. Its emphasis is on promoting interaction between teachers, learners and peers which is in line with how it can be used in inclusive education.

It was therefore necessary to adopt behaviourism because it is relevant to inclusive education and its purpose is to impart knowledge to the learners (Hickey, 2014). According to Abramson (2013) behaviourism emphasised that special school learners' learning is controlled by the environment in which it occurs. This suggests that there should be interaction between learning and environment. Practically, behaviourism theory is relevant to inclusive education because its emphasis is on learner behaviour and performance in using inducement resources (Ertmer & Newby, 2013). In addition, the theory follows direct instruction that is relevant to inclusive education (Al-Shammari, 2019a). Therefore, the behaviourism theory technique has revealed optimistic exploration outcomes with learners with special needs in normal educational settings. Zhang, Anderson, Morris, Miller, Nguyen-Jahiel, Lin and Latawiec (2016) suggest that behaviourism theory involves a systematic approach propagated by the educator and trailed by learners' teaching. The direct instruction is relevant to inclusive education because it breaks down tasks into smallest elements and this is universally employed by teachers teaching special educational needs learners.

In direct instructional approach learners are active participants in the classroom settings. Through this theory learners are given opportunity to decide at what point to begin instruction and focus on reinforcements that are most effective. According to Ertmer and Newby (2013:410) in behaviourism theory, the role of teachers is threefold, namely:

- “Decide which clues determine prompts to stimulate the learners’ desired responses;
- Organize practices which are expected to elicit the responses in the ‘natural’ settings;
- and organize environmental circumstances to aid learners to make the correct responses” (Ertmer & Newby, 2013:410).

In behaviourism theory the teacher is a facilitator and his responsibility is to facilitate learning through structured and planned lessons guided by the objectives of the learners. The teacher also assesses learners’ understanding of content delivered and receives feedback to ensure understanding.

2.7.2 Cognitivism theory

2.7.2.1 Background to the theory

The study adopts cognitivism theory developed by Jean Piaget in 1936 and its focus is on helping learners to be more organised, to interpret, categorise and acquire knowledge which is in line with inclusive education (Ertmer & Newby, 2013). Cognitive psychology is all about how we know, understand, and think about the world around us.

2.7.2.2 Objectives and principles of the theory

The theory emphasises that learning should take place through different approaches that are relevant to inclusive educational settings (Lenjani, 2016). Therefore, the principles of cognitivism theory are significant and relevant to inclusive education because teachers are regarded as facilitators and their responsibility is to provide crucial information whilst learners are encouraged to generate their own knowledge. Convincingly, the teaching

methodologies suggested in cognitivism theory such as learner-centred, task-based, note-taking, underlining, summarising, outlining and mapping are relevant to the inclusive education (Shi, 2013).

2.7.2.3 Relevancy of the theory

The researcher has chosen to employ cognitivism theory because its emphasis is on self-reflection and motivating learners to learn. It is relevant to inclusive education since it places emphasis on inventing knowledge that makes teaching and learning to be more meaningful to the learners. The theory heavily emphasises the importance of learning which is centred on diverse strategies required in inclusive settings (Petersen, 2014). The researcher used constructivism theory in conjunction with cognitive theory. Cognitivism theory like constructive theory is advantageous to inclusive education due to the fact that learners are encouraged to make connections with previously learned material (Tunmer, Chapman, Greatney & Prochnow, 2002). This connection is used as a form of assessment to check whether the learners understood what was covered before in the classroom settings. Through cognitivism theory teachers are expected to use different instructional approaches that encourage learners to take note, underline, summarise and write in order to learn (Boyle & Rivera, 2012). Al-Shammari (2019b) reveals that study skills and reciprocal teaching is emphasised in cognitivism theory which is relevant to inclusive education. The researcher also used the two above discussed theories with constructivism theory. This is due to the fact that constructivism theory teaches learners to understand the way they think.

2.7.3 Constructivism theory

2.7.3.1 Background to the theory

The study also adopts constructivism theory developed by Jean Piaget (Seifert & Sutton, 2009; Chen, Hoy, Ye & Ho, 2022).

2.7.3.2 Objectives and principles of the theory

The constructivism theorists believe that learners should actively construct their own knowledge (Chen et al., 2022). The theory teaches that learners acquired knowledge prior to entering school.

2.7.3.3 Relevancy of the theory

The study embraces the principles of constructivism theory developed by Lev Vygotsky (Lenjani, 2016). The theory is relevant to inclusive education, for instance learners are given the opportunity to construct, create and invent information which helps learners to learn effectively. It is relevant to inclusive education because it emphasises that the stakeholders should work together to realise the objectives of inclusive education (Lenjani, 2016). Like Cognitivism theory, Constructivism theory indicates that teachers are considered as facilitators and providers of information to learners. The study adopts constructivism theory since its emphasis is on generating a cognitive apparatus that reflects the insights and experiences of learning. In addition, the theory is also relevant to inclusive education since it involves learners' understanding of the significance of the societal component that involves observation, treatment, elucidation, and adaptation of data. The theory encourages a participatory approach to teaching and learning and teachers are regarded as facilitators.

The above-mentioned element is the cornerstone of CAPS and Outcomes-Based Education. According to Lenjani (2016:411) there are four key elements that are promoted by constructivism that are relevant to inclusive education. These four key elements are:

- “Learning involves searching meaning of what is supposed to be learnt;
 - Learners should be required to understand the whole subject interconnected with other chapters;
 - It is critical for them to have an understanding of the mental models to perceive their world and expectations to support their models;
 - and the purpose of learning is to help the learners to construct their own meaning.
- All these four principles are relevant to inclusive education” (Lenjani, 2016:411).

The study also embraces constructivism theory because it emphasises the learner-centred approach to teaching and learning (Shi, 2013). Furthermore, this theory encourages collaboration between various stakeholders with the intention of helping learners to learn. According to Hansen, Carrington, Jensen, Molbaek and Schmidt (2020), teacher collaboration is effective and relevant in inclusive settings. Collaboration is an essential element of constructivist theory. Additionally, through constructivism the educator facilitates the process of teaching and learning. Furthermore, constructivism encourages teachers to use useful teaching strategies such as graphic organisers and self-monitoring which were proven to be beneficial for physically disadvantaged learners (Lenjani, 2016).

2.7.4 Reasons for using behaviourism, cognitivism and constructivism theories

The study embraces all three theories because each of them focuses on and contributes towards strategies for supporting learners with special needs. It should be noted that, one of these theories may not be enough to have an effective lens to look at the various ranges of learners in inclusive education practices. The researcher has considered the application of three theories because they are all relevant to inclusive education. All three of these theories bring a unique trait to methods for supporting the execution of inclusive education. Furthermore, an understanding of all covered theories in this study helps teachers to connect to all different kinds of learners in the classroom settings. In addition, teachers can focus on different learning styles emphasised by the three theories to reach diverse learners in the classroom settings.

These theories enable learners to understand special school curricula better. They build knowledge through experiences and interactions. A combination of these theories helps and encourages them to develop self-directed learning. Therefore, adopting these three theories provides an effective way of teaching a varied range of learners in inclusive classes. However, the decision for using each of these theories should depend on or be based on learners' needs, tasks to be presented and context of the activities to be presented.

2.8 CONCLUSION

This chapter presented experiences of inclusive education and its challenges both globally and locally. Thereafter, South African policy on inclusive education was discussed taking into consideration the limitations in its implementation. This was followed by a presentation on a special school curriculum, linking it with inclusive education. Apart from this, challenges associated with the implementation of a special school curriculum and dealing with barriers learners face were presented. Additionally, the chapter presented the significance of teachers in supporting the execution of a special school curriculum and barriers learners face. Following this, the theoretical framework on inclusive education such as behaviourism, cognitivism, constructivism and its relevance to inclusive education was discussed.

In conclusion, it should be noted that the majority of schools face innumerable challenges that hinder the implementation of inclusive education. Research suggests that teachers play a critical role in the execution of inclusive education, and development design of a curriculum. Literature in the Netherlands, Italy, Sweden, America, Canada, India, America and the United Kingdom has acknowledged a number of barriers associated with the execution of all-encompassing education such as lack of uniformity, failure of teachers' preparedness, the challenge of making an ordinary school an inclusion education institution, changing the whole educational system, implementing tailor made curricula, poor collaboration, negative attitudes of teachers, infrastructure not adaptive or conducive to the needs of learners, expensive learning resources, inadequate personnel training, shortage of qualified teachers, the demand for a wide range of changes, lack of teacher development, unfavourable physical settings, a rigid curriculum, absence of parental involvement in inclusive education and disability. Regionally, countries like Lesotho, Ghana and Tanzania experience similar challenges experienced by international communities.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter two presented a literature study on key concepts. The chapter also presented experiences of special needs education together with its barriers both globally and locally. Furthermore, the chapter discussed the country's position on special needs education taking into consideration barriers to its implementation. In addition, the chapter presented literature on special school curricula with a direct link to special needs education. Moreover, the chapter covered barriers related to the execution of a special school curriculum and the importance of teachers in supporting its implementation and dealing with barriers learners face. Thereafter, experiences and impressions of teachers with regard to the execution of a special needs' education were presented followed by the theoretical framework on inclusive education such as behaviourism, cognitivism, constructivism and its relevance to inclusive education.

This chapter presents the methodology of the study.

3.2 RESEARCH APPROACH

Polit and Hungler (2013:155) describe the research approach as "a blueprint, or outline, for conducting the study in such a way that maximum control will be exercised over factors that could interfere with the validity of the research results". Creswell and Plano Clark (2017), define a research approach as a comprehensive strategy of how a researcher aims to conduct research. Leedy (2016:195) defines research approach as "a plan for a study, providing the overall framework for collecting data".

3.2.1 Qualitative research approach

According to Levitt, Motulsky, Wertz, Morrow and Ponterotto (2017) qualitative research moves from specific instances into a generalised conclusion. Mohajan (2018) reveals that qualitative research focuses on participants' beliefs and their experiences. In this study, the qualitative approach focused on teachers and departmental heads who are responsible for the implementation of curricula in their settings in Vhembe District Special Schools, Limpopo Province. According to Bloomberg and Volpe (2012:18) "qualitative research is grounded in an essentially constructivist philosophical position, in a sense that it is concerned with how the complexities of the socio-cultural world are experienced, interpreted and understood in a particular context". Sarantakos (2013:37) suggests that "qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of the phenomenon in terms of the meanings people bring to them".

Through qualitative research design, the researcher gathered original source material from the participants' experiences in the implementation of the special school curriculum and barriers learners face. This helped the researcher gain insight into the challenges on the implementation of a special school curriculum (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). I collected data through interviewing teachers and heads of department in the selected special schools (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In addition, the researcher conducted class observation in grade four to six classes whilst the teachers were busy teaching.

The researcher has chosen to employ the qualitative research design due to its flexibility. The study also reflects on how teachers interact with learners in the classroom settings. Mohajan (2018) states that qualitative research provides immense meaning on how people explain and understand reality. In this context, special school teachers expressed their views and roles in the implementation of special school curricula in their settings. The study adopted the case study research approach in conducting research.

3.2.2 Research paradigm

According to Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) a research paradigm is a philosophical framework that guides all areas of the research plan. There are three main research paradigms namely interpretivism, positivism and pragmatism.

3.2.2.1 Interpretivism paradigm

The main purpose of interpretivism is to assist the researcher to understand the subjective world of human experience (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017, Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016).

The researcher adopts the interpretivism paradigm approach because it provides the opportunity to observe teachers implementing inclusive education in classroom settings. This was achieved through conducting classroom observation when teachers were teaching special needs pupils. Furthermore, the approach provides the opportunity for the researcher to interview teachers and the departmental heads with regard to the implementation of inclusive education in special schools. The participants' views and their understanding in the implementation of special school curricula was captured.

3.2.2.2 Positivism paradigm

Saunders et al. (2016) indicate that the positivism paradigm relies on deductive logic, formulating of hypotheses and testing those hypotheses. This approach was not adopted because it is relevant to quantitative research.

3.2.2.3 Pragmatism paradigm

The pragmatists argued that it was not possible to access the 'truth' about the real world solely by virtue of a single scientific method as advocated by the positivist paradigm, nor was it possible to determine social reality as constructed under the interpretivist paradigm. According to Ragab and Arisha (2018), this theory emphasises concepts, ideas, hypotheses, and research findings not in an abstract form. This research paradigm, like positivism, was not applied in this study due to the fact that Saunders et al. (2016) state that quantitative research is associated with pragmatism. In addition, Patton (2015b)

states that this methodology is relevant for testing various hypotheses. Therefore, this study was purely qualitative in nature.

3.2.3 Case study research design

Gustafsson (2017) states that a case study involves a thorough study about a subject or subjects with the purpose of guiding the researcher on what to say at the end of a research project. In addition, Hyett, Kenny and Dickson-Swift (2014) indicate that the case study research approach is a process where the researcher explores what happens in humans in a natural setting. Convincingly, Maree (2014:75) shows that “case studies open the possibilities of giving a voice to the voiceless people”. The researcher used the case study approach because it is flexible in nature (Lucas, Fleming & Bhosale, 2018; Yin, 2017). A single case study was adopted in four different school settings. This study focuses on a single event within its natural settings namely “experiences of teachers in the implementation of a special school curriculum and barriers learners face in Vhembe District, Limpopo Province, South Africa: Towards an intervention strategy”.

The idea was to provide contextual detail of the extent of participants’ experiences in the execution of the special school curricula and barriers learners face. This design allowed the researcher to use different data collection techniques. Furthermore, Yin (2017) argues that case study is a flexible approach in terms of collecting data. In this study the case study method is relevant since the researcher spent time in the school setting, interacting with the grade four to six teachers and departmental heads in the selected schools. In this study, the researcher observed grade four to six teachers whilst they were teaching Human Sciences in the classroom settings. This took place in the classroom settings as the teachers interacted with the learners.

3.3 RESEARCH SITES

A research site is a place where research was conducted. The research was conducted in Vhembe District, Limpopo Province.

3.3.1 Limpopo Province

This study was conducted in the Limpopo Province of South Africa. Limpopo Province is South Africa's most northern province (Statistics South Africa, 2011). It is named after the Limpopo River, which forms the western and northern boundaries of the province. Polokwane is the provincial capital and largest city. The province consists of three former homelands, namely Lebowa, Gazankulu, and Venda. Limpopo consists of three major ethnic groups: Bapedi, Vatsonga and Vhavenda. The province has five districts which are known as Mopani, Vhembe, Capricorn, Waterberg and Greater Sekhukhune.

Limpopo is divided into twenty-two (22) local municipalities namely Ba-Phalaborwa, Bela-Bela, Blouberg, Elias Motswaledi, Ephraim Mogale, Fetakgomo Tubatse, Greater Giyani, Greater Letaba, Greater Tzaneen Local Municipality, Lepelle-Nkumpi, Lephalale, Makhado, Makhudutamaga, Maruleng, Modimolle-Mookgophong, Mogalakwena, Molemole, Musina, Polokwane, Thabazimbi and Thulamela.

According to Statistics South Africa (2011) Limpopo Province has an area of 125.754 km². The total population is 6,572,286. It is composed of Black Africans, Whites, Coloureds and Indians or Asians. The languages spoken in the province are Northern Sotho, Xitsonga, Tshivenda, Afrikaans and isiNdebele. It shares international borders with Botswana, Zimbabwe and Mozambique. Limpopo is regarded as a rural province.

3.3.2 Vhembe District

In this study, research was conducted in five (5) special schools in Vhembe District. These school were labeled as School **A to E**.

School A is in Vhembe East District. It is under Dzindi Circuit. The school is situated at Shayandima Urban Area. School A is 5.29 kilometers to the east of Thohoyandou.

School B is in Vhembe West District Circuit. It is under Vhembe West Circuit. The school is situated at Riboni Rural Area. School B is 4 km to the south of Elim Township.

School C is in Vhembe West District. It is under Soutpansberg West Circuit. The school is situated in Tshilwavhusiku Rural Area. School C is 15 km to the south of Makhado Town.

School D is in Vhembe East District. It is under Tshinanne Circuit. It is situated in Tshivhungululu Village. School D is 14 km to the south of Thohoyandou Town.

School E is in Vhembe East District. It is under Tshinanne Circuit. The school is situated in Thohoyandou Urban Area. School E is 6 km to the east of Thohoyandou town.

3.4 SAMPLING AND SAMPLING SIZE

The study adopted the purposive sampling procedure. Palinkans, Horwitz, Green, Wisdom, Duan and Hoagwood (2015) state that purposive sampling is extensively used due to its provision of rich data associated with the participants involved in the study. Braun and Clarke (2019) indicate that the aim of purposive sampling techniques is to generate information on the topic of interest. Considering the focus of the current study “experiences of teachers in the implementation of the special school curriculum and barriers learners face in Vhembe District, Limpopo Province, South Africa: Towards an intervention strategy”, the purposive sampling procedure was adopted to select teachers and heads of department.

Purposive sampling was adopted because of its cost-effective sample selection method. The researcher collected information from the best suited participants and the results are relevant to this research study (Carolan, Forbat & Smith, 2016). The researcher identified and selected teachers who are teaching in the special schools and are knowledgeable on teaching learners in inclusive educational settings (Braun & Clarke, 2019).

There are six special schools in Vhembe District in Limpopo Province which were labelled. School A, B, C, D and E were selected as settings for the study. School F was not selected because it does not have an Intermediate Phase. Furthermore, the school does not have a physically impaired category of learners which is the main target of research. Data was collected from teachers who were teaching Social Sciences (History and Geography) and departmental heads for Intermediate Phase Grade 4 to 6. The study

focused on History and Geography due to the investigator's background of teaching methodology of the subjects. Teachers who teach Grade 4 to 6 are assumed to have knowledge and experience in teaching learners with learning difficulties. In addition, departmental heads for the Intermediate Phase responsible for Social Sciences formed part of this study. The departmental heads were selected in this study because of their ability of coordinating and supporting teachers in the execution of special needs learners' curriculum.

3.5 DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES

Mohajan (2018) states that different techniques such as interviews, diaries, journals, classroom observation, and open-ended questionnaires are used to collect data. These techniques are also identified by Creswell (2018) and Yin (2013).

Interactions between teachers and learners in the classroom settings were observed (Early Grade Reading Study, 2017). Furthermore, the researcher used class observation because it captures the interaction between learners and teachers (Halim, Wahid & Halim, 2018). Classroom observation provides the opportunity of recording data observed within a classroom (Macdonald, 2018). In this study, the researcher recorded information while teachers were teaching in the classroom settings. In addition, as a way of complementing data that was obtained through classroom observation, the researcher also used in-depth interviews.

The researcher took advantage of using in-depth interviews since they are more manageable compared to telephone surveys and other data collection methods (Morris, 2015). Through in-depth interviews the researcher managed to monitor changes in tone and word choice of teachers in the classroom settings. Thereafter, the researcher probed participants for greater clarity on some of the questions discussed during interviews (Patton, 2015a). As a way of complementing data that was obtained through classroom observation and in-depth interviews the researcher also used document analysis.

The researcher used document analysis as another way of gathering information as it is manageable and gleaned from practical resources. In addition, the researcher employed document analysis because documents are easily accessible and a reliable source of data. A detailed data analysis procedure is discussed in **Chapter 5**.

3.5.1 Class observation

Classroom observation was used in combination with other methods of collecting data. Therefore, it was important to observe the communication between teachers and learners in inclusive classroom settings. During the class observation, the observer used a class observation schedule to record the interaction between learners and teachers in the classroom settings (Jogan, 2018).

3.5.2 Semi-structured interviews

In this research, the researcher developed a semi-structured interview to collect information from departmental heads and teachers (See **Appendices D and E**). A semi-structured interview affords much more comprehensive data than other data collection methods (Jogan, 2018).

Table 1: Number of departmental heads and teachers interviewed

School	Departmental Heads	Grade 4 teachers interviewed
School A	3	2
School B	1	1
School C	1	2
School D	1	2
School E	1	2
Total	7	9

Table 1 shows that seven (7) departmental heads and nine (9) Grade 4 teachers were interviewed. Each semi-structured interview took 30 to 45 minutes. None of the participants were worried about the time for the completion of the semi-structured interview. It was observed that during an interview with a departmental head for hearing impaired learners in School A, the phone rang and the person attended to the call and re-joined the semi-structured interview discussion.

Table 2: Number of class observations conducted

School	Total number of observations conducted in Grade 4 and 5
School A	OC T3 and OC T4
School B	No Observation Conducted
School C	No Observation Conducted
School D	No Observation Conducted
School E	No Observation Conducted
Total Number of class observations conducted	02

Table 2 shows that two class observations in School A were conducted with a Grade 4 teacher and Grade 5 teacher teaching Social Sciences (History and Geography). Although School B has Social Sciences from Grade 4 to 6, no class observations were conducted because they use Braille and the researcher was not familiar with Braille. Furthermore, no class observations were conducted in School C to E because they do not offer Social Sciences as one of the teaching subjects which was targeted for this study (See **Appendix F**).

3.5.3 Consulted official documents to support the implementation of special school curricula

The researcher consulted official documents of the DoE that were available for supporting teaching and learning in special schools. For each school the researcher visited he

requested teachers and heads of department to provide all the documents needed to support evidence collected from interviews and observations. The documents collected ranged from lesson plans to mark schedules, a sizable number of learners' workbooks, evidence of resources for planning teaching and learning in inclusive classes and assessment recording tools. The researcher also checked the files of the teachers which include the Annual Work Schedule, Assessment Plan, Formal Assessment Tasks and Memoranda and Indication of textbook(s).

Furthermore, policy documents that should aid in teaching special needs learners were consulted. I developed and used a checklist to gather information relevant to the school profiles such as teacher pupil ratio, discipline in the school, list of policies and implementation documents that are available for inclusive education or a special school curriculum, professional support for special educational needs, speech and hearing impairment, visual impairment, learning disability, equipment outside of the classroom to support students to access areas of the school that may have been previously inaccessible to them. The detailed analysis of the school profiles is presented in **Chapter 4** (See **Appendix G**).

Most of the schools visited have the following documents which are relevant for the execution of all-encompassing education:

Policies for the implementation of a special school curriculum

- Admission Policy for Ordinary Public Schools
- HIV Policy
- Early Childhood Development Policy
- Employment of Teachers Act
- Limpopo Prescripts for Management of Funds
- Policy on Learner Attendance
- Integrated School Health Policy
- National Protocol of Assessment

- Integrated School Health Policy
- 2001. Overcoming Exclusive through Inclusive Approaches in Education

The schools chosen for this study have relevant documents for the execution of all-encompassing education. School A and B are executing the NCAPS. These schools have all the relevant legislation and policy documents that are guiding them in terms of implementing such curriculum. In addition, School C, D and E are implementing both the National Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement, Differentiated Curriculum and Technical Occupational Curriculum. Furthermore, School C, D and E have all relevant policy documents to guide them in the execution of such curricula.

3.6 DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis involves the technique of sorting data, reducing data, structuring data, coding data, reporting and writing up research (Watling, James & Briggs, 2012; Punch, 2011). More information about data analysis will follow in **Chapter 5** of this research. On the basis of data collection tools selected for the study, analysis of data was performed through thematic content analysis which is the method of qualitative data analysis that any researcher should familiarise himself with (Butler-Kisber, 2015). In this study, data from observation, interviews and document analysis was analysed using steps proposed by Lester, Cho and Lochmiller (2020). They proposed six stages to be employed in analysing qualitative data. These stages involve preparing or organising information, familiarising oneself with information, coding information, grouping information and constructing a research report. These steps were adopted in this study and are discussed below.

Step 1: Preparing information for analysis. It was done to prepare information for thematic analysis (Anderson, 2017). The researcher captured observational notes electronically in MS Word and Excel format.

Step 2: Transcribing information. I transcribed information from interviews for analysis. Data from the field was organised and transcribed into verbatim transcripts with the purpose of capturing words from the participants (Paulus, Lester & Dempster, 2014).

Step 3: I familiarised myself with information that was collected. Thereafter, I conducted a preliminary analysis by reading through transcripts to obtain a general sense of the data.

Step 4: Coding information. The researcher labelled and organised information by identifying different themes and the relationships between them. The data was then coded and codes were used to develop themes in the context of the research questions (Perkins, 2018). Data generated by documents were analysed using thematic content analysis.

Step 5: Data was grouped into themes. The researcher grouped data into themes using content analysis and thematic analysis. According to Saldana (2016) content analysis involves coding data for certain words whereas thematic analysis involves grouping the data into themes. Thereafter, the researcher categorised similarities, differences and relationships across categories.

Step 6: Producing the research report. The findings were reported in narrative discussions (Schreier, 2012). The report was supported by quotes from the verbatim transcripts. Furthermore, descriptive analysis was conducted based on document analysis, interviews and classroom observation. The method is relevant to analyse written, verbal or visual communication (Cole, 1988). Content analysis was aligned with the research objectives.

Data consulted from various documents was analysed through narrative analysis where the researcher checked the documents to determine whether they are relevant for the implementation of special school curricula or not. Information generated through observations was analysed through narrative analysis. The researcher provided a comprehensive summary of class observation that has been entrenched in the discussion

of the findings in **Chapter 5** in **5.2.5.1**. The researcher summarised the findings of class observation whilst teachers were teaching History and Geography in the inclusive educational settings.

3.7 TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE STUDY

In this section, quality criteria for qualitative approaches are addressed and discussed. The researcher adhered to qualitative quality criteria in conducting research. This study adhered to the following qualitative criteria:

3.7.1 Credibility

According to Yin (2015), credibility is the conviction of the truthfulness vested in the research findings. According to Mandukwini (2016) it deals with the reliability and sureness in the certainty of the research findings. Literature suggests that the researcher should have a prolonged engagement in the field when collecting data. Therefore, a researcher's prolonged time in collecting information from the participants helps to gain their trust. In this study, the researcher spent five days in each school he visited instead of two. This strategy was adopted to verify and confirm with the data collected and to have a better understanding of the school settings in general. In addition, the use of peer debriefing is essential. It should be stated that the researcher sought guidance from his supervisor and his mentor who are all professors in the academic field. These professors always provided guidance while I was conducting this study. The researcher involved his supervisor in all the stages or phases of the study for academic guidance.

3.7.2 Transferability

Marshall and Rossman (2014) argue that the results of research findings should be applicable to another similar context. The researcher prepared a detailed data analysis methodology in this chapter of which the research results, if any researcher should use the same methodology in analysing data, shall obtain the same results. Furthermore, the

researcher provided detailed data collection instruments which correlate with the objectives of the study.

3.7.3 Dependability

Dependability emphasises that the study findings must be consistent and repeatable (Polit & Hungler, 2013). In its application, the analysis was linked with the aim of the study. Furthermore, I gave a clear step by step analysis of the data so that if any researcher would follow the same steps he/she should be able to arrive at the same conclusion. Qualitative researchers suggest that dependability is affirmed through four steps discussed below (Noble & Smith, 2015).

An Audit Trail. The researcher discussed in detail how the research was conducted up to the final product which is the research report. This process is called an audit trail strategy. Furthermore, the researcher kept the following documents such as raw data, audio records of semi-structured interviews conducted with the participants, completed classroom observation notes, completed school profile instruments, field notes and other records collected from the field (Silverman, 2016). The Audit Trail process helped the researcher with cross-checking the inquiry process.

Code-recode strategy. This approach encouraged the researcher to code the same data twice. The researcher coded the data twice through excel. This was done to compare the coding process as to whether the results were the same. It was discovered that results were indeed the same (Creswell, 2014).

Stepwise replication. This is the process whereby different researchers analyse the same data separately and compare the outcomes (Creswell, 2014). I sent the transcripts to a research consultant at Underhill Corporate Solutions to run excel to validate the findings of the data collected. It was discovered that there were no inconsistencies that arose from the analysis. Therefore, there was no need to adjust any inconsistencies especially in terms of the emerging themes in order to improve the dependability of the inquiry.

Peer examination. I presented preliminary findings of the study to the University of Limpopo during a Spring Lecture that was held from 05 to 06 September 2022. The participants provided inputs to improve the research report. Furthermore, the findings of the study were presented to the Research Directorate in the Department of Correctional Services for inputs. The colleagues identified a few issues related to the curriculum implementation model proposed to be implemented in special schools. Thereafter, the identified issues were addressed accordingly.

3.7.4 Confirmability

This is the process whereby the findings of the study should be confirmed by other researchers. This is achieved by avoiding biasness in the process of analysing data. The researcher used direct quotations or verbatim words provided by the participants during data collection and this reduced the level of biasness (Spradley, 2016). The researcher also involved two data collection experts on data collection to avoid biasness.

The researcher kept visible evidence such as field notes, records of interview audios, word document transcripts and excel reports that were used to transcribe data collected from the participants. The researcher avoided doubtful information through prolonging discussions and probing where some of the responses were not clear (Spradley, 2016).

3.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

Educational research focuses primarily on human beings. Dantzker and Hunter (2012) define ethics as moral and legal obligation to be adhered to when conducting research. The researcher adhered to the following obligation:

3.8.1 Seeking consent to collect data

Dantzker and Hunter (2012) indicate that the researcher should seek permission before collecting data. The researcher was granted Ethical Clearance by the Department of

Education in Limpopo Province (see attached **Appendix A**). In addition, the Department issued a letter to grant the researcher permission to collect data from the selected school (see attached **Appendix B**). The application was accompanied by the Turfloop Research Ethics Committee Clearance Letter (see attached **Appendix C**). The application was approved by the Limpopo Provincial Research Ethics Committee and the researcher was granted consent to collect information from special schools. The researcher visited all the schools targeted and requested permission to collect data. Dates for collecting data were secured with all the schools.

3.8.2 Informed consent

Moodley (2013) states that informed consent is a way of making sure that participants are aware of what it entails to be involved in the study. In its application, all those who were involved in this study were verbally informed about their responsibility and rights before being involving in this research (see attached **Appendix H**). The participants signed a consent form before participating in the data collection process. The interview was scheduled to take 30 to 45 minutes and classroom observation 30 minutes. The researcher adhered to all the above principles and no one was forced to participate in the data collection process.

3.8.3 Concealment and privacy

Bryman and Bell (2015) indicate that no identity of the participants should be disclosed in the whole process of conducting research. Therefore, the names of the teachers and departmental heads were kept anonymous throughout the study as were the names of the schools, for example, teachers were designated by using **T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, T6, T7, T8** and **T9**. Departmental heads were designated by using **DH1, DH2, DH3, DH4, DH5, DH6** and **DH7** throughout the writing of the report. In addition, observations conducted were designated by using **OCT3** and **OCT4**.

3.8.4 Avoidance of harm

Bryman and Bell (2015) indicate that it is critical for the researcher to avoid harm when collecting data from the participants. Creswell and Creswell (2018) state that the researcher should avoid any harm to those involved in the study. The researcher avoided at all cost to harm those to be involved in this study, because some of them, especially learners with special needs, may bring up traumatic experiences. The researcher therefore avoided interviewing the learners. The researcher does however acknowledge that his presence in the classroom during the observation might have brought some discomfort and stress to some of the learners. The researcher engaged the professionals that are located in Vhembe District Department of Education for support should the need arise.

3.9 CONCLUSION

The research design and its elements were discussed in detail. These components included, qualitative research design, case study approach, sampling, information gathering techniques and quality criteria. Furthermore, advantages of the qualitative research were discussed. Three methods of collecting data were also expounded. Furthermore, class observation was conducted in the classroom settings and thereafter semi-structured interviews were conducted with teachers that are teaching Social Sciences for Grade 4 to Grade 6 learners. In addition, departmental heads and teachers were interviewed. Thereafter, data was analysed guided by six steps proposed by Lester, Cho and Lochmiller (2020).

CHAPTER 4

SCHOOL PROFILES AND DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the profiles of the participants. This was done taking the research questions of the study into consideration. The profiles are presented in the form of summary tables of basic information of the five schools, total enrolment of special needs learners, gender, location, total number of teachers and teacher-learner ratio.

Furthermore, the chapter presents the steps taken to analyse qualitative data which included data analysis procedure, different methods to qualitative data analysis, approach adopted in this study, justification for using thematic content analysis linked with behaviourism, cognitive and constructivism theories. This is followed by the identification of themes generated from the study.

4.2 DEPARTMENTAL HEADS' AND TEACHERS' PROFILES

Table 3: Participants' biographical information

Participants	Age	Gender	Schools	Responsibilities	Highest qualification	Teaching subjects	Grade	Teaching experience
T1	46-55	Male	School A	Teaching Prepare lessons Assess learners Classroom administration and management	Degree in Special Education Needs	History and Geography	Grade 4 to 6	20 years and above
T2	46-55	Male	School A	Teaching Prepare lessons Assess learners Classroom administration and management	B.Ed. Hons	History and Geography	Grade 4 to 6	20 years and above
T3	46-55	Female	School A	Teaching Prepare lessons Assess learners Classroom administration and management	B.Tech environmental management	Tshivenda, English and Life Orientation	Grade 4 to 7	10-15 years
T4	46-55	Female	School B	Teaching Prepare lessons Assess learners Classroom administration and management	Diploma in Special Education Needs	Mathematics, English and Natural Science	Grade 4 to 7	5-10 years

T5	36-45	Male	School C	Teaching Prepare lessons Assess learners Classroom administration and management	Junior Teachers Diploma	Welding	Grade 4 to 5	10-15 years
T6	46-55	Male	School D	Teaching Prepare lessons Assess learners Classroom administration and management	University Education Diploma	Motor Mechanics	Grade 4 to 5	10-15 years
T7	36-45	Female	School D	Teaching Prepare lessons Assess learners Classroom administration and management	Bachelor of Arts	Consumer Studies Needlework	Grade 4 to 7	01-5 years
T8	46-55	Female	School E	Teaching Prepare lessons Assess learners Classroom administration and management	Diploma in Special Needs Education	Welding	Grade 4 to 5	15-20 years
T9	46-55	Female	School E	Teaching Prepare lessons Assess learners Classroom administration	Diploma in Special Needs Education	Woodwork	Grade 4 to 7	15-20 years

				and management				
DH1	56-65	Male	School A	Supervisory role Teaching learners Screen learners Training teachers Provide teaching and learning resources	M.Ed.	Tshivenda Grade 7	Grade 6 to 7	20 years and above
DH2	46-55	Female	School A	Supervisory role Screen learners Teaching learners Training teachers Provide teaching and learning resources	B.Ed. Hons	Mathematics Grade 6 to 7	Grade 4 to 6	20 years and above
DH3	56-65	Male	School A	Supervisory role Teaching learners Screen learners Training teachers Provide teaching and learning resources Conduct class observation	Degree in Special Education	EMS Grade 7 English Grade 6	Grade 4 to 6	20 years and above
DH4	46-55	Male	School B	Supervisory role	Degree in Special	Mathematics	Grade 4-6	15-20 years

				Teaching learners Screen learners Provide teaching and learning resources	Education Needs			
DH5	46-55	Male	School C	Supervisory role Teaching learners Screen learners Provide teaching and learning resources	Bachelor of Arts	Carpentry	Grade 4 to 6	20 years and above
DH6	46-55	Female	School D	Supervisory role Teaching learners Screen learners Provide teaching and learning resources	B.Ed. Hons	Carpentry	Grade 4 to 6	15-20 years
DH7	56-65	Male	School E	Supervisory role Teaching learners Screen learners Provide teaching and learning resources Encourage teachers to implement curriculum effectively	Honours Learner Support	Consumer Studies Needlework	Grade 4 to 7	20 years and above

Table 3 provides the profile of departmental heads together with teachers who partook in the study. The data shows that nine (9) of the participants are males whereas seven (7) are females. Ten (10) of the participants are of the age group 46-55 and four of the participants are of the age group 56-65. Furthermore, the table reveals that only two participants are of the age group 36-45. This suggests that the participants are aging.

Table 3 also shows that the departmental heads and teachers attained appropriate credentials to implement special school curricula. They acquired qualifications in Special Educational Needs. However, seven (7) of them have a relevant qualification for mainstream schooling such as Junior Primary Teachers Education, B. Tech Environmental Management, Honours in Learner Support, Bachelor of Arts, Honours Degree in Education and Masters in Education. In addition, Table 3 reveals that there are participants who have relevant qualifications in Inclusive Education.

Furthermore, Table 3 reveals that all the participants have 20 years' teaching experience and above, whereas others have 15 years and more of educating special needs learners. However, the minority of them have 5-10 and 10-15 years of experience in educating special needs learners.

Table 3 also depicts that the role of teachers is to prepare lessons, to teach, assess learners and manage the classroom. However, the departmental heads provide a supportive role in teaching and learning. Lastly, the table shows that there are schools that are teaching subjects that are offered in mainstream schools whereas others are teaching Technical Occupational Curriculum subjects.

4.3 PROFILE OF SCHOOLS

Mabasa (2013) reflects that the profile of schools may help the researcher to contextualise the information when writing the research report. Of equal importance, is that generating data on school profiles helps the researcher and the research report reader to establish a preliminary overview of the level of functionality of the schools, which

have been selected as settings of research. It provides the researcher with strategic information necessary for research report writing. In addition, it also provides an overview on the important information about the demographics and highlights materials for the execution of a special school curriculum. In this study, the profile of the schools provides the mission and vision which could assist the report writer to establish whether the mission of the school is relevant to the execution of special education curricula. Furthermore, this section conveys general information about the school. The general information about the schools helps the reader of the report to have a holistic approach about the nature of schools where research was conducted. Lastly, a research report that captures the school profile provides the reader with insight, understanding and the background of the settings where research was conducted.

In this study, the information of the school profiles was captured in tables as expounded in the next paragraph. The first step was to organise in table form the information from the completed school profile data. Tables make it easy to navigate and sort large amounts of data in various ways. They allow the researcher to scrutinise information from numerous and diverse angles, to condense, bring order and make sense of data packaged in table form. Thereafter, narrative analysis was employed for the information captured in the tables. In this study, tables must be viewed as more than just communication devices (Jonsen, Fendt & Point, 2018).

4.4 SUMMARY TABLE OF BASIC INFORMATION OF FIVE SCHOOLS

Table 4: Total number of learners, gender, the location, number of teachers, gender and teacher-learner ratio

List of Special Schools	Location	Total of learners 2022			Total of Teachers			Teacher-Learner Ratio
		Male	Female	Over all	Male	Female	Overall	
School A	Township	175	133	308	8	24	32	1:5
School B	Rural	77	47	124	7	6	13	1:9
School C	Township	552	287	839	5	41	46	1:15
School D	Rural	145	70	215	1	17	18	1:17
School E	Rural	70	33	103	3	7	10	1:13
Total		1019	570	1589	24	95	119	

Table 4 shows that one thousand five hundred and eighty-nine (1 589) learners registered in special schools in 2022. The majority of them (1019) are males whereas the minority of them (570) are of the opposite sex.

Most of the special schools are in remote areas whereas the minority are in townships. The total number of teachers teaching in special schools are 119. The table displays a large difference between the number of females (95) to male teachers (24) teaching in special schools. It goes without saying that the lower the pupil-teacher ratio, the higher the availability of teacher services to physically challenged learners. The teacher-pupil ratio ranges from **1:5 to 1:7**. However, only School A complies with the requirement because Inclusive Education of the Disabled at Secondary Stage (IEDSS) indicated that special teachers should be appointed at a teacher-pupil ratio of **1:5**. Based on this criterion, only School A complied with such requirement. It should be stated in this report that practically all the schools were not complying with the recommended ratio because the exact number of learners exceeded the approved teacher-pupil ratio.

Table 5: Total enrolment of learners in special schools that served as settings for the study

List of Special Schools	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number
School A	347	342	335	314	308
School B	116	112	121	118	124
School C	668	746	753	788	839
School D	209	239	229	204	215
School E	169	147	137	103	103
Total	1509	1586	1575	1527	1589

Table 5 shows the list of schools that served as settings for the study. These schools cater for children with special needs of hearing, visual and physical challenges. Data captured in Table 5 shows that in School A and E there was a decrease in the enrolment of learners with special needs from 2018 to 2022.

Data generated in Table 5 shows that in School B there was a decline of enrolment of learners in 2019 and 2021. However, there was an increase of enrolment of learners in 2020 and 2022. Table 5 also shows that in School C, there was an increase of the enrolment of physically challenged students.

Data collected reveals that School C is strategically located. It is easily accessible because it is close to the main road and located in a township. In addition, the school is also offering a Technical Occupational Curriculum that is attracting many learners. In School D, enrolment of students increased from 2019 to 2020. However, there was a decrease in 2021 and an increase in 2022. Most of the learners in School D travel a long distance. Therefore, in 2021 the school established and built informal boarding schools and this led to an improvement in terms of enrolment. Data captured in School C shows that there was an enrolment increase of learners in 2019, however from 2020 to 2022 there was a decrease of enrolment of the learners. School C like School D also experienced the serious challenge of absenteeism.

Table 6: School A to E: Professional support for special educational needs

List of Schools	School A		School B		School C		School D		School E		Total	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Guidance and counselling specialist	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	4
Psychologists	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	4
Sign Language interpreters	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	4
Braille	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	2	3
Therapists	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	3	2
Social workers	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	3	2
Nursing Personnel	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	4	1
Rehabilitation workers	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	2	3
Child and youth care	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	2	2

Table 6 provides information on professional support for special educational needs for School A to E. Therefore, the child who is found eligible for special education may receive a variety of services, including guidance from a counselling specialist, speech and language therapy, psychological services, physical and occupational therapy, nursing personnel and counselling services. In addition, special schools should be capacitated with rehabilitation workers such as child and youth care workers, sign language interpreters, Braille Orientation and Mobility Instructors. Table 6 shows that School A has the majority of professional support, however, they do not have child and youth care which is critical to support the execution of a special school curriculum for special school learners.

In addition, Table 6 shows that in School B there are no Professional Specialist Support Staff for special needs learners. There is only a therapist to support special needs learners, therefore, the school cannot properly function without professional support. Table 6 reveals that in School C there are therapists, social workers, nursing personnel, child and youth care personnel. However, School C has no other key professionals to support the implementation of a special school curriculum. Therefore, there is a need to capacitate the schools with professionals to support the smooth running of a special school.

Table 7: School A to E: Resources for speech and hearing impaired

List of Schools	School A		School B		School C		School D		School E		Total	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Sound discrimination toys (loud refined)	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	3
Group hearing aids	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	3
Individual hearing aids	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	3
Audiometer with all accessories	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	3
Speech trainer with all accessories	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	3
Charts slides on sign language	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	3
Manual alphabet	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	3
Model of speech and hearing mechanisms	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	3
Slides, charts on defects/deformities of speech and hearing impairments	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	3

It should be noted that hearing impairment learners have severe language problems compared to their hearing classmates. Therefore, this group of learners need access to relevant resources and skilled professionals who can improve receptive and expressive language throughout planned learning areas. Table 7 shows provision of speech and hearing-impairment resources. Data on Table 7 shows that School A has individual hearing aids, audiometer with all accessories, charts slides on sign language and manual alphabet resources to support speech and hearing-impaired learners. However, the same school does not have basic resources to support speech and hearing-impaired learners such as sound discrimination toys (loud refined), group hearing aids, speech trainer with all accessories, model of speech and hearing mechanisms, slides and charts on defects/deformities of speech and hearing impairments. These are important resources that should be in place to effectively teach speech and hearing impairment learners. The table also reveals that there are no resources for speech and hearing impairment in School B to E because those schools have no speech and hearing impairment learners.

Table 8: School A to E: Visual impairment resources

List of Schools	A		B		C		D		E		Total	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Braille alphabet English/any other regional language	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	3	2
Snellen Charts required for eye check ups	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	3
Braille kit	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	2	3
Mobility cane, blind folder	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	3
Charts on mobility skills	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	4
Magnifying glasses plastic	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	3
Talking books	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	3	1
Touch and Audio learning materials	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	2	2
Typewriter with braille marker	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	3
Thermoform machines	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	2	3

Learners with visual impairments need to learn the same subjects and academic skills as their sighted counterparts. To achieve that, the curriculum needs to be adapted to fit their impairments. This suggests that there should be a provision of relevant materials for them to achieve academically. Moreover, they must read and write in Braille. Table 8 reveals that School A, B and C have visually impaired learners and School D and E have no visually impaired learners. School B has almost all visual impairment resources with the exception of charts on mobility skills. Table 8 shows that School A has Braille alphabet English/any other regional language, Braille kit and Thermoform machines. This shows that School A is not well resourced with enough visual impairment resources because they have visual impaired learners. Table 8 also depicts that there is no provision of visual impairment materials in School D and E because they do not have visually impaired learners.

Table 9: School A to E: Resources for testing learning disabilities

List of schools	School A		School B		School C		School D		School E		Total	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Tests used for assessment	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	4
Charts/slides on basic areas of learning disability perceptual, reading, writing, arithmetic, listening and comprehension	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	4
Charts/slides on mistakes done by children	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	4
Toys games, any other material used for correction of these problems	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	4
Sand trays	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	4

There should be professionals to test for learning disabilities of learners. These professionals range from experts in education, speech and language, audiology to psychologists. These professionals use different tools to assess learners' disabilities. Table 9 shows that it is only in School A where they conduct tests to assess learning disabilities of learners. However, Table 9 shows that School B to E have no resources to conduct tests for learning disabilities.

Table 10: Outside of classroom resources to support learners

List of Schools	A		B		C		D		E		Total	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Assembly	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	5	0
Extra-curricular activities	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	5	0
Recreational facilities	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	4	1
Camp and excursions	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	3	2
Outside school hours care	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	3	2

Table 10 shows that School A, B and C all have outside of classroom resources to support learners. However, Table 10 also shows that School C to D have other outside of classroom resources to support learners with the exception of camp and excursions and no outside school hours care. In addition, School E has assembly and extra-curricular activities but no recreational facilities, excursions and no outside school hours care.

Table 11: School A to E: Equipment to support learners to access areas of the school that may have been previously inaccessible to them

List of Schools	A		B		C		D		E		Total	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
The library	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	4
The school canteen/tuck shop	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	2	3
Bathrooms and changing rooms	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	3	2
Indoor and outdoor facilities	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	3	2
Indoor and outdoor playgrounds	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	3	2

It is critical for schools to have libraries because of their importance in helping students to get authentic information through books. Table 11 shows that there are no libraries in any of the schools. Data also reveals that School A and D have a school canteen/tuck shop to support learners during lunch time/break times. The table suggests that School B, C and E have no school canteen/tuck shop. It should also be noted that School A to C have bathrooms and changing rooms. School A and School B have boarding schools to accommodate learners in the school. Table 11 shows that School A, B and C have indoor and outdoor facilities whereas School D and E have no indoor and outdoor facilities. Table 11 also reveals that School A, C and D have indoor and outdoor playgrounds whereas School B and E have no indoor and outdoor playgrounds.

4.4.1 Vision, mission and discipline

The vision, mission and discipline can help keep the institution on track with its greater purpose by helping school leaders to navigate and fulfill the reason for their existence. Vision and mission statements are unspoken contracts between the organisation and various stakeholders. Therefore, mission and vision statements define the purpose for the existence of a particular organisation which in this context are special schools.

Vision and Mission. School A: The emphasis of School A's vision declaration is on empowering learners with learning barriers through quality education. In addition, their mission is to provide learners with quality education according to their needs, interests, aptitudes and abilities. This is achieved by offering quality education through dedicated, passionate and motivational personnel. It is endorsed that each and every learner will be treated with love, understanding and respect irrespective of their disabilities. The mission and vision aim to empower learners' educational, technical and social skills. The vision and mission statements of School A have an aspect of all-encompassing education and of empowering physically challenged pupils. The information collected confirms that physically challenged pupils are taught by some of the teachers who are visually impaired, hearing impaired and physically impaired. This suggests that learners relate well with teachers who have the same impairments as they have.

Chastisement: School A has no discipline challenges. Classroom management during lessons was very effective in this school because learners were cooperating with the teacher. During the conversation with the Deputy Principal who was coordinating data collection for my study in the school, it was highlighted that the school maintains discipline by referring any anti-social behaviour to the Disciplinary Committee. However, if the matter warrants the intervention of professionals then the matter would be referred to social workers or relevant professionals pertaining to the challenge reflected by the learner. The deputy principal also indicated that if the approach does not work then the learner would be suspended for seven (7) days.

Vision and Mission. School B: School B's vision declaration places emphasis on offering all visually impaired, partially sighted and sighted people quality of life and a standard of living. Indeed, the school lives up to its mission and vision because visually impaired, partially sighted and sighted learners attend classes in this school. The mission of School B is also to promote protection for the visually impaired, partially sighted and sighted learners. The vision and mission statements encourage all communities to accept visually impaired people openly and to work with them productively where visually impaired, partially sighted and sighted learners learn together. The vision and mission

statements focus on enabling persons who are visually impaired, partially sighted and sighted, to have equal admission and opportunities that will ensure the liberty of choice in their lives. The school accomplishes this vision by taking a leadership role in the development and implementation of rehabilitation and self-improvement programmes.

Discipline: Unlike School A, School B has disciplinary challenges. The school established a Disciplinary Committee to handle disciplinary issues. The principal indicated that 3% of learners have discipline challenges. It was highlighted that some of the learners involved themselves in substance abuse.

Vision and Mission. School C: The declaration of School C emphasises encouragement to learners to be independent thinkers. The school introduced a Technical Occupational Curriculum which helps learners to be independent and self-supporting.

Discipline: Like School B, School C has punitive measures in place. The researcher noticed during the observation that there were a few learners who were arguing with their teacher. The teacher tried to explain herself but some of the learners were not eager to listen to her. There was an element of disrespect on the part of learners in their conversation with teachers. Some of the learners showed an element of rudeness towards the teacher when interrupting her while she was trying to explain herself to the subject content. My observation is that this is due to the fact that the school offers a Technical Occupational Curriculum which is attended by older aged learners some of whom are aged 18 and above. The school principal also confirmed that there are many disciplinary challenges in the school. There are learners who are involved in drug abuse or violence, who injure each other and those who sexually abuse other learners and fail to adhere to wearing the school uniform. However, it should be noted that some of the classrooms were well managed.

Vision and Mission. School D: The school propagates the protection and promotion of the interests of disabled children and promotes means to improve their well-being. To achieve that, they encourage independence and self-reliance in differently disabled

learners. The school offers a Technical Occupational Curriculum, which helps learners to be independent, and self-reliant. The mission of the school is to identify and develop individual skills. In addition, the mission also aims to provide primary health care and create a healthy learning environment. However, it seems as if it is impossible to achieve this aspect of the mission because the school does not have nurses or health care practitioners. In addition, the purpose of its mission is to encourage complete development, be it socially, economically, physically or psychologically. The mission of the school also aims to instill enough courage and determination in the learners to face own goals and directions to fulfill personal dreams, family and community expectation.

Furthermore, the mission of the school is to give quality education and training. Nevertheless, this seems a challenge to achieve because the departmental head and teachers interviewed in this school confirmed that insufficient training was provided to effectively execute special school curricula. The mission also allows the involvement of non-political stakeholders. In addition, the school excels in terms of implementing its mission to show love, respect and understanding to the learner. During the school visit it was observed that teachers show love, respect and understanding to learners. I noticed that some of the teachers accompany learners to the toilets which shows the spirit of sympathy and guardianship.

Discipline: Like School B and C, School D has disciplinary challenges. However, school D established a Disciplinary Committee to handle disciplinary issues. According to the school principal 10% of learners do misbehave. He highlighted that some learners fight with each other.

Vision and Mission. School E: School E's vision and mission focus on embracing a comprehensive strategy of action to stimulate positive change and promote growth. Furthermore, the vision of the school is to increase the level of independence and improve the social life of all the learners. The mission is to aspire to be the leading special education institution that promotes a holistic approach in education and aspiration of the disabled persons. To achieve that, the mission of the school is committed to providing an

individualised tailored care and training development programme. This might be difficult to achieve because the school is under-staffed and relies on additional School Governing employed teachers. The school is committed to providing an array of multi-disciplinary care training environment. The mission of the school is to serve, empower and equip parents of the disabled learners to cope with a disabled child.

Discipline: School B, C, D and school E have disciplinary challenges. Therefore, school E established a Disciplinary Committee to handle disciplinary issues. According to the school principal, it is very difficult to discipline learners with special needs. However, light punishment is given to those who misbehave such as sweeping the floor and collecting papers but if learners do not change their misbehaving attitude, parents are called to assist in the process.

4.4.2 Policies on the implementation of a curriculum

It should be noted that special schools are regarded as public schools. Therefore, it is imperative for their operation to be directed by the prescripts that are used in mainstream schools. It should be highlighted that special needs schools have a significant part in the execution of an all-encompassing education. Therefore, it is critical for all special schools to have relevant legislation to support the execution of all-encompassing education. In addition, special schools selected as settings for the study were requested to share relevant legislation and policies that guided them in the execution of all-encompassing education and curriculum delivered in the school. It should be stated that most of the relevant legislation and policies checked were printed materials and relevant for the implementation of a special school curriculum.

In **Chapter 3**, it was indicated that all the schools selected as settings for this study have relevant prescripts that guide them for the execution of inclusive education. Particularly, School A and B are implementing the NCAPS and Learners with Intellectual Disabilities Curriculum (LSPID). These two schools have all the relevant legislation and policy documents that are guiding them in terms of implementing such a curriculum. In addition,

School C, D and E are implementing NCAPS, Differentiated Curriculum and Technical Occupational Curriculum. These three schools have all relevant legislation and policy documents to guide them in the implementation of such curricula.

4.4.3 Reflection of school profiles and their relevance to Behaviourism, Cognitivism and Constructivism

The reflection of schools' profiles was deliberated in relation to the theoretical framework on inclusive education and this includes behaviourism, cognitivism and constructivism (Al-Shammari et al., 2019). Behaviourism theory emphasises that the special schools' teachers should use the direct instruction method that has shown positive results for special needs learners (Al-Shammari, 2019b). Therefore, Table 4 shows that only School A may be able to adhere to the behaviourism principle because it adheres to a teacher-pupil ratio of 1:5 as prescribed by Inclusive Education of the Disabled at Secondary Stage. However, School B to E may find it difficult to employ the direct instruction method due to overcrowded classrooms. According to Abramson (2013) behaviourism emphasises that environment determines the way pupils learn in school. Therefore, Abramson (2013) concurs with Al-Shammari et al. (2019) that learners with special needs learn better in normal educational settings. As mentioned before, School B to E are operating in unconducive class environments due to overcrowded classrooms. This suggests that it may be difficult to have a sound interaction amongst teachers and physically challenged pupils. Behaviourism theory emphasises that the teacher should monitor learners' understanding and give feedback to ensure understanding. However, Table 4 shows that this process may hardly take place in School B to E because they are operating in overcrowded classrooms.

In addition, principles of constructivism theory should be applied in the classroom settings (Lenjani, 2016). It emphasises that learners should actively construct or make their own knowledge (Chen et al., 2022). However, this principle was not adhered to due to the fact that some of the learners were unable to read and write. Like cognitivism theory, constructivism theory expects teachers to be facilitators of teaching and learning. In some school settings teachers were forced to switch over from facilitator methodology to

teacher-centred methodology due to overcrowded classrooms. The next section presents the approach used in analysing qualitative data.

4.5 THE APPROACH USED TO ANALYSE DATA

In this section, the researcher discusses the approach used to analyse data.

4.5.1 Data analysis procedure

Data analysis procedure is an approach that the researcher follows to explicate generated data. It is an ongoing procedure where data is continuously generated and analysed almost simultaneously. The researcher generally analyses for patterns of the data, similarities, differences through the entire data collection phase (Clarke & Braun, 2016). In this study, data analysis was performed based on class observation, documents reviewed and field notes taken (Schurink, Fouché & De Vos, 2011).

4.5.2 Different approaches to qualitative research analysis

Literature shows that there are many approaches to analyse information. The approaches include grounded theory, narrative, content and thematic analysis. However, narrative and thematic content analysis were adopted in this study.

4.5.2.1 Narrative analysis

Narrative analysis is all about sharing the story to the audience. According to Ullström, Sachs, Hansson, Øvretveit and Brommels (2014) the story telling helps the report reader to make sense of the world and provide insights into the ways people view things. In Chapter 4, the researcher presented information of school profiles in table form followed by narrative analysis.

4.5.2.2 Thematic analysis

The researcher also used thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is part of the content analysis. The process encompasses reading through a data set from transcripts collected through semi-structured interviews and classroom observation schedules (Braun & Clarke, 2019). Most of the qualitative researchers opt for thematic analysis because of its flexibility. Braun and Clarke (2019) show that there are six steps/approaches which must be applied in using the thematic analysis approach:

Step 1: Familiarising oneself with the information collected: The investigator must familiarise himself with the data collected. In addition, the researcher must keep the records of data collected from the field which in this study is the school settings. Furthermore, the researcher must keep record of all interview audio records, data field notes and transcripts (Braun & Clarke, 2016).

Step 2: Generating initial codes: This is the stage where the researcher would produce codes from the data, however the researcher should keep on revisiting the data. I read through gathered information to get a sense of what it looks like. Thereafter, I went through the collected data line-by-line to code as much as possible. Furthermore, I categorised the codes and figured out how they fit into my coding frame (Braun, Clarke & Gray, 2017).

Step 3: Searching themes: This is the stage where themes are developed. I examined the characters, identified ideas that were explored in the text and extracted the main messages from the verbatim transcripts.

Step 4: Reviewing themes: The researcher used Microsoft Excel to identify the themes. It was the quickest way of identifying them (Bree & Gallagher, 2016). The themes should be clear and different from each other. In addition, there are questions the researcher should ask to establish whether the themes are clear or not. Before finalising the themes of the study, I asked myself the following questions:

- Do the themes make sense?
- Does the information collected support the themes?

While busy reviewing the themes, I discovered that there were themes within themes (subthemes). Those subthemes were captured in the tables followed by analysis of information.

Step 5: Defining and naming themes: This is the final refinement of the themes and the aim is to identify the ‘essence’ of what each theme is about (Braun & Clarke, 2019). In this study, defining themes encompasses articulating precisely what we mean by each theme and figuring out how it helps the researcher to understand the data. In addition, naming themes is a process where the investigator should come up with a concise and effortlessly understandable name for each theme. Detailed information on themes generated for the study is presented in **Chapter 5**.

Step 6: Producing research report: This is the final stage of thematic analysis. The researcher finalised the report and implemented all the inputs received from his supervisor.

4.6 APPROACH ADOPTED IN THIS STUDY

Thematic Content Analysis (TCA) was used to analyse data. The researcher sought to identify, classify, and present the main arguments arising as well as any other discussions on the subject of the research on experiences of teachers in the execution of the special school curricula and barriers learners face in Vhembe District, Limpopo Province, South Africa: Towards an intervention strategy. The data generated was entered into Microsoft Excel for analysis. The TCA consisted of six steps discussed in **4.5.2.2**.

I familiarised myself with the data set to provide a valuable orientation to the raw data set and foundation for all the subsequent steps (Braun & Clarke, 2019). Texts were read several times and were compared with notes that were written during fieldwork. Thereafter, data was coded. This was done by developing shorthand labels or “codes” to

describe the content. After codes were developed, each transcript of each semi-structured interview was re-read and everything that is relevant to addressing the research questions identified in this study was highlighted. It was important in this process to also highlight all the phrases and sentences that match the identified codes. In some cases, new codes were added as I went through the text.

Thereafter patterns were identified among transcripts, and themes started coming up. At this stage, the researcher discovered that some of the codes were not relevant to the research questions, therefore all irrelevant codes were discarded.

After having generated the themes, themes were named and defined. After defining and naming the themes, the researcher created a table where the theme codes relevant to each response were added. Thereafter, the theme that corresponds to each code were added. Tables presented in **Chapter 5** provide examples of developed themes based on data generated during interviews. In addition, data are grouped and matched based on theme patterns that emerged during the analysis procedure. Emanating from the data, the following five themes were identified namely: (a) Responsibility of teachers in the execution of the special school curriculum; (b) Experiences of teachers in classroom settings; (c) The teachers' and departmental heads' attitude and perceptions on the implementation of the special school curriculum; (d) Barriers faced by teachers in classroom settings and (e) Interventions that may assist in addressing obstacles faced by teachers.

The use of thematic content analysis helped me to identify relevant themes pertaining to the objectives of the study. Furthermore, thematic content is not rigid and it can be changed for the needs of various research studies (Braun & Clarke, 2016). Equally important, it is suitable for this study as it provided me with rich and comprehensive information to aid in the analysis process. Data is well captured and categorically discussed through thematic content analysis. In this study, I managed to highlight the responsibility of teachers and departmental heads in the execution of special school

curricula. Thematic content analysis helped the researcher to explicitly and clearly demarcate the areas of discussion.

The data scrutiny was done taking all three theories that served as lenses for the study into consideration. It should be noted that behaviourism theory promotes interaction between teachers and learners (Hickey, 2014). It was discovered during classroom observation that teachers communicate knowledge of reality to learners. In addition, in both lessons presented to the classroom, the teacher broke down tasks into smaller elements for learners to understand the content better as emphasised by behaviourism theory.

The data collected during class observation revealed that teachers considered or took cognisance of prior knowledge of physically disadvantaged learners. However, teachers only managed this partially due to the condition of physical impairment of learners. Furthermore, data generated revealed that teachers used different instructional approaches that encourage learners to participate in teaching and learning processes (Boyle & Rivera, 2012). The teachers that were observed used different approaches to encourage learners to take note, however some of the learners were unable to read and write. It should be stated that thematic content analysis helped the researcher to organise information according to themes such as learners' activities, teachers' activities, teaching methods and assessment procedures adopted in this study.

4.7 CONCLUSION

The study showed that nine teachers and seven departmental heads took part in the study. There were one thousand and eighty-nine learners registered in the schools selected for the academic study year 2022. Provision of relevant resources to execute inclusive education is the key for the delivery of special school curricula. However, as reflected in Table 6, Table 7 and Table 8, there are schools without basic teaching and learning resources for visually impaired, hearing impaired and physically impaired learners.

Learners with special needs may need additional instruction, time and other learning methods and professional knowledge. Furthermore, learner-teacher ratio of any given school is frequently used to judge the quality of education. Another important aspect is that special needs learners have learning challenges and require more time and individual attention from teachers. However, this might not be realised because of overcrowded classes where teachers are teaching. The discussion highlighted five themes generated by making use of the thematic content analysis method. **Chapter 5** presents the findings of the research.

CHAPTER 5

INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the interpretation and discussion of the results from five selected schools. The interpretation is supported by verbatim expressions and discussed within the context of the existing literature. Therefore, interpretation and discussion of the results is organised thematically using five themes identified in **Chapter 4**, namely: (a) responsibility of teachers and departmental heads in the execution of special school curricula; (b) barriers that teachers face in classroom settings; (c) the teachers' and departmental heads' attitude and perceptions on success and failures in the execution of the special school curriculum; (d) challenges that teachers face in classroom settings and (e) interventions that may assist in addressing obstacles.

This section interprets the discussion of the results. Data generated from the participants helped in answering the research questions of the study outlined as follows:

- What is the role of teachers and departmental heads in the implementation of the special school curriculum?
- What are barriers faced by teachers in classroom settings?
- What are the attitudes and perceptions of teachers in the implementation of the special school curriculum and the barriers learners face?
- What are the challenges faced by teachers in the implementation of special school curricula?
- What are the interventions which may assist in addressing limitations associated with the implementation of the special school curriculum and barriers learners face?

5.2 PART A: THEME 1: THE RESPONSIBILITY OF PARTICIPANTS IN THE EXECUTION OF THE SPECIAL SCHOOL CURRICULUM

In this section, there are themes, sub-themes and sub-categories identified for the analysis of data for **Theme 1**. These sub-themes and sub-categories are presented in the table and discussed below.

Table 12: Themes on the role of teachers and departmental heads

Sub-Themes	Sub-categories
Type of curriculum implemented in special schools	N/A
The training of teachers and departmental heads	N/A
Knowledge and experience of teachers and departmental heads	N/A
Lack of support from curriculum advisors trained for special school curriculum	N/A
Teachers are involved in all aspects necessary for teaching and learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare lessons • Teaching • Assess learners • Class administration and management
Departmental heads provided supportive role in teaching and learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide teaching and learning resources • Training teachers • Supervisory role • Screen learners • Encourage teachers to implement curriculum effectively • Conduct classroom observation

Factors considered necessary for teachers to implement curriculum effectively	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuous training • Adequate teaching and learning resources • Re-design special school curricula • Reduce high workload of teachers • Provision of adequate human resources • Support provided by different structures
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5.2.1 Type of curriculum implemented in special schools

The teachers and departmental heads reported that there are various types of curricula that special schools are implementing. These include: Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS), Learners with Intellectual Disabilities Curriculum (LSPID), Differentiated Curriculum (DECAPS) and Technical Occupational Curriculum (TOC) identified in Table 17 and Table 18 attached as **Appendix I**. This has been expressed by teachers and the departmental heads. **DH4** and **T1** in Table 18 expressed it succinctly by stating that:

“We are implementing SID (Severe Intellectual Disabilities Curriculum), which is also called Differentiated CAPS which is based on mainstream CAPS but adopted for special needs learners according to different ability of learners in the classroom”.

The findings reveal that there is no variation between teachers and departmental heads about the type of curriculum implemented in their schools. This finding is supported by Muzata (2017) who found that special schools do implement different types of curricula such as CAPS, Learners with Intellectual Disabilities Curriculum, Differentiated Curriculum and Technical Occupational Curriculum. The rationale given by the

departmental heads is that these curricula are meant to accommodate physically impaired learners.

5.2.2 The training of teachers and departmental heads

It is critical for the teachers and departmental heads to be skilled and empowered to effectively implement the special school curricula. Therefore, the accomplishment of special school curricula depends entirely on the quality of training provided to the departmental heads and teachers. Undoubtedly, ongoing training would contribute to the successful implementation of any curriculum in the school settings. Furthermore, teacher training familiarises the teachers with policies, procedures, and provision intended to equip them with skills to effectively execute curricula in the school settings.

In addition, teacher training has a profound implication in education and improving learning to assure high-quality of education. It was reported in this study that eight (8) teachers and seven (7) departmental heads received training for the implementation of special school curricula. These training statistics show that only one (1) teacher did not receive training for the implementation of special school curricula as identified in Table 19 and in Table 20 attached as **Appendix I**. However, it was expressed that participants received insufficient training to prepare teachers to effectively implement the special school curricula. **DH3** stated in detail that:

“Training conducted by the Department of Education was not sufficient to prepare teachers to effectively implement curricula in the classroom settings, and it was not thorough training. It was not an advanced course that was conducted”. “The training was not sufficient at all specially to prepare departmental heads to assist the teachers in the implementation of Technical Occupational Curriculum”.

In line with the literature reviewed, this study confirms that supporting teachers through training is essential. Carl (2012) finds that supporting teachers with relevant knowledge

and skills in terms of implementing special school curricula contributes to increased teacher job performance and productivity. It also boosts the morale of teachers.

5.2.3 Experience of teachers and departmental heads

Knowledge and experience are a key to teachers in delivering special school curricula. Therefore, teachers and departmental heads are expected to have knowledge and experience to implement different types of curricula in special schools. Convincingly, teaching experience is important as it is positively associated with learners' achievement. As teachers and departmental heads gain experience, their learners are more likely to perform better. The findings reveal that knowledge and experiences of teachers and departmental heads varied. This might be due to the fact that contexts are not the same. According to data generated, some have experience whereas others do not have experience. **T1** concurs with **T3** that:

"I have no experience of teaching the curriculum as discussed earlier on, however, I said before the training was not sufficient". "I have no experience. We were trained for 1-month course for a sign language. Mass Tech trained us on how to use sign language. However, the training was not sufficient for teachers. It was not thorough training. It was not an advanced course that was conducted".

Arising from the responses, seven (7) departmental heads and eight (8) teachers have work experience in the execution of all-encompassing education as shown in Table 21 and Table 22 attached as **Appendix I**. This might be due to the fact that special schools are also offering curricula which are being implemented in mainstream schools. This finding is in line with the observation by Goldhaber, Lavery and Theobald (2015) who established that teaching experience is an essential instrument required for encouraging an effective classroom performance for both teachers and learners. Therefore, teaching experience is important to handle different categories of learners in special schools.

5.2.4 Lack of support from curriculum advisors trained for special school curriculum

Although teachers and departmental heads received training and have work experience on the implementation of special school curricula, they highlighted that there is no support from curriculum advisors specifically trained to provide support to special schools. **T3** explicitly indicated that:

“It is challenging because we don’t have Curriculum Advisors who have been trained by the DoE on dealing with Deaf learners and how to use sign language. Some of the teachers lack knowledge on how to use sign language. Therefore, the DoE should train curriculum advisors to assist in special schools. Those curriculum advisors know nothing about special school curriculum”.

Furthermore, the participants expressed that there is a shortage of support from curriculum advisors who were to help hearing impaired, visually impaired and physically impaired learners. In a nutshell, findings confirm that there was no training for curriculum advisors to support teachers to teach learners with learning barriers.

5.2.5 Teachers are involved in all aspects necessary for teaching and learning

As shown in Table 23 attached as **Appendix I**, it is evident that there is variation between the roles of teachers and departmental heads. For example, with regard to their roles, teachers know their roles. They indicated that their roles involve all aspects necessary for effective teaching and learning. Teachers confirmed that their key role is to prepare lessons, teach, assess learners, and do class administration and management. For the purpose of teaching, special needs education teachers explained that they group learners according to their impairment, ensure that learners participate in classroom activities, adapt content according to learners’ impairment, and manage the learners in classroom, adopt individual learning, apply remedial learning and conduct extra classes to cater for slow learners. This was explicitly summarised by **T1** when he/she stated that:

“It is my responsibility to hold sign language classes, group learners according to their impairment, ensure that learners participate in classroom activities, adapt content according to learners’ impairment, and manage the learners in classroom, adopt individual learning, apply remedial learning and conduct extra classes to cater slow learners”.

Based on the above-discussion, teachers execute the following key roles in their schools:

5.2.5.1 Prepare lessons

One critical component of effective teaching is preparation of the lesson. Professional teachers are always prepared for their lessons. Therefore, preparation of a lesson is a key to successful teaching and learning. Data constructed support the view that teachers are aware that it is their role to prepare lessons. During classroom observation it was discovered that **T3** of School A presented a lesson on Social Science (History) in Grade 5 while **T4** of School B presented a lesson on Social Science (Geography) in Grade 6. The topic of Social Science (History) in Grade 5 was based on “When, Why and Where the first African farmers settled in Southern Africa” while the topic of Social Science (Geography) was based on “Why people trade”.

Both lessons were well presented to physically impaired learners. All the lessons were based on Term 2 and the duration of observation was 30 minutes. The **T3** and **T4** of School A used English and Tshivenda as medium of instruction but the researcher detected that some of the learners were struggling to understand English. The lesson preparations were well structured. Both lessons had aim, skill, method, content, resources, inclusivity, explanation of terminology and beginning knowledge. **T8** and **T9** stated clearly that:

“Our role is to prepare lessons”.

The finding is in line with the Department of Education (2003:02) who confirmed that:

“it is the role of teachers to prepare a lesson plan since it is the next level of planning and is drawn directly from the Work Schedule. It also describes concretely and in detail teaching, learning and assessment activities that are ‘to be implemented in any given period of time’”.

5.2.5.2 Teaching

Teachers are aware that they are important factors in the realisation of curricula in the classroom settings. The participants confirmed that teaching is their key role in the classroom settings. According to them, their role can be achieved if learners understand the content. The data generated shows that a teacher’s role is to make sure that physically disadvantaged pupils master the content in the classroom settings. Therefore, teachers suggested that if that is achieved, it will make learners to pass the subject delivered. This finding confirms Khalkhali, Soleymanpoor and Fardi’s (2010) observation that the role of teachers is to teach by managing their own classrooms and teach different learning areas or subjects of their specialisation.

5.2.5.3 Assess learners

Teachers confirmed that after teaching learners they needed to assess them. According to the teachers learners’ assessment helps them to establish their pre-knowledge and establish what learners are able to do with what they have learnt. This shows that the teachers are aware that assessment of learners is one of their roles in the school settings.

This finding is in line with Ngubane (2014) who found that the National Curriculum Statements (NCS) put more emphasis on assessment of teaching and learning in the classrooms.

5.2.5.4 Classroom administration and management

Data constructed shows that classroom administration and management are part of the responsibilities of the teachers. Therefore, when classroom administration and management strategies are implemented effectively, teachers and departmental heads are able to reduce the behaviours that prevent learning from taking place effectively. Teachers and departmental heads reported that they are responsible for class administration and management. All the teachers and departmental heads in this study reported that they conduct class administration. This includes marking registers, managing classrooms, filling in the period register, managing learners, keeping attendance registers and looking after learners. T4 highlighted that:

“My role is to set up roles, mark registers, organise attendance register, mark registers, keep the incidents book, keep record book, fill in the period register manage learners, look after learners”.

The findings on the responsibilities of teachers concur with the revelation by the South African Council for Teachers (2020) and Gauteng Department of Education (2018) who observed that teachers' responsibilities are to mark registers, manage classrooms, fill in the period register, manage learners, keep attendance registers and look after learners. It is also supported by Maulana, Helms-Lorenz and Van de Grift (2017) who found that it is the responsibility of teachers to manage classrooms, creating a learning climate, providing clear instruction, and promoting active learning, adapting learning and teaching learning strategies.

5.2.6 Departmental heads provide supportive role in teaching and learning

Data constructed shows that there is also variation between the responsibilities of teachers and departmental heads in the execution of special school curricula. Both groups seem to know their roles. For example, the departmental heads are responsible

for supporting teachers in the execution of special school curricula. It became evident from the findings that the departmental heads are providing the following supportive roles to the teachers as reflected in Table 24 attached as **Appendix I**.

5.2.6.1 Provide teaching and learning resources

According to the participants, supply of learning materials is a key for effectual execution of curricula in the school settings. For example, departmental heads are aware that apart from teaching they are expected to support teachers through the provision of educational resources for proper execution of the curriculum. These resources include teachers' books, learners' books, annual teachers' plans, braille machine and lesson plans assessment programmes. This was emphatically expressed by **DH4** who stated that:

“It is my role and responsibility to make sure that teachers have necessary teaching materials in the classroom and I have to make sure that they have braille machines. I have to encourage and make sure that all teachers have proper preparation for teaching learners, make sure that they have ATP, lesson plans, assessment program”.

This finding concurs with Tapala (2019) who observed that the departmental heads are expected to supervise teachers on a daily basis in their schools. Oyugi and Nyaga (2010), Jinga (2016) and Malinga (2016) also add some of the roles of departmental heads by indicating that they are expected to provide resources in schools and also to re-arrange available resources. Oyugi and Nyaga (2010) further argue that learning materials such as books, Braille, Braille kit, touch and audio learning materials and talking books should be provided to special schools.

Okongo, Ngao, Rop and Nyongesa (2015) suggests that it is critical for special schools to be provided with advanced learning materials such as television and video tape recorders. Therefore, shortage of sufficient or inadequate teaching and learning resources acts as a hindrance to the execution of inclusive education (Kochung, 2011).

5.2.6.2 Training teachers

The departmental heads confirmed that it is their role to train teachers. According to them, training teachers is critical for preparing them to effectively implement the curriculum in special schools. It was confirmed by **HD2** that:

“We conduct training every Wednesday to train teachers how to use sign language. This is another way of helping teachers to familiarise themselves with the sign language which they have to use daily in their classes. It is my role to encourage teachers to adopt individual learning or individual attention that should be provided to the learners because we have learners who are hearing impaired. I encourage them to teach according to the pace of learners. I also check the progress of learners because some are slow and other are fast learners”.

Training of teachers at school by the departmental heads is aimed at increasing teacher effectiveness regarding curriculum implementation. Clarke (2012:132) found that “Teacher training works effectively where there is a common commitment to personal improvement through professional development and to the sharing of resources, including ideas, skills and time”. In addition, departmental heads must ensure that there is a provision of continuous training and development of the teachers.

It is their responsibility to encourage teachers to attend meetings and workshops organised by the curriculum advisors, education specialists and other relevant stakeholders within the circuit, district and province (Ogina, 2017). It is also supported by Oliva (2013) who found that the departmental heads also train teachers to effectively implement curricula. The finding is in line with Ntuli (2012) who found that the departmental heads are also responsible for developing other teachers in their line of command. They should also make sure that teachers are continuously trained to achieve the school and curriculum outcomes.

5.2.6.3 Supervisory rule

The departmental heads reported that their roles involve the aspects necessary for overseer: monitor teachers' work, supervise teaching and learning, mentor teachers and monitor practical work performed by the teachers. **DH6** stated that:

"I am responsible of making sure that I have to provide assistants to 10 teachers in this school. I also monitor teachers' work, supervise teaching and learning and mentoring teachers. I also monitor practical work performed by the teachers and learners. I also monitor and check teachers' file to check if they are in line with the required standard".

Therefore, it is critical for the departmental heads to empower teachers in terms of implementing curricula in the school settings. The finding on the role of departmental heads in providing support to teachers in terms of implementing curricula in school settings concurs with the declaration by Hoy and Miskel (2013) who stated that departmental heads are instructional leaders to effectively lead the execution of curricula in the school settings. It is also supported by Naicker (2019) who found that the departmental heads' leadership role in the implementation of curricula brings about effective teaching and learning. Additionally, Naicker (2019) states that the departmental heads should assist teachers to alter, re-arrange, and re-interpret the curriculum.

5.2.6.4 Screen learners

The departmental heads confirmed that it is their role and responsibility to screen learners before they are admitted in special schools. According to them screening learners is conducted because every child is entitled to quality education within the special schools. The data constructed confirmed that the process of screening is aimed at giving guidance on how reasonable accommodation can be made available in an inclusive setting. The departmental heads revealed that no child may be refused admission to a special school without recourse to a process of appeal. **DH4** was explicit by stating that:

“I am also a Member of School Support Team responsible for screening learners to be admitted in the special school. It is also my role to identify barriers experienced by learners and address them accordingly”.

Therefore, it is critical that all pupils should go through the process of screening as it guarantees that every child has the right to access quality education and enjoy support within his or her local community. In addition, the process is aimed at giving guidance on how reasonable accommodation can be made available in an inclusive setting and on how decisions should be made in the best interest of a child at all times.

5.2.6.5 Motivate teachers to implement curriculum effectively

The departmental heads highlighted that it is their role to motivate teachers to implement a curriculum effectively. According to them, teachers develop confidence in teaching and learning especially if support is provided in terms of implementing the curriculum. **DH1** clearly indicated that:

“My role is to make sure that all the skills relevant to SID CAPS are implemented in the classroom settings. My role is to make sure that all the skills relevant to CAPS are implemented in the classroom settings. I have to make sure that teachers must use different devices of teaching as a way of helping learners to achieve on what is expected”.

This finding is in line with Alsubaie (2016) who found that the level of departmental heads in supporting teachers to implement a curriculum effectively leads to best possible achievement of curriculum delivery.

5.2.6.6 Conduct class observation

The departmental heads who participated in this study reported that they always conduct classroom observation. These class observations are conducted to provide support to teachers where they experience challenges. **DH3** confirmed that:

“I also conduct classroom observation to check whether teachers are following the CAPS curriculum as prescribed by the DoE”.

The participants were able to identify various reasons for fulfilling their roles. It is evident from the participants that there is variation in terms of actualising their roles. For example, those who were accomplishing their roles stated that there is progress in the physically challenged classes, good relationship between teachers and departmental heads. Both parties are familiar with the methodology that is used to teach impaired learners and teachers who are positive to work with all categories of learners. This was explicitly summarised by **DH5** who stated that:

“Yes, I think my role has been realised because there is a lot of progress in physically challenged classes. This role has been realised because of good relationship between teachers and departmental heads. Yes, because teachers’ attitude changes when dealing with disabled learners. Yes, I think my role has been realised. I have a very good relationship with teachers. Sometimes I delegate, I also make submission to the plans to teacher on how we can help visual impaired learners. Teachers always comply if there is anything that is needed. Teaching them help us to learn different types of disabilities. The attitude for the teachers also changes when they are dealing with disabled learners. I think you need to be a Christian in order to reach out to disabled learners”.

However, the participants who did not realise their roles cited various reasons which contributed to their failures. They revealed that it is due to the lack of training, unidentified limitations associated with the implementation of special school curricula and lack of support from educational structures. The finding is in line with Badugela (2012) who found that there is a lack of support from higher educational structure in terms of implementing the special school curricula. It is also supported by Zwane and Malale (2018) and Khoane (2012) who found that insufficient training of teachers, lack of educational specialists,

unqualified teachers, and lack of support materials are some of the limitations for the execution of all-encompassing education.

5.2.7 Factors considered necessary for teachers to implement curriculum effectively

The teachers and departmental heads identified necessary factors to be implemented in order for them to effectively implement curricula for special needs learners. Some of the proposed factors are related to continuous curriculum training, adequate teaching and learning resources, re-design of special school curricula, reduction of high workload of teachers, provision of adequate personnel in Table 27 and Table 28 attached as **Appendix I**.

5.2.7.1 Continuous training

It was reported that there is a lack of continuous workshops to empower teachers and departmental heads. Therefore, participants recommended that the DoE conduct extensive training to prepare them and curriculum advisors to effectively implement special school curricula. This suggests that extensive training for teachers and curriculum advisors is critical for the success of implementing a special school curriculum. **DH7** states this concisely by saying that:

“I think continuous workshops on curriculum implementation can help a lot”. “I think some workshops should be conducted”. “Extensive training for skills and knowledge to deal with different types of curricula should be conducted”. “Extensive training for skills and knowledge to deal with different forms of curricula should be conducted”. “I think extensive training for skills and knowledge to deal with different forms of curriculums should be conducted. Empowering teachers with eclectic methods or model of teaching is paramount”.

Therefore, continuous staff development through training increases teacher effectiveness regarding curriculum implementation. This finding is in line with the observation by Clarke (2012) that the School Management Teams must ensure the provision of continuous training and development of teachers, particularly on curriculum implementation. The same view is expressed by Okongo, Ngao, Rop and Nyongesa (2015) who recommend that the DoE continuously conduct workshops to adequately prepare teachers and curriculum advisors to effectively implement the curriculum. However, Ainscow (2012) adds that an insufficient personnel training programme is another problem hindering achievement in special school education in developing countries.

5.2.7.2 Adequate learning materials

The teachers and departmental heads are aware that adequate learning materials are prerequisites for the effective execution of the curriculum. It was highlighted that schools cannot function well without basic resources to support the execution of the curriculum. Therefore, it was recommended that all special schools need to have basic resources to meet the curriculum needs. More specifically, teachers and departmental heads proposed that the educational structure must supply them with sufficient learning materials. **DH4** compendiously stated that:

“I recommend that ATP for TOC should be drafted by the Department of Education. Currently, we don’t have ATP for Technical Occupational Curriculum. The Department of Education should provide teachers’ guides and learners’ books with preparations like what they do in the mainstream school curriculum. We also need the provision of materials in the software”.

Equally important, adequate learning materials and equipment are prerequisites for the successful execution of the curriculum. A prior study conducted by Mandukwini (2016) found that inadequate resources impede effective delivery of curricula in schools. Therefore, it is necessary to guarantee that teachers have adequate teaching and learning resources.

5.2.7.3 Re-design special school curriculum

The participants reported that the special school curriculum was not well designed, therefore it was recommended that it should be re-designed and participants wanted to be part of the re-design process. This is due to the fact that they are knowledgeable on what works and what does not work in classroom settings which can add value in the re-design of the curriculum. The participants further reported that the mainstream school curriculum is better designed than the special school curriculum. They argued that teachers' books and learners' books for mainstream schools were well developed. According to them there is a huge difference between Differentiated Curriculum, Special Occupational Curriculum and NCS curriculum. Therefore, it was recommended that the educational structure adopt the approach of developing curricula for mainstream schools for special schools' curricula. This was specifically proposed by teachers and departmental heads who are teaching Differentiated and Technical Occupational Curricula. **T5** succinctly stated that:

"I think it is important for the Department of Education to re-design special school curriculum. My observation is that mainstream curriculum is well developed compared to special school curriculum. In the mainstream school there are Annual Teachers Plans but in Technical Occupational Curriculum we don't have ATPs so we are struggling when teaching Technical Occupational subjects in our school. In addition, Teachers' books and Learners' books are provided in mainstream school but we don't have learners' books in TOC".

This finding concurs with Tyagi (2016) who found that special school stakeholders must be involved in curriculum design and development.

5.2.7.4 Reduce high workload of teachers

The participants raised the concern that there is a high workload for teachers. Therefore, they recommended that teachers be provided with sufficient time to prepare and that the Department of Education reduce the high workload which makes curriculum implementation a challenge for teachers. Accordingly, teachers' workload has a substantial outcome on the academic attainment of learners since it determines the effectiveness of teaching. **T3** stated in detail that:

“DoE should stick to teacher pupil ratio of 1:7, currently I have 15 learners in Grade 6 and 14 learners in Grade 5, this means that I am operating in the overcrowded classes. In addition, I think it is important for the Department of Education to reduce the workload of teachers. I am raising this because working with impaired learners is not easy, one need more time to provide individual attention to all the learners. Therefore, to achieve that teacher's workload should be addressed. The situation is worsened by overcrowded classrooms which are difficult to manage”.

This finding on the reduction of workload concurs with the observation by Clarke (2012) that increased teacher's workload has a negative effect on the school's efficacy. It is also supported by Legotlo (2014) who confirms that heavy workloads result in teachers' dissatisfaction.

5.2.7.5 Provision of adequate personnel

The participants reported that the provision of adequate personnel is the most important aspect to be considered in the execution of a special school curriculum. The supply of adequate personnel must be provided so that the curriculum standard of a school is not compromised. The following verbatims express the need for the provision of adequate personnel. **D7** expressed that:

“we need human resources such as teacher assistants, support staff, medical personnel to support the implementation of the special school curriculum”. “I would recommend that the DoE provide the special school with enough teacher assistants and provision of enough resources for the implementation of curriculum”.

It was reported by the participants that lack of experts and curriculum advisors is negatively affecting the execution of curricula in special schools. Accordingly, the smooth implementation of a special school curriculum relies on the provision of adequate human resources. Therefore, the support from educational structure and supply of adequate personnel is paramount for the implementation of a curriculum. This is because teaching personnel are the major instrument for curriculum implementation in the school settings. In addition, provision of adequate, skilled and well-motivated teachers is important to achieve the mandate of special school curricula. This suggests that well trained teachers and curriculum specialists should work together to achieve the mandate of special schools.

However, the participants reported that the above-mentioned proposal can only be realised if special schools work together with other stakeholders. This finding is in line with Hansen et al. (2020) who found that collaborative approach is essential to implement inclusive education in special schools. Omebe (2014:30) also adds that human resources are critical for effective educational functioning. Therefore, the selection of human resources influences the teachers and departmental heads remain committed to their job, dedicated and produce learners who are competent in the education system.

5.2.7.6 Support from different structures

Participants also reported that there is a need for support from different structures to effectively implement special school curricula. They proposed that NGOs, business sectors and civil organisations should be involved in special school business. It was suggested that to create effective education systems and effective learning environments, all stakeholders need to come together through collaboration. According to them, this

collaboration can help the special schools to solve the challenges that special schools are experiencing. The finding is in line with Bingham, Michielsens, Clarke and van der Meer (2013) who observed that partnerships, school boards, sector specific approaches to special education are some of the measures that can be put in place to address barriers experienced in special schools.

5.3 PART B: THEME 2: BARRIERS OF TEACHERS IN CLASSROOM SETTINGS

In this section, six sub-themes emerged from the data generated for **Theme 2**. These sub-themes are presented in the following table and discussed below.

Table 13: Themes on barriers of learning

Sub-Themes
Understanding of barrier of learning
Learners' condition
Teachers' condition
Language as a barrier to learning
Strategies of addressing barriers
Other role players in addressing barriers

The study revealed many blockades that hinder learners to learn effectively in the classroom settings as reflected in Table 29 and Table 30 attached as **Appendix I**. The study shows that there are many barriers teachers faced in their school settings on a daily basis. These barriers hinder them enormously in the implementation of special school curricula. Therefore, the participants shared their understanding of barriers of learning. Thereafter, they reported barriers that hinder them from implementing curricula effectively.

5.3.1 Understanding of barrier of learning

Data constructed shows that there is no variation in the understanding of barriers to learning between the teachers and departmental heads. They defined blockades as hindrances that deter effective teaching and learning. It was also identified by the participants that some of the barriers are extrinsic whereas others are intrinsic in nature.

5.3.2 Learners' conditions as barrier to learning

It was reported that the physical condition of learners is a barrier that makes it difficult for them to cope in classroom settings. Therefore, learners' conditions such as visual impairment, hearing impairment and physical impairment are typical barriers on their own. The teachers and departmental heads reported that there are learners who were unable to read and write due to their disabilities such as blindness and deafness and this affected their performance academically. It was also emphasised that there are learners who are not fit to attend special schools due to a mistake incurred by the professionals who screened learners for admission in special schools. In addition, the participants reported that there are learners who are unable to move from one place to another, learners who are epileptic, learners with Down syndrome, short eye sighted, autistic learners, hypertension learners, slow learners, cerebral learners, learners who lack concentration, learners who are unable to speak properly and those who are not able to hold their pens properly. **DH7** indicated that:

"We have learners who are unable to read and write. Some of them cannot move from one place to another and they have to be moved. In addition, we have learners who cannot be able to hold their pens. Some have Down syndrome challenge and lack concentration".

Notably, based on responses above, learners' conditions are a limitation for effective learning to take place. These blockades have an adverse influence on the implementation of special school curricula. The finding is in line with Carrington (2017) who found that

learners with impairment conditions are prevented from accessing effective learning opportunities.

5.3.3 Teachers as barriers to learning

Teachers need to have basic knowledge and skills to effectively implement special school curricula. This basic knowledge is necessary to contextualise inclusive education policy documents. In addition, they need to have knowledge to accommodate diverse physically challenged learners. Data constructed established that some of the teachers lack adequate knowledge and skills to handle special needs learners. Furthermore, it was reported that there are teachers who do not have basic knowledge of accommodating physically challenged learners. This according to them lowers the standard of teaching and learning because it is impossible to teach visually impaired learners and hearing-impaired learners without basic braille and sign language knowledge. Another major challenge according to them is the lack of qualified teachers to teach the Technical Occupational Curriculum.

5.3.4 Language as barrier to learning

One other challenge reported by the participants is the language as barrier to learning. It was highlighted that the materials designed for special school curricula are in English and some learners are unable to understand English. It was reported that the language barrier is a great challenge because it is used to communicate the content to the learners. As mentioned in **5.3.2** some learners are unable to read or write and there are those who cannot concentrate in the classroom settings. Therefore, without proper understanding of language used in the classroom settings, learners cannot be taught effectively. It was also reported that some learners have speech problems and therefore the ability to communicate is essential for all children and it is the core instrument in teaching and learning.

5.3.5 Strategies in dealing with barriers to teaching and learning

The teachers and departmental heads face barriers every day in their classroom settings. Therefore, both of them need to be able to face these challenges head on if they want to make sure that they are making the best use of the school year. In this study, the participants identified many challenges that the schools are experiencing in the execution of the special school curriculum. However, there are different approaches the schools employ to deal with these limitations. Strategies include provision of extra classes, conducting workshops to train teachers to use braille, providing textbooks with visual aids or sign language as a way of supporting physically impaired learners, encouraging teachers to further their studies to effectively teach them, adjusting teaching methods, dividing learners according to their impairment, initiating reading and writing programmes, adjusting classrooms accordingly and conducting continuous diagnosis of different categories of learners according to their educational needs. This shows that, even though some schools rely on the Department of Education for help, others have developed their own strategies. This was aptly expressed by **DH3** who stated that:

“I train teachers on how to use braille in the school every Wednesday like I said before. I teach them myself. I also create time in the afternoon to help the teachers. I also encourage teachers to develop themselves by applying for Diploma courses to improve the language and to deal with virtual impaired learners”.

However, teachers and departmental heads felt that the educational structure must adjust curricula according to special needs of the learners, develop curricula that suit learners with learning difficulties or special school learners, provide intensive training to address some of the barriers discussed. However, it was recommended that intensive training should be conducted with teachers who are teaching special school curricula.

At the same time, there are schools that are able to provide textbooks with visual aids or sign language as a way of supporting physically impaired learners. As a consequence, schools also adjust their curriculum and teaching method as a way of catering for

physically challenged pupils. Subsequently, the participants recommended that special schools should change or adjust the classroom settings to fit physically challenged learners. Molbaek (2017) confirmed in his study that a conducive environment is a vital component for quality education and it increases access to schools. Therefore, teachers should adjust their classrooms accordingly as a way of accommodating physically challenged pupils. Skinner (2016) confirmed that teacher training is critical for addressing barriers experienced in special schools.

5.3.6 Other role players in addressing the barriers to learning

The participants reported that it is not the sole responsibility of special schools to manage the barriers that they are experiencing. Therefore, it was proposed collaboration should be forged with other stakeholders. According to them, this collaboration can help the schools and other stakeholders to solve the barriers to learning. On that condition, it was recommended that different stakeholders, Department of Health, Civil Society, NGOs, Community members, Social Development, SAPS, Professionals and Churches should all play a role in addressing barriers of learning. **DH1** summarised this by saying:

“I think the involvement of DoE, SMT, school, Community members, Civil Society, NGO can play a major role to address the barriers”. “Parents, Teachers, DoE, Professionals, Hospitals, SAPS, Social Development, Psychologists, and Social Workers. In summary this should be done in partnership with different stakeholders. Teachers also need to work with professionals for proper training for teaching this special category of learners”.

As highlighted by responses, the involvement of different stakeholders is a key in addressing barriers that the special schools are experiencing. The finding on the involvement of different stakeholders as a solution in addressing barriers in special schools concurs with the utterance by Seedet (2018) that special schools should utilise a communicative, collaborative and well-developed whole school strategy approach in combating limitations associated with the execution of all-encompassing education.

Bingham et al. (2013) add that partnerships, school boards and a sector specific approach are some of the measures that can be put in place to address barriers experienced in special schools. The finding is also in line with Hansen et al.'s (2020) recommendation that provinces should adopt a collaborative and communicative approach in handling challenges experienced in special schools.

5.4 PART C: THEME 3: THE TEACHERS' AND DEPARTMENTAL HEADS' ATTITUDE AND PERCEPTIONS ON THE SUCCESS AND FAILURES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SPECIAL SCHOOL CURRICULUM

In this section, there are a number of themes identified and presented in **Table 14** below.

Table 14: Themes on attitude and perceptions on success and failures in the implementation of special school curriculum

Sub-Themes	Sub-categories
Successes in the implementation of special school curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formation of SBST • The establishment of boarding school to house learners • The provision of extra-mural activities • Reading and writing programme • Modern technology used in the schools • The introduction of Technical Occupational Modules
Failures in the implementation of special school curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shortage of teaching and learning resources • Insufficient workshops and lack of sufficient training

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of curriculum advisors trained for special schools
Factors influencing failures for the implementation of special school curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absence of parental participation in their children’s education • Pupils from dysfunctional families • Teachers have negative attitudes towards visually impaired, hearing impaired, and physically impaired learners
Strategies to address the failures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DoE to assign curriculum advisors to assist in special school • DoE to conduct workshops to assist schools to implement curriculum successfully • Parents to be motivated to participate in special school education • Teaching and learning materials to be designed according to learners’ impairment

5.4.1 Success in the implementation of a special school curriculum

Even though there are other stakeholders who are playing a role in the success of schools in terms of the execution of a special school curriculum, teachers’ and departmental heads’ attitudes and their perceptions are critical for the effective delivery of a curriculum. Smith, Mestry and Bambie (2013) indicate that the departmental heads’ and teachers’ attitude is crucial in terms of leading the curriculum implementation. Tapala (2019) confirms that the departmental heads are responsible for the provision of teaching and learning materials.

This suggests that proper execution of a special school curriculum relies on the attitude and perceptions of departmental heads and teachers. This was explicitly expressed in Table 37 and Table 38 attached as **Appendix I** about the successful factors shared by teachers and departmental heads in the execution of the special school education. These factors include: the formation of SBST, the establishment of a boarding school to house learners, the provision of extra-mural activities, reading and writing programmes, learners' improvement plans and the introduction of a technical occupational curriculum.

5.4.1.1 The formation of SBST

The departmental heads and teachers reported that the current educational system and the designed curriculum must cater to learners irrespective of their impairment. Nonetheless, according to the participants, this cannot be realised without the formation of a SBST. Therefore, special schools established a SBST that is responsible for training teachers, supporting teachers in curriculum implementation, identifying challenges experienced by physically challenged pupils and to solve problems that teachers and learners are experiencing in the school. **DH1** expressed it succinctly by stating that:

“We have developed or initiated School-Based Support Team which is responsible for training teachers and solve problems that teachers and learners are experiencing in the school”. “In addition, SBST is responsible for training teachers, support teachers in curriculum, identifying school needs with a focus on barrier to learning for learners and to solve problems that teachers and learners are experiencing in the school”.

The departmental heads reported that it is through the SBST that challenges are identified and addressed.

5.4.1.2 The establishment of boarding schools to house learners

Teachers and departmental heads in School A and B are proud of the establishment of a boarding school to house learners. According to them, boarding schools are a distraction-free zone where learners cannot be distracted. It was reported that through boarding schools, learners could access extra lessons. Therefore, boarding school is the environment where learners are more engaged and secure in terms of learning. According to them, due to the establishment of boarding schools, extra classes are organised for learners who are not performing well in learning and this is conducted after school hours. **DH2** explicitly expressed it by stating that:

“I have observed that teachers are committed to their work daily. The sign language workshops that we conduct every Wednesday is helping a lot. In addition, we conduct extra classes for those learners who are not performing well during class periods. This is possible due to the fact that we have boarding school that is housing learners. All our learners reside in boarding school and we do not have day’s scholars”.

This evidence surely confirms that the role of boarding schools to house or accommodate learners is critical. This finding confirms Sadler’s (2006:32) observation that

as far as an introduction to boarding was concerned, this was indeed a baptism by fire. I joined a staff which was highly professional and dedicated; but junior members of staff were required to cover the pupils' extra-curricular activities and so the working day was exceptionally long and demanding.

5.4.1.3 The provision of extra-mural activities

It was reported that learners are able to participate in extra-mural activities. To achieve that, some of the schools use their school grounds whereas other schools use community grounds. Some of the provisions of these extra-mural activities are due to the

establishment of boarding schools because School A and B could conduct extra-mural activities after school. Emerging from the responses all special schools are providing extra-mural activities. Learners therefore receive a more holistic education as a result of living in these facilities. **DH1** expressed this by stating that:

“We have Wi-Fi which is helping us to access information online. In this school we are technologically advanced. We also have a boarding school that is housing the learners. We have a lot of extra mural activities that normally takes place in our school”.

5.4.1.4 Reading and writing programme

It was reported in **Theme 1** that there are learners that are incompetent to read and write. However, it should be noted that reading and writing is essential to communicate information to the teachers and learners. Therefore, through reading and writing programmes learners are able to develop speech and language and learn skills that are important to the development of literacy (reading and writing). It was discovered during classroom observation that some of the learners were struggling to read. The participants in School A are delighted to initiate a reading and writing programme to assist learners who are unable to read and write. This programme according to them is managed by the Foundation Phase teachers. **T1** clearly stated that:

“We are proud of extra classes created or organised for those learners who experience challenges in learning. There is reading and writing program established by the Foundation Phase teachers which is helping a lot. For visually impaired learners we provide them with extra classes”.

The finding on challenges of learners who are unable to read and write concurs with the revelation by Le Cordeur (2010) who observed that it is important to identify and address reading challenges. Oyegade (2012) also adds the challenge that some of the learners

lacked basic skills, such as reading and writing. Therefore, a reading and writing programme is important as it assists learners to enhance literacy skills.

5.4.1.5 Modern technology used in the schools

Data constructed revealed that modern technology is important in supporting physically challenged learners in a school setup. The teachers and departmental heads raised the point regarding the delivery of modern resources introduced in their schools. The participants from School A highlighted that they have *Computer Lab*, Wi-Fi and new gadgets which are helping the participants to access information online. **DH1** expressed this by stating that:

“We have Computer Lab which according to me it is big progress. We have Wi-Fi which is helping us to access information online. In this school we are technologically advanced”.

5.4.1.6 The introduction of Technical Occupational Curriculum Modules

It was reported by the participants from School C, D and E that the introduction of Technical Occupational Curriculum modules or subjects is a great achievement in their schools. According to them, the TOC is aiming to prepare physically challenged pupils to be self-employed. This was aptly expressed by **T6** (in **Table 38** in **Appendix I**):

“We are proud because our school is offering Technical Occupational Curriculum where 13 modules are offered in the school. There are learners who are doing very well after they complete their modules such as carpentry and welding. In addition, they are self-employed and doing well in society. In addition, some are hired to fit in kitchen units in lodges, hotels, and the communities. I know some who are busy doing the frame of the gates and windows. I am proud to note that some of the learners have resources to start their businesses”.

The teachers and departmental heads confirmed that offering the Technical Occupational Curriculum has given learners opportunity to be self-employed. In addition, the departmental heads and teachers reported that working as a team, with teachers who are dedicated and committed, good support from the School Governing Body, support from Non-Governmental Organisations and involvement of other stakeholders contributed to the success of a special school curriculum. It was further revealed that teachers are passionate about their classroom activities which makes it easier to implement a special school curriculum.

The involvement of other stakeholders in special school curriculum delivery and its implementation concur with the utterance by Chaudhary (2015) who advocates that for successfully implementing the curriculum, the special schools should work together with other stakeholders that have a great influence on curriculum implementation. Chaudhary further adds that special schools should identify interest groups in the community that could influence the implementation of curricula.

5.4.2 Factors influencing failures in the implementation of special school curriculum

There are several failures that were reported by the participants associated with the execution of the special school curriculum. Without a doubt, lack of educational resources, insufficient workshops, lack of sufficient training and lack of curriculum advisors trained for special schools emerged as factors influencing failures in the implementation of special school curricula. These factors also emerged in **Theme 1** in **5.2**. This shows that the above-mentioned factors are of great concern and contributing to the impediment in the execution of special school curricula. In addition, physically challenged pupils coming from dysfunctional families and teachers who have negative attitudes towards visually impaired, hearing impaired, and physically impaired learners are causal to the failures in the execution of a special school curriculum.

5.4.2.1 Absence of parental participation in their children's education

The involvement of parents in the education of their children is critical. Ceka and Murati (2016) highlight that parents influence and shape their children's behaviour, discipline and good habits. Parental involvement in children's education leads to a positive learning environment. Parental involvement in education is one predictor of learners' success in their career. In the same manner, parental participation is fundamental for effective running of special schools. However, there are barriers for parental involvement in their children's education such as limited education, economic status, and lack of school policy, poor communication and teachers' attitude towards parents. Convincingly, the participants reported that there is an absence of parental involvement in their children's education. The participants cited that parents should help their children in school activities, checking their books and assisting them where assistance is needed. T7 expressed it by stating that:

"I think shortage of enough workshops. Furthermore, there is a serious lack of parental involvement in their children's education. That on its own is a great concern. You will agree with me that our current system of education encourages parental involvement in their children's education. However, my observation is that there is a serious lack of parental involvement in their children's education in our schools".

This finding is in line with Mtsweni's (2013) observation that parental involvement is vital for effectively running a special school. However, it should be noted that parental support in the education of learners extends beyond the school building. Moreover, parents are expected to motivate, finance extra classes for their children and help them in their daily school work activities.

5.4.2.2 Learners from dysfunctional families

Teachers and departmental heads reported that there are learners who come from dysfunctional family setups. According to them those are learners who are neglected, abused or rejected by their own family members. It was speculated that in such type of

family one or both parents might be suffering from a substance abuse, personality disorder, or mood disorder. Due to that fact, School C highlighted that some of those learners are too loose and they are exposed to several substances. This was aptly summarised by **DH5** who stated that:

“I have observed that dysfunctional family setup is contributing to all of these. My observation is that learners are too loose and they are exposed to a number of substances. Some are used by elders to be involved in the substance. To control them is very much difficult. Sometimes we refer them to in-house social worker and sometimes we refer them to rehabilitation centres where they can get help”.

The finding is in line with Paylo’s (2011) observation that a dysfunctional family is one where parents fail to exercise their leadership responsibility in a family. He further elaborates that the reasons for parents’ failure to assume leadership in a family include substance abuse, mental illness, youthfulness, marital discord, work-related fatigue, and lack of parenting skills. All these negatively affect the performance of learners in the school settings.

5.4.2.3 Teachers have negative attitudes towards visually impaired, hearing impaired and physically impaired learners

Teacher attitude towards learners contributes to the failure of the execution of a curriculum. Both teachers and departmental heads confirmed that there are teachers who have negative attitudes towards visually impaired, hearing impaired, and physically impaired learners. Without question, teachers’ attitudes towards pupils contribute to the success or failure of curriculum execution in the classroom settings. **DH3** emphatically expressed it well by stating that:

“What I observed is that teachers attend training conducted by DoE but they come back knowing nothing or without them knowing basic information. There are also learners who are struggling unable to read properly. I think some teachers are less committed to their work. I think it is because those teachers are sighted they don’t understand the visual impaired learners and how they feel. Some of the teachers

are negative and have negative attitude in terms of teaching visual impaired learners. Some of the learners are ignorant”.

This finding on teachers who have negative attitudes towards impaired learners concurs with that of Budginaité et al. (2016) who observed that some of the key implementers of the curriculum showed a negative attitude with regard to the execution of a special school curriculum.

5.4.2.4 Strategies to address the failures in the implementation of special school curriculum

The study revealed factors that are contributing to the failures in the execution of a special school curriculum. However, teachers and departmental heads identified strategies to address these failures. The departmental heads and teachers recommended that the Department of Education conduct extensive workshops and assign curriculum advisors to assist in special schools.

5.5 PART D: CHALLENGES FACED BY TEACHERS IN THE CLASSROOM SETTINGS

In this section, identified sub-themes and sub-categories are presented in **Table 15** and discussed below.

Table 15: Themes on challenges faced by teachers in the classroom settings

Sub-Themes	Sub-categories
Specific challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human, physical and resources challenges
Strategies to address specific challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intervention by the Department of Education • Involvement of different stakeholders • Collaborative approach • Departmental heads' roles

5.5.1 Specific challenges

The departmental heads and teachers identified specific challenges that are impediments for the execution of a special school curriculum. The identified challenges are human, physical and resource-related in nature.

The teachers and departmental heads highlighted specific challenges which include: insufficient teacher assistants, lack of support from curriculum advisors, lack of resources, failure to adhere to the teacher-pupil ratio of the DoE, failure of Grade 7 learners to cope in mainstream schools, provision of unreliable information on the assessment of learners to be placed in a special school, special school curriculum not clearly defined, no essential equipment to implement TOC, lack of learning materials especially for TOC, insufficient teaching materials for impaired learners, negative attitudes of community towards impaired learners.

Emerging from the responses, the major setback to effective implementation of special school curricula are human, physical and material resources. Without doubt, the importance of human resources such as enough teachers, curriculum advisors, and involvement of professionals cannot be overemphasised. However, respondents confirmed that their schools are running short of enough human resources to fully implement curricula as expected. **T2** expressed it well by stating that:

“Lack of resources/materials. We don’t have enough teachers or we have shortage of human resources especially teachers to teach special learners. We don’t have enough teaching aids. It is my opinion that learners here are not given opportunity to go for tour so that they can explore the outside world or the world work”.

In addition, the participants reported that special schools are running short of physical resources and material resources such as teaching and learning resources, lack of infrastructure to conduct the Technical Occupational Curriculum which has a direct impact

on the delivery of the curriculum. Furthermore, the participants argued that the current curriculum is not clearly defined.

The finding is also in line with the observation by Mandukwini (2016) who established that limited resources demotivated schools to implement special curricula effectively. Encouragingly though, the departmental heads and teachers have embraced the implementation of the special school curriculum despite the hardships they are encountering. More interestingly, the participants suggested strategies to address challenges encountered by teachers in special schools.

5.5.2 Strategies to address specific challenges

The departmental heads and teachers identified a number of strategies to deal with challenges reported in this study. According to the participants, most of the challenges must be addressed by the Department of Education.

5.5.2.1 Intervention by the DoE

It was reported that the DoE must play the following roles in terms of addressing the challenges identified: clearly define the special school curriculum, provide teaching resources relevant to TOC, capacitate special schools with sufficient teacher assistants, train curriculum advisors for special schools, capacitate special schools with professional support personnel, conduct sufficient workshops for all types of curricula, provide full support to special schools, adhere to the prescribed pupil-teacher ratio, train mainstream schools on sign language and how to use braille.

It emerged from the responses that the educational structure has a major role to execute in addressing most of the challenges experienced and identified by the participants in special schools. Therefore, the DoE must empower and develop departmental heads and teachers to effectively implement curricula. It was also recommended that the DoE should train curriculum specialists or advisors specifically for special schools. This finding is in

line with the observation by Igbokwe, Mezieobi and Eke (2014) who remarked that empowerment of teachers and other relevant stakeholders is paramount to effectively implement curricula in schools.

5.5.2.2 Involvement of different stakeholders

Teachers and departmental heads proposed that the special schools should adopt a multi-disciplinary approach. They recommended that NGOs, School-Based Support Teams, SAPS and local hospitals should play a major role in solving some of the challenges identified. According to them, this approach encourages special schools to work together with all relevant stakeholders. **DH4** suggested that:

“The DoE should address most of the problems I have identified above. Provision of professional will assist a lot to deal with most of the challenges discussed above. We need to employ multi-disciplinary approach where all stakeholders should come together and work hand in hand. We need to have support from the following stakeholders”.

There are many barriers identified in this study, however, the departmental heads and teachers proposed various strategies to address challenges identified.

5.5.2.3 Collaborative approach

The participants reported that collaboration is the best approach in solving challenges experienced by special school teachers. All the participants are aware that a collective effort of the SMT, Department of Education, Non-Governmental Organisation, SBST, and partnership with the South African Police Services and hospitals would play a major role to address challenges experienced by teachers in special schools. **DH1** expressed in the form of a recommendation that:

“I strongly feel that the SMT should address some of the challenges but some should be attended by the DoE. We can also outsource a person who is knowledgeable on learners with disabilities. My opinion is that there are various stakeholders who should play a role in addressing the challenges experienced by physical challenged learners. The School Management Team and teachers, different stakeholders, Department of Health, Civil Society, NGOs and churches can play a role in addressing challenges experienced by physical challenged learners”.

It became apparent from the interviews that teachers and departmental heads are aware that special schools cannot operate in silos in addressing challenges in the implementation of a curriculum. As demonstrated above, the departmental heads and teachers proposed that a collective effort is essential for the trouble-free running of special schools. Given that, the Department of Educations’ role cannot be overemphasised in the whole process. In addition, other stakeholders and special school curriculum advisors have a role to play in addressing challenges experienced by special schools in terms of implementing the curriculum. Alsubaie (2016) argues that the delivery and accomplishment of special school curricula depend on the involvement of internal and external stakeholders.

5.5.2.4 Departmental heads’ roles

All the departmental heads have a common understanding that they have a role to play in addressing challenges experienced in a special school. The departmental heads highlighted that they conduct workshops for teachers, refer learners to professionals, adapt curricula and methodology, conduct extra classes, provide more practical’s to learners, and allocate learners to bakery, hair and dressing salons. The DOE (2002:24) confirms that departmental heads must ensure that all the policies on the implementation of the curriculum are in place to effectively support the execution of the curriculum.

5.6 PART E: THEME 5: INTERVENTIONS THAT MAY ASSIST IN ADDRESSING OBSTACLES FACED BY TEACHERS

In this section, identified sub-themes and sub-categories are presented in **Table 16** and discussed below.

Table 16: Themes on interventions that may assist in addressing obstacles faced by teachers

Sub-Themes	Sub-categories
Additional support needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct extensive continuous teacher training workshops • Provision of enough teaching and learning resources • Tailor made infrastructure • Conduct educational campaign to the communities • Involvement of teachers in curriculum design and development • Provision of enough human resources • Provision of special school curriculum • Support from other stakeholders
Interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborative approach • Special school teachers to be involved in curriculum design and development • Forge relationship with hospitals

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The establishment of community forum • Providing sufficient equipment • Extensive training of teachers and curriculum advisors • Organise parental forum • Intervention and support structure to be put in place
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5.6.1 Additional support needed

In this section, the participants identified additional support needed to fully implement the curriculum. The additional support strategies proposed are as follows:

5.6.1.1 Conduct extensive continuous teacher training workshops

The teachers and departmental heads continuously reported from **Theme 1** to **Theme 4** that it is important for the DoE to continuously conduct extensive teacher training workshops. According to them this is critically important for the effective execution of curricula in special school settings. It emerged from the responses that teachers and departmental heads expect the Department of Education to conduct extensive continuous teacher training workshops.

This finding on conducting extensive teacher training workshops coincides with Sitthipon's (2013) observation that it is critical to empower teachers and to provide them with basic information to implement a curriculum effectively. In addition, Okongo, Ngao, Rop and Nyongesa (2015) share the same sentiment with Sitthipon that the DoE must continuously conduct workshops to adequately prepare teachers and curriculum advisors to effectively implement the curriculum.

5.6.1.2 Provision of enough teaching and learning resources

It was continuously reported from **Theme 1** to **Theme 4** that special schools need enough teaching and learning resources such as overhead projectors, sign language booklets and pamphlets with South African Language Terminology, DVDs for Sign Language, Sign Language Laboratory, more computers and wheelchairs, cubicles with computers, resources relevant to teaching CAPS in line with the Special Curriculum, enough and tailor-made infrastructure relevant to the Technical Occupational Curriculum and resources relevant to teaching the latter.

Therefore, in order to implement a curriculum effectively, the interviewees revealed that there should be provision of enough human resources by the DoE. This finding is in line with the observation of Mandukwini (2016) that the provision of human resources is crucial for the effective execution of a curriculum. Furthermore, the DoE (2000) endorsed that the provision of relevant resources ensures that the curriculum standards are not compromised.

5.6.1.3 Tailor made infrastructure

It was proposed that tailor made infrastructure is expected to support the execution of the Technical Occupational Curriculum. In addition, it was proposed that sponsors play a major role for schools to develop tailor made infrastructure. The participants reported that learners who completed the Technical Occupational Curriculum are self-employed and they are doing well in the society.

DH6 suggested that:

“It is important for the Department of Education to provide special school with tailor-made infrastructure relevant to Technical Occupational Curriculum”.

This finding agrees with the directive by the Department of Basic Education (2013) who endorsed that the TOC aims to prepare learners to be self-employed.

5.6.1.4 Conduct educational campaigns in communities

The participants proposed that educational campaigns should be conducted in the communities. According to them, an educational campaign is a way to draw attention to stakeholders that are not involved in supporting special schools. Teachers and departmental heads suggested that the campaign can take the form of inviting parents and the community in community halls to discuss issues that are affecting learners and teachers in special schools with the intention of proposing strategies to address the challenges.

5.6.1.5 Teachers' involvement in curriculum design and development

The participants reported that there is a need for them to be involved in curriculum design and development for special schools. Teachers and departmental heads claimed to have appropriate information and teaching methodology background that could help in curriculum development. It was also reported that curriculum advisors for special schools should be trained to support the execution of the curriculum. Furthermore, the provision of professionals was highlighted as an additional support necessary for the special schools to implement a curriculum successfully. **T5** recommended that:

“Curriculum developers should involve teachers in curriculum development especially for special school”. “Special school teachers should be involved in curriculum development”.

Teachers and departmental heads recommended that it is critical for them to be involved in curriculum design and development. There is no doubt, that teachers are the ones who best understand the learners, content and the methodology to be adopted in terms of implementing and achieving the developed curriculum. Teachers believe that an entire curriculum design can be developed around learners' interests.

5.6.1.6 Provision of enough human resources

It was reported throughout this study that there is a lack of sufficient human resources to effectively support the execution of a special school curriculum. Therefore, all departmental heads and teachers recommended that the DoE provide them with enough human resources such as teacher assistants who will be able to help learners. It was observed during the generation of data that special school learners demanded attention and closer observation and therefore teacher assistants can play a major role to attend to the identified gaps.

5.6.1.7 Provision of special school curriculum advisors

Teachers and departmental heads highlighted that their schools have no curriculum advisors specifically trained for special schools. Therefore, there is a huge gap because there are special school curriculum advisors who were specifically trained to provide services to special schools. **T5** proposed that:

“I think it is important for the DoE to capacitate our district and all the circuits with curriculum advisors who are trained to support special schools”.

This finding is contrary to Mbanjwa’s (2014) observation that the responsibility of the curriculum advisors is to help school principals, departmental heads and teachers to improve the implementation of special school curricula.

5.6.1.8 Support from other stakeholders

The participants indicated that participation of other role players in special school education is very critical. Emerging from the responses, special schools are expecting support from other stakeholders to achieve the mandate of special school learners. **T6** made a suggestion by stating that:

“We should forge relationship with different structures to support special school curriculum and capacitate Vhembe District all the circuits with curriculum advisors who are trained to support special schools”.

The participants mentioned that there is a need for the involvement of other role players in the running of special schools. This finding concurs with Mbanjwa (2014) who divulged that involvement of other stakeholders in special schools is critical as it contributes to the success of an organisation in fulfilling its mission and achieving intended results.

5.6.2 Interventions proposed for the effective implementation of the curriculum

It should be highlighted that the role of departmental heads and teachers remains influential in the success or failure of a curriculum. However, participants highlighted many challenges experienced by special schools in the execution of the special school curricula. Therefore, the departmental heads and teachers must learn how to proactively identify challenges or barriers and address them before learners fall behind. Equally important, effective classroom intervention strategies equip departmental heads and teachers with structured methods for identifying areas of weakness and helping learners increase academic ability. In general terms, classroom intervention is a set of steps departmental heads and teachers take to help learners improve in their area of need by eradicating educational barriers in and outside the school setting. In addition, interventions assist classroom teachers to identify the early signs of learning disabilities and identifying and removing obstacles that hinder a learner’s educational advancement. Therefore, the participants proposed several intervention strategies for the effective execution of the curriculum. Some of the proposed interventions are as follows:

5.6.2.1 Collaborative approach

Teachers and departmental heads reported that it is critical for all stakeholders to come together and work together and according to them this can be realised through a collaborative approach. It was further highlighted that a collaboration approach entails

teachers of special schools working together with other stakeholders as equals to assist learners to succeed in the execution of the special school education. Collaborative approach according to them can allow different role players to discuss the challenges experienced by special schools and propose recommendations to address them. **DH3** expressed it succinctly that:

“I think different stakeholders must work together to support the special schools. This collaboration between different stakeholders can add a lot of value in the provision of relevant materials, infrastructure and solving challenges about the special needs learners together”. “The DoE should provide continuous training. I think Civil Society, NGOs and parents should support the special schools. Working together I think it can make teachers’ job easier”.

Clearly, the participants endorsed that special schools should adopt a collaborative approach in terms of realising the mandate of special schools. This finding is in line with the observation by Sears, Peters, Beidler and Murawski (2021) who found that a collaboration approach is broadly recommended in special education for accomplishing a wide range of goals, including determining eligibility for services, delivering instruction, ensuring support through paraprofessionals, and resolving student and programmatic issues. Garcia-Melgar, Hyett, Badley, McKinstry, Spong and Lacono (2022) also observe that collaborative approach involves different stakeholders who play a major role in the execution of an all-encompassing education.

5.6.2.2 Special school teachers to be involved in curriculum design and development

All the participants strongly believe that if the Department of Education involves them in curriculum development, such curriculum would take into consideration the individual attention due to special school learners, language development suitable for learners, needs of learners and behavioural changes of learners. **T8** expressed that:

“They should involve special school teachers in the development of curriculum because they know exactly what are the limitations, challenges, what is working and what is not working in terms of teaching special needs learners. This is because they know what is working and what is not working in the classroom settings”.

DH5 recommended that:

“The DoE should adopt Bottom–Up Approach of developing curriculum could assist because they can share their classroom experiences and even to share with curriculum developers what is working and not working in special schools”.

Emerging from the responses it was clear that teachers and departmental heads are not involved in curriculum design and development. Mikser et al. (2016) confirm that when teachers are involved in curriculum development they can easily implement it because they would have a sense of ownership.

5.6.2.3 Forge relationship with local hospitals

The departmental heads and teachers suggested that it is paramount for special schools to forge a relationship with local hospitals. This was proposed because most of the special schools visited do not have nurses or doctors who could assist learners who need medical attention. Therefore, according to them, local hospitals could assist to address infirmities that special school learners could experience in the school settings. Teachers and departmental heads also suggested that this relationship could assist special schools to receive support services from professional personnel such as social workers, psychologists, and physiotherapists that currently do not exist in some of the special schools. **DH4** proposed that:

“Special school should forge relationship with local hospitals because our schools we do not have nurses and there are problems of infirmities that can be addressed

by hospital and the nurses. It is necessary to forge relationship or work together with other organisations such as SAPS, local hospitals”.

5.6.2.4 The establishment of community forums

It was reported that community forums should be established to identify problems that influenced learners to be absent from special school and to develop a strategy of addressing such a challenge. According to the participants, community forums should be organised with parents of physically challenged learners so that special schools can share with them how to assist learners while they are at home in terms of their homework etc.

5.6.2.5 Provision of sufficient resources

The shortage of relevant teaching and learning resources continuously emerged strongly in this study. The participants proposed that all special schools should be provided with sufficient teaching and learning resources. Moreover, schools need enough teaching and learning resources such as overhead projectors, sign language booklets and pamphlets with South African Language Terminology, DVDs for Sign Language, Sign Language Laboratory, more computers and wheelchairs, cubicles with computers, and resources relevant to teaching CAPS in line with the Special Curriculum, enough and tailor made infrastructure relevant to the Technical Occupational Curriculum and resources relevant to teaching the latter.

Emerging from the responses, special schools need sufficient materials and proper training to support the implementation of curricula. This finding is in line with Mafugu and Sanderson (2022) who emphasise that the success of a curriculum depends on sufficient materials, teaching and learning strategies and proper training.

5.6.2.6 Extensive training of teachers and curriculum advisors

It continuously emerged in this study that the departmental heads and teachers proposed that extensive training should be conducted for teachers and curriculum advisors for special schools. The participants suggested that it is critical for teachers and curriculum advisors to be trained to familiarise themselves with how teaching is conducted in special schools. The departmental heads and teachers suggested that it is equally critical for the DoE to conduct an extensive workshop to empower teachers to be competent in terms of implementing curricula in the school settings. Mafugu and Sanderson (2022) argue that curriculum advisors should be thoroughly trained to support special schools in terms of implementing curricula in schools.

5.6.2.7 Organise parental forum

According to the participants, it is critical for special schools to establish or organise parental forums for the learners who are attending special schools. According to them, several schools run parental forums to discuss the concerns and challenges that the schools are facing. This joint venture is critical to help parents to plan their children's homework, make them aware of drug and alcohol abuse, identify the effects of drugs and their dangers and how to talk to teens about it. Accordingly, the forums are useful because special school learners can be taught how to handle rejection and highlight what parents and learners need to know to avoid the emotional and psychological pitfalls of failing at their endeavours and relationships. The participants suggested that forums should be organised with parents of learners with disabilities and through these forums, participants can share ways of helping learners in terms of homework etc. **DH4** enthusiastically expressed that:

“Forums should be organised with parents of learners with disabilities so that we can share with them on how to assist them whilst they are at home in terms of their homework's etc.”

Đurišić and Bunijevac (2017) recognise the important role that a strong positive bond between homes and schools plays in the development and education of children. Lara and Saracosti (2019) are of the view that support from parents influences learners to be more engaged in their school work, stay in school longer, and achieve better learning outcomes.

5.6.2.8 Support from the Department of Social Development

The participants from Schools B to E highlighted that they have a challenge of absenteeism and absconders because those learners do not have money for transport to come to school. Therefore, the departmental heads and teachers suggested that the Department of Social Development could assist those learners by providing them with a social grant so that they can be able to finance their transport going to school.

5.6.2.9 Intervention and support structure to be put in place

The teachers and departmental heads recommended that an intervention and support structure must be established to support the execution of special school curricula. **DH3** made a suggestion by stating that:

“The intervention and support structure should be put in place to support specials category of learners. The intervention and support approaches should target the level of special categories of learners and may require a highly modified learning environment to meet their individual needs”.

This finding agrees with Okech, Yuwono and Abdu’s (2021) observation that an intervention and support structure is a set of strategies or approaches that can make a difference especially to challenges experienced in the implementation of a curriculum.

5.7 CONCLUSION

This chapter presented information generated from the participants. The findings were presented using the participants' verbatim transcripts. In addition, this chapter provided the discussion of the research findings which addressed the aim of this study. Equally important, the information on the implementation of a special school curriculum was discussed and explained to link the research questions proposed in this research. **Chapter 6** outlines findings, conclusions and recommendations of the study. The chapter also addresses the aim and research questions, limitations, intervention strategies that could assist in addressing obstacles faced by teachers, a proposed intervention model to boost the implementation of a special school curriculum, contribution of the study and suggestions for the future.

CHAPTER 6

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses limitations, findings, conclusions and provides recommendations on how special schools could improve the implementation of special school curricula.

6.2 DATA GENERATING SUB-QUESTIONS

This research concentrated on experiences of teachers in the execution of the special school curriculum and barriers learners face in Vhembe District. Data was generated from five special schools in Vhembe District, Limpopo Province. Behaviourism, cognitivism and constructivism were adopted as frameworks for the investigation. The research responds to the following sub-questions:

The responsibility of teachers in special school curricula:

- ✚ What type or form of curriculum are you implementing in your schools?
- ✚ Have you been trained to be able to implement the curriculum you have mentioned? Share with me your experience with regard to the training you have attended.
- ✚ What is your role in the implementation of a curriculum for learners who experience barriers to learning?
- ✚ What is your role in supporting teachers in the implementation of a curriculum for learners who experience barriers to learning?
- ✚ Do you think your role has been realised? If yes, how, if not, why not?
- ✚ Which factors do you consider necessary for the execution of a special school curriculum?

Teachers' understanding of barriers to learning in special school curricula:

- ✚ What do you think is meant by barriers to learning? What are some of the barriers to learning that are prevalent at your school?
- ✚ How do you deal with barriers to learning in your school?
- ✚ Who else should play a role in addressing the barriers to learning?

Understanding and point of view of teachers in the execution of a special curriculum and the barriers learners face:

- ✚ What would you consider as successes of the implementation of the curriculum for learners who experience barriers to learning in your school?
- ✚ What do you think has contributed to the successes of the implementation of the curriculum for learners who experience barriers to learning?
- ✚ What do you think were the failures of the implementation of the curriculum for learners who experience barriers to learning?
- ✚ What do you think has contributed to the failures of the implementation of the curriculum for learners who experience barriers to learning?
- ✚ What do you think should be done to address the failures?

Barriers faced by teachers in the execution of special school curricula:

- ✚ What are the specific challenges that you are encountering in the implementation of the curriculum for learners who experience barriers to learning?
- ✚ What do you think should be done to address the challenges you have mentioned?
- ✚ Who should address them? Why?

The interventions which may assist in addressing limitations:

- ✚ What additional support do you think the school needs to fully support the implementation of the curriculum for learners who experience barriers to learning?

- ✚ Are there interventions that you would like to propose for the effective implementation of the curriculum? If yes, share with me those intervention strategies.

The data generated were in line with the motivation of the research which was to examine experiences of teachers in the implementation of special curricula and barriers learners face in Vhembe District.

6.3 CONSTRAINTS OF RESEARCH

Even though the research managed to reveal some nuances with regard to the execution of special school curricula, it is vital to indicate that there are some limitations that need to be outlined. The study targeted special schools that are offering Social Sciences (Geography and History). However, only School A and School B meet the above-mentioned criteria and Schools C to E did not meet the criteria. Therefore, classroom observation was conducted in School A in Grade 5 and Grade 6 in the physically impaired category of learners. It should be stated that although School B meets the criteria no observation was conducted because the researcher was not familiar with braille that is used to teach visually impaired learners. It would have been beneficial to conduct classroom observation in Schools C to E, but unfortunately, those schools did not offer Social Sciences (Geography and History). The study's observation was conducted on History and Geography because of the researchers' background and knowledge of teaching methodology of the selected subjects. Furthermore, although no classroom observations were conducted in Schools B to E, the departmental heads for all selected schools in the Intermediate Phase and teachers who opted to participate in the study were interviewed.

In School A the departmental head for the physically impaired was targeted for interviews but it was discovered that the departmental head for the visually impaired and the departmental head for the hearing impaired learners also offer Social Science (Geography and History) in their section. The sample of schools was selected in the Vhembe District and as such, results are not generalisable to all the Intermediate Phase

special schools in Limpopo Province and Vhembe District Department of Education. The interviews conducted were limited to departmental heads and teachers only.

6.4 FINDINGS

Themes that were highlighted in **Chapter 4** informed the findings of the research. The themes include responsibility of teachers in the execution of a curriculum, the experiences of teachers in classroom settings, the teachers' and departmental heads' attitude and perceptions on the execution of the special school curriculum, barriers faced by teachers in classroom settings and interventions that may assist in addressing obstacles faced by teachers.

6.4.1 Responsibility of teachers and departmental heads

The research found that teachers differ in terms of their understanding of their roles. It became apparent that teachers are aware that their roles involve all aspects essential for proper execution of the curriculum. I discovered that the teachers' role involves preparing lessons, teaching, assessing learners, doing class administration and class management. This confirms Khalkhali et al.'s (2010) finding that the teachers' role is to teach by managing their own classrooms and teaching different learning areas or subjects of their specialisation.

On the other hand, the departmental heads provide a supportive role for teachers in the implementation of special school curricula. For example, these roles involve providing teaching and learning resources, training teachers, supervising, screening learners, encouraging teachers to implement the curriculum effectively and conducting classroom observation. This echoes Tapala's (2019) observation that the roles of departmental heads include training teachers, supervising the subordinates and encouraging teachers to execute special school curricula.

However, data generated show that there is no training for curriculum advisors to support teachers to teach visually impaired, hearing impaired and physically impaired learners. Emanating from the data, it becomes clear that there are many areas that should be addressed by educational structures in terms of capacitating teachers and departmental heads for the implementation of special school curricula. Areas that need to be addressed include conducting extensive training to capacitate departmental heads and teachers, providing sufficient facilities and relevant human resources.

6.4.2 Barriers of teachers in classroom settings

The study has shown that there are many barriers that are preventing learners to learn effectively in the classroom settings. Data generated revealed that these barriers include learners' condition, teachers and language issue. This is supported by Brandon (2006) who states that learners with impairment conditions are prevented from accessing effective learning opportunities. However, my site visits confirmed that there are strategies adopted by special schools in addressing barriers to learning. These include provision of extra classes, conducting workshops to train teachers to use braille, providing textbooks with visual aids or sign language as a way of supporting physically impaired learners, encouraging teachers to further their studies to effectively teach visually impaired, hearing impaired and physically impaired learners, to adjust their teaching method and divide learners according to their impairment, initiate reading and writing programmes, adjust classrooms accordingly and conduct continuous diagnosis of different categories of learners according to their educational needs.

It was clear from the data generated that special schools should work with other stakeholders to address the barriers that they are experiencing. This suggests that for the proper execution of special school curricula, different role players need to be involved in education for special needs learners.

6.4.3 The teachers' and departmental heads' attitude and perceptions on the success and failures in the implementation of special schools' curriculum

The study found that proper and effective implementation of special school education revolves around teachers' and departmental heads' perceptions. This research discovered that teachers' and departmental heads' attitude towards learners is critical for the successful execution of a curriculum. Without question, teachers' attitude towards learners contributes positively or negatively to the execution of a curriculum in the classroom settings. However, looking closely through interview responses, I found that some of the teachers and departmental heads have a negative attitude towards visually impaired, hearing impaired, and physically impaired students. The teachers' and departmental heads' comments confirmed that *"some of the learners are not fit and qualify to attend in special school"*. This shows that there are departmental heads and teachers who believe that there is nothing the special school can do to assist some of the special needs learners to learn effectively in a special school.

The research highlighted successes for the execution of curricula in special schools selected for this study such as the establishment of the SBST, boarding school to house learners, provision of extra-mural activities and introduction of reading and writing programmes. However, if one considers teachers' and departmental heads' comments, there are challenges that are hindering the implementation of the special school curriculum. The challenges range from insufficient workshops to insufficient training and lack of curriculum advisors trained for special schools. These factors contribute to failures in the implementation of special school curricula and to the inability of learners to read and write. This resonates with what Le Cordeur (2010) found when he states that it is important to identify and address reading challenges as early as possible in the early years of schooling.

6.4.4 Challenges faced by teachers in the classroom settings

The study reveals that the other major setback to effective implementation of special school curricula are human, physical and material resources. The study confirmed that schools are running short of enough human resources to fully implement the curriculum as expected. This confirms Mandukwini's (2016) observation that special school curricula are specifically related to shortage of teaching staff and unfilled teaching posts that are yet to be advertised and filled.

My observation is that even though there are challenges that hinder the implementation of special school curricula, the participants suggested various approaches to counter challenges reported in this study. These strategies involve the intervention by the Department of Education, involvement of different stakeholders and collaborative approach to be adopted by the special schools. Therefore, my study has shown that special schools cannot operate in silos in addressing challenges in the execution of curricula.

In addition, the study has shown that the departmental heads are playing a significant role in addressing challenges experienced in special schools. These roles range from conducting workshops for teachers to referring learners to professionals, adapting the curriculum, adjusting methodology, conducting extra classes, providing more practical's to learners and allocating learners to bakery, hair and dressing salons.

6.4.5 Interventions that may assist in addressing obstacles faced by teachers

The study has raised many obstacles that teachers are facing in the execution of special school curricula. Therefore, there is a need for additional support for teachers and departmental heads to fully implement special school curricula such as conducting extensive continuous teacher training workshops, provision of enough teaching and learning resources, tailor made infrastructure, conducting educational campaigns among

the communities, provision of enough human resources, provision of special school curriculum advisors and support from other stakeholders.

Most of the participants proposed a number of intervention strategies to be adopted for effective implementation of the special school curricula. I found that collaborative approach was identified as the best approach to combat barriers experienced in special schools. This echoes Saenz-Armstrong's (2021) observation on the role of collaboration as an effective tool that allows special school teachers, learning specialists, administrators, and other stakeholders to work together to realise the objectives of special school curricula.

The research proposed the involvement of special school teachers in curriculum design and development, the forging of relationships with local hospitals, establishing community forums, providing sufficient resources, arranging extensive training of teachers and curriculum advisors, and putting in place an intervention and support structure.

6.5 CONCLUSION

The following are the conclusions of the study:

- The roles of teachers and departmental heads varied in terms of implementing special school curricula. Teachers are responsible for preparing lessons, teaching, assessing learners, doing class administration and class management whereas the departmental heads play a supportive role for teachers in the implementation of special school curricula.
- There are successes in some of the schools in the implementation of special school curricula such as the introduction of School-Based Support Teams, boarding schools to house learners, provision of extra-mural activities and introduction of reading and writing programmes.
- The departmental heads take part in addressing challenges experienced by teachers by conducting workshops for teachers, referring learners to

professionals, adapting a curriculum, adjusting the methodology, conducting extra classes, providing more practical's to learners and allocating learners to bakery, hair and dressing salons.

- There are many barriers that prevent learners from learning effectively in the classroom settings. The major barrier is the failure by the Department of Education to conduct extensive training to thoroughly prepare departmental heads and teachers to effectively implement curricula in special school settings. Some of the barriers range from learners' condition to teachers and language issues.
- The research identified hindrances for the successful execution of special school curricula such as insufficient resources, insufficient workshops and learners who are unable to read and write.
- There is a lack of provision of special school curriculum advisors to support teachers and departmental heads in special school settings.
- In addition, other setbacks to effective execution of special school curricula are human, physical and material resources and all the schools visited are running short of enough human resources to fully implement curricula as expected.
- Failure of parent participation in special school education is a great concern and contributes to the impediment in the implementation of special school curricula. This is also exacerbated by learners who are from dysfunctional families where parents fail to exercise their leadership responsibility in a family.
- Collaborative approach is key in combating barriers that are hindering progress for special school curricula.

6.6 PROPOSED COMMENDATIONS

The following commendations are proposed:

- Educational structure should conduct comprehensive training to empower departmental heads and teachers in the implementation of the special schools' curricula. This can be done by involving educational stakeholders in training

departmental heads and teachers. Researchers, academics and educational experts can play a major role in conducting such training.

- Educational structure must make provision for sufficient facilities and resources to special schools. It should be noted that special schools cannot function well without basic resources to support the implementation of curricula. Therefore, adequate facilities and resources are prerequisites for the successful implementation of special school curricula.
- The DoE should train curriculum advisors specifically for special schools to support the implementation of special school curricula. This will assist the DoE to provide special schools with curriculum advisors that are knowledgeable about the implementation of special school curricula.
- Special schools should build a partnership with parents and develop mutual responsibility for special needs learners' success in the educational system. In this way, this will contribute to a positive impact on the successful implementation of curricula. Communal and collegial approach should be adopted to encourage parental involvement in special school education. Their involvement will assist in the identification of problems experienced by learners and teachers in the implementation of special school curricula.
- The DoE should involve teachers and departmental heads in curriculum development and design. The development and design of curricula should be special school centered. As a way of contributing to the process of developing the curriculum, departmental heads and teachers must provide first-hand information to inform curriculum development.
- Collaborative approach should be adopted as a key in combating barriers to the execution of special school curricula. Specifically, special schools should forge a relationship with local hospitals that could help special schools with medical services, social workers, psychologists, and physiotherapist support services that currently are not existing in most of the special schools.
- In addition, special schools may involve various stakeholders in addressing the challenges experienced by physically challenged learners such as the School Management Team and Teachers, Department of Health, Civil Society, NGOs,

DoE, Department of Health, SASSA, Professional Support Staff, SGB, Parents, SAPS, School-Based Support Team, Community members and churches. They can all play a role in addressing challenges experienced by physically challenged learners. This can be done by establishing School-Based Forums that should involve other relevant stakeholders to assist in the implementation of special school curricula.

- All special schools may be encouraged and be motivated to establish a SBST. The SBST should help to train teachers and solve problems that teachers and learners experience in their schools.
- Special schools may be encouraged to establish reading and writing programmes. The special schools can adopt the approach employed by School A whereby a reading and writing programme was established and managed by the Foundation Phase teachers. The schools must involve learners in the programme to improve their reading and writing skills.
- The DoE should forge a relationship with SAPS, Social Development, Community, Churches, Business Sectors, and Civil Society. These structures should work together to assist special schools in their challenges.

6.7 PROPOSED CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION MODEL

Due to challenges and gaps identified in this study, a Curriculum Implementation Model for Special Schools was developed. The model explains the role of special schools in providing first-hand information to inform the development and design of a curriculum. In addition, the Educational Stakeholders' role is defined. Moreover, the model proposes that the designed curriculum should be piloted and reviewed after three years. The model also proposes the strategy of ongoing training of teachers, school-based collaboration, involvement of professional services and collaboration of special schools with other stakeholders.

Curriculum Implementation Model For Special School (CIMFSS)

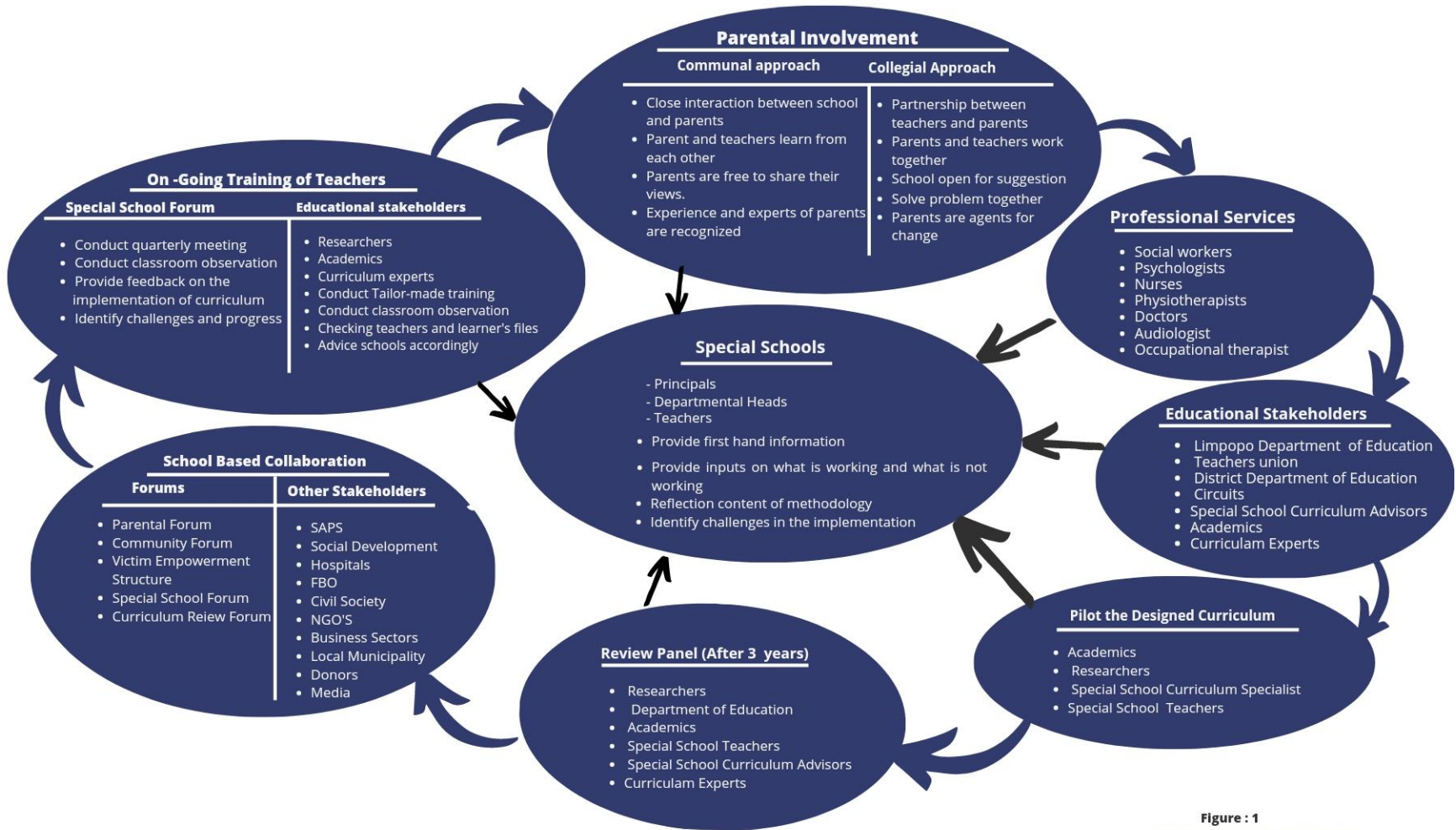


Figure : 1
Bottom Up Approach of Curriculum Implementation for Special School

Figure 1: Curriculum implementation model for special schools

The study developed a Curriculum Implementation Model for Special Schools as presented in **Figure 1**. The model promotes the Bottom-Up Approach for the development and implementation of a special school curriculum. Curriculum specialists are aware that a curriculum remains the tool for regulating educational efforts all over the world. Therefore, it is critical to make sure that beneficiaries of the curriculum should be involved in curriculum implementation. The special schools are expected to share or provide first-hand information on curriculum development. In the same manner, the special school provides input on what is working and what is not working in terms of the curriculum implemented in their schools. Moreover, the special schools reflect the methodology of teaching special school learners. Thereafter, the curriculum implementation model encourages special schools to identify challenges experienced in school settings. This model encourages teachers to own their curriculum and its implementation.

In addition, the Curriculum Implementation Model for Special Schools proposes that key educational stakeholders should consider information submitted by the special school when developing a special school curriculum. The educational stakeholders should be composed of the Teachers Union, Circuits, Special School Curriculum Advisors, and curriculum experts. This Curriculum Implementation Model considers information from key stakeholders in terms of developing such a curriculum. This suggests that special school principals, departmental heads, and teachers should be at the center of developing the special school curriculum. After the development of the curriculum, the Curriculum Implementation Model proposes that it should be piloted by academics, researchers, special school curriculum specialists, and special school teachers. Thereafter, the curriculum should be implemented. The model also proposes that the curriculum should be reviewed after three years by the review panel which should be composed of researchers, academics, special school teachers, special school curriculum advisors, and curriculum experts.

Furthermore, the key stakeholders should provide inputs on the content and methodology that is relevant and suitable for special school learners, and identify challenges and progress in terms of the curriculum they are implementing currently. In the proposed

model, professional services, curriculum experts, and special school curriculum developers must be involved in terms of developing the curriculum together with special school teachers. Thereafter, the review panel composed of the Department of Education, researchers, teachers, and academics should work together to implement the findings based on the pilot study results. Consequently, special school teachers should implement the designed curriculum.

Research showed failure of parent participation in curriculum execution of special schools. Therefore, the model proposes a communal and collegial approach as two approaches for involving parents in curriculum implementation of special schools. Of equal importance, the communal approach encourages close interaction between school and parents. In addition, it values the idea that teachers and parents can learn from each other. Furthermore, the approach allows parents to share their views in the school. Moreover, the experience and expertise of parents are recognised and valued. Comparatively, the communal approach encourages teachers and parents to be partners in special school education. This approach emphasises that parents and teachers should work together and that suggestions of parents should be considered in the school. Interestingly, this approach encourages teachers and parents to solve problems together and parents are regarded as agents of change.

The study discovered that teachers and departmental heads received insufficient training. Therefore, it is important to have ongoing training of teachers for the successful implementation of special school curricula. In this model, special school forums and educational stakeholders play an important role. The special school forum is expected to conduct a quarterly meeting, conduct classroom observation, provide feedback on the execution of the curriculum and identify barriers in the execution of the curriculum. However, educational stakeholders shall be expected to conduct tailor made training, conduct classroom observation, check the files of the learners, and advise schools accordingly. The educational stakeholders shall be composed of researchers, academics, universities and curriculum experts.

The study revealed that there is a serious shortage of professional services to support special school teachers and departmental heads. This model proposes the involvement of social workers, psychologists, nurses, physiotherapists, doctors, audiologists, and occupational therapists in supporting the execution of special school curricula. This should help them to have a better understanding of special school curriculum dynamics when assessing learners. The study revealed the lack of teamwork between special schools with other key stakeholders. The model suggests that parental forums, community forums, victim empowerment structures, special school forums, and curriculum review forums should be established for the smooth running of special schools. The Curriculum Implementation model also encourages the SAPS, Social Development, Hospitals, FBO, Civil Society, NGOs, Business Sectors, Local Municipality, Donors, and media to participate in supporting special needs education.

6.8 CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY

The research proposed intervention strategies to address barriers learners face in Vhembe District, Limpopo Province. This was done by looking at the role of teachers in classroom settings, experiences of teachers in classroom settings, the teachers' attitudes and perceptions on the implementation of curricula, barriers faced by teachers in classroom settings, and interventions that may assist in addressing obstacles faced by teachers.

The study indicates that departmental heads and teachers are implementing curricula in their schools. However, there are limitations and barriers associated with the execution of such curricula. It is very interesting to discover in this study that many proposals were recommended to combat barriers of learning in the school settings. The research provided an overview of the status in Schools A to E in terms of implementing the curriculum. Another contribution to this research is that a detailed intervention in the form of a Curriculum Implementation Model was developed for addressing obstacles faced by teachers.

6.9 SUGGESTIONS FOR FORTHCOMING INVESTIGATION

Based on conclusions of the research, I recommend that further comprehensive studies be conducted for Intermediate Phase in Limpopo Province special schools. This would be helpful to extend the study to include the experiences of other departmental heads and teachers in various circuits and districts in the Limpopo Department of Education. A survey study can also be conducted on the implementation of special schools' curricula.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Limpopo Department of Education Approval and Ethical Clearance

CONFIDENTIAL



TO: DR MC MAKOLA

FROM: DR T MABILA

**CHAIRPERSON: LIMPOPO PROVINCIAL RESEARCH COMMITTEE (LPRC) ONLINE
REVIEW DATE: 10th - 17th FEBRUARY 2022
SUBJECT: EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
SPECIAL SCHOOLS CURRICULUM AND BARRIERS LEARNERS FACE IN VHEMBE
DISTRICT, LIMPOPO PROVINCE: TOWARDS AN INTERVENTION STRATEGY**

RESEARCHER: MATHONI TJ

Dear Colleague

The above researcher's research proposal served at the Limpopo Provincial Research Committee (LPRC). The committee is satisfied with the ethical soundness of the proposed study.

Decision: The revised research proposal is granted full approval and ethical clearance

Regards

Acting Chairperson: Dr T Mabila

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "T. Mabila", is written below the name of the Acting Chairperson.

Secretariat: Ms J Mokobi

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "J. Mokobi", is written below the name of the Secretariat.

Date: 28/02/2022

APPENDIX B: Letter for permission to conduct research from LDoE



Letter from
LDoE_Appendix B.doc

APPENDIX C: Turfloop Research Committee Ethics Clearance Certificate



Ethics
clearance_Appendix

APPENDIX D: Semi-Structured Interview for the Departmental Heads

1. Range

18-21	26-35	36-45	46-55	56-65	Above 65
1	2	3	4	5	6

2. Racial Group

Black	White	Coloured	Indian	Other (Specify
1	2	3	4

3. Designation

DH	1
Senior Teacher	2
Teacher	3

4. Professional qualification

None	Certificate in SNE	Diploma in SEN	Degree in SEN	Med in SEN	Other (Specify)
1	2	3	4	5	6

OBJECTIVE 1: Responsibility of teachers and departmental heads

- ✚ What type or form of curriculum are you implementing in your schools?
- ✚ Have you been trained to be able to implement the curriculum you have mentioned? Share with me your experience with regard to the training you have attended.
- ✚ What is your role in supporting teachers in the implementation of curriculum for learners who experience barriers to learning?
- ✚ Do you think your role has been realised? If yes, how, if not, why not?
- ✚ What are factors that you consider necessary for teachers to effectively implement curriculum for learners who experience barriers to learning?

OBJECTIVE 2: Barriers that teachers face in the classroom settings

- ✚ What do you think is meant by barriers to learning? What are some of the barriers to learning that are prevalent at your school?
- ✚ How do you deal with barriers to learning in your school?
- ✚ Who else should play a role in addressing the barriers to learning?

OBJECTIVE 3: The Departmental head's attitudes and perceptions on success and failures in the implementation of special school curriculum

- ✚ What would you consider as successes of the implementation of curriculum for learners who experience barriers to learning in your school?
- ✚ What do you think has contributed to the successes of the implementation of curriculum for learners who experience barriers to learning?
- ✚ What do you think were the failures of the implementation of curriculum for learners who experience barriers to learning?
- ✚ What do you think has contributed to the failures of the implementation of curriculum for learners who experience barriers to learning?
- ✚ What do you think should be done to address the failures?

OBJECTIVE 4: Challenges that teachers faced in classroom settings

- ✚ What are the specific challenges that you think teachers are encountering in the implementation of curriculum for learners who experience barriers to learning?
- ✚ What do you think should be done to address the challenges you have mentioned?
- ✚ Who should address them? Why?

OBJECTIVE 5: Interventions that may assist in addressing obstacles faced by teachers

- ✚ What additional support do you think the school needs to fully support the implementation of curriculum of learners who experience barriers to learning?
- ✚ Are there interventions that you would like to propose for the effective implementation of the curriculum? If yes, share with me those intervention strategies.

APPENDIX E: Semi-Structured Interviews for Teachers

1. Range

18-21	26-35	36-45	46-55	56-65	Above 65
1	2	3	4	5	6

2. Racial Group

Black	White	Coloured	Indian	Other (Specify
1	2	3	4

3. Designation

Deputy Head	1
Senior Teacher	2
Teacher	3

4. Professional qualification

None	Certificate in SEN	Diploma in SEN	Degree in SEN	Med in SEN	Other (Specify)
1	2	3	4	5	6

OBJECTIVE 1: The responsibility of teachers

- ✚ What type or form of curriculum are you implementing in your schools?
- ✚ Have you been trained to be able to execute special school curriculum? Share with me your experience with regard to the training you have attended.
- ✚ Do you have any experience for the execution of special school curriculum? If yes share your experience.
- ✚ What is your role in the implementation of special school curriculum for learners who experience barriers to learning?
- ✚ Do you think your role has been realised? If yes, how, if not, why not?
- ✚ Which factors do you consider necessary for effective implementation of curriculum for learners who experience barriers to learning?

OBJECTIVE 2: Barriers that teachers face in the classroom settings

- ✚ What do you think is meant by barriers to learning? What are some of the barriers to learning that are prevalent at your school?
- ✚ How do you deal with barriers to learning in your teaching?

OBJECTIVE 3: The teachers' attitudes and perceptions on success and failures in the implementation of special school curriculum

- ✚ What would you consider as successes of the implementation of curriculum for learners who experience barriers to learning?
- ✚ What do you think has contributed to the successes of the implementation of curriculum for learners who experience barriers to learning?
- ✚ What do you think were the failures of the implementation of curriculum for learners who experience barriers to learning?
- ✚ What do you think contributed to the failures of the implementation of curriculum for learners who experience barriers to learning?
- ✚ What do you think should be done to address the failures?

OBJECTIVE 4: Challenges that teachers face in classroom settings

- ✚ What are the specific challenges that you are encountering in the implementation of curriculum for learners who experience barriers to learning?
- ✚ What do you think should be done to address the challenges you have mentioned?
- ✚ Who should address them? Why?

OBJECTIVE 5: Interventions that may assist in addressing obstacles

- ✚ What additional support do you think the school needs to fully support the implementation of curriculum?

✚ Are there interventions that you would like to propose for the effective implementation of the special school curriculum? If yes, share with me those intervention strategies.

APPENDIX F: Class Observation Schedule for Grade 4 to 6

The observer checked the following attributes in the classroom settings. The main idea was to observe how teachers interact with learners in the inclusive classroom settings.

Observation details

School

Grade

Date

Term

Duration.....

Skills.....

Topic.....

Content.....

Resources.....

Inclusivity.....

Explanation of terminology.....

Beginning knowledge.....

Teacher's activities	Learner's activities	Resources	Teaching methods	Assessment	Expanded opportunities

APPENDIX G: School Profile Instrument

1. Name of the School.....
2. Number of teachers in the school.....
3. Gender: Male.....Female.....
4. Location of the school: Rural, Urban, Township, Semi-Rural Area
5. The vision.....
6. The mission of the school.....
7. Total number of learners.....
8. Gender: Male..... Female.....
9. Total enrolment of learners in the school in
2018.....2019.....2020.....2021.....2022.....
10. Gender: Male..... Female..... (2022 only)
11. Teacher Pupil Ratio.....
12. Discipline in the school
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.....
13. List of policies and implementation documents that are available for inclusive education or special school curriculum
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The researcher would check next to the resources that are currently present in the school and cross accordingly.

A. Professional Support for SEN

Resources	Yes	No
1. Guidance and counselling Specialist		
2. Psychologists		
3. Sign language interpreters		
4. Braille and Orientation mobility instructors		
5. Occupational Therapists, Speech and Language; Audiologists, Music and Physiotherapists		
6. Social workers		
7. Nursing Personnel		
8. Rehabilitation workers		
9. Child and youth care workers		

B. Speech and Hearing Impairment

Resources	Yes	No
1. Sound discrimination toys (loud to refined)		
2. Group hearing aids		
3. Individual hearing aids		
4. Audiometer with all accessories		
5. Speech trainer with all accessories		
6. Charts slides on sign language		
7. Manual alphabet		
8. Model of speech and hearing mechanism		
9. Slides, charts on defects/deformities of speech and hearing impairments		

C. Visual Impairment

Resources	Yes	No
1. Braille alphabet English/Any other regional language		
2. Snellen charts required for eye check-ups		
3. Braille kit including abacus, stylus slate, taylor made frame, etc. embossed tape rubber sheets, push pins		
4. Mobility cane, blind folder		
5. Charts on mobility skills		

6. Magnifying glasses plastic-based focusable, cylindrical magnifier, hand magnifiers, rectangular readers, etc.		
7. Talking books		
8. Touch and audio learning material		
9. Typewriter with Braille marker		
10. Thermoform machines		

D. Learning Disability

Resources	Yes	No
1. Tests used for assessment		
2. Charts/Slides on basic areas of learning disability- perceptual, reading, writing, arithmetic, listening and comprehension		
3. Charts/Slides on mistakes done by children		
4. Toys, games, any other material used for correction of these problems		
5. Sand trays		

E. Outside of classroom to support learners

Resources	Yes	No
1. Assembly		
2. Extra-curricular activities		
3. Recreational activities		
4. Camps and excursions		
5. Outside School Hours Care		

F. Equipment to support students to access areas of the school that may have been previously inaccessible to them, such as

Resources	Yes	No
1. The school library		
2. The school canteen/tuckshop		
3. Bathrooms and changing rooms		
4. Indoor and outdoor sport facilities		
5. Indoor and outdoor playgrounds		

APPENDIX H: Participation Consent Form

I, Mr Mathoni Tsumbedzo, am conducting research on “Experiences of teachers in the implementation of the special school curriculum and barriers learners face in Vhembe District, Limpopo Province: Towards an intervention strategy”. The aim of the research is to investigate experiences of teachers with regard to the implementation of special school curricula and barriers learners face in Vhembe District special schools. The study is targeted at interviewing and observing teachers who are teaching in special schools. The study also aims to interview Intermediate Phase departmental heads who are providing support to the implementation of special curricula. I am inviting you to take part in a research study. The study entails the following:

1. The study is qualitative in nature and Grade 04 to 06 teachers will be interviewed. Furthermore, classroom observation will be conducted in Grade 04 to 06 classes whilst the teacher will be teaching Human Sciences.
2. Interviews with Grade 04 to 06 teachers will be conducted before or after school. Interviews and classroom observation will be conducted from **05 April to 06 May 2022**. However, the proposed dates can be adjusted depending on the availability of the targeted teachers and the Heads of Departments.
3. The interviews to be conducted will last for **30-45** minutes and classroom observation will be determined by the length of the lesson as prescribed by the Department of Education.

Participation in the research is completely voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the research (without providing any reasons) at any time. You are encouraged to ask any questions that you might have in connection with this research at any stage. The researcher will gladly answer your question. The researcher will also discuss the research in detail with you.

I agree to take part in the study “Experiences of teachers in the implementation of the special school curriculum and barriers learners face in Vhembe District, Limpopo

Province: Towards an intervention strategy". I have been briefed about the research. I voluntarily take part in interviews and classroom observation. If you have any inquiry about this study you can contact Prof Mabasa my supervisor on 0822005218.

Signature:.....

Date.....Year.....

Thank you for reading the consent form and participating in this study.

APPENDIX I: Teachers' and Departmental Heads' Transcripts

Theme 1: The role of teachers and departmental heads in the implementation of the special school curriculum

Table 17: Teachers' responses on type of curriculum implemented in special schools

T1 to T9	Response
T1	We are implementing SID (Severe Intellectual Disabilities) Curriculum, which is also called Differentiated CAPS which is based on mainstream CAPS but adopted for special needs learners according to different ability of learners in the classroom. I am implementing National Statement Curriculum.
T2	We are implementing mainstream curriculum called National Curriculum Statement but adopted for special needs learners according to different ability of learners in the classroom. I am implementing National Statement Curriculum.
T3	I am currently implementing National Curriculum Statement Curriculum. This is the same curriculum which is offered in mainstream schools. I am teaching physical disabled learners but curriculum is the same as the one on mainstream schools. The strategy that one must adopt is to give learners more time to learn so that they can catch up with those other learners. Fortunately, our school has a boarding where is housing learners. Therefore, as teachers we have the opportunity to provide extra classes.
T4	I am currently implementing National Curriculum Statement Curriculum. This is the same curriculum which is offered in mainstream schools. I am implementing SID (Severe Intellectual Disabilities) Curriculum, which is also called Differentiated CAPS which is based on mainstream school CAPS but adopted for special needs learners according to different ability of learners in the classroom. According to my understanding there are three types of curriculum that we are implementing namely SID (Severe Intellectual Disabilities Curriculum), LSPID (Learners with Severe to Profound Intellectual Disability), and CAPS.
T5 and T6	We are implementing SID (Severe Intellectual Disabilities) Curriculum, which is also called Differentiated CAPS which is based on mainstream CAPS but adopted for special needs learners according to different ability of learners in the classroom. According to my understanding there are four types of curriculum that we are implementing namely SID (Severe Intellectual

	Disabilities Curriculum), LSPID (Learners with Severe to Profound Intellectual Disability), TOC and CAPS.
T7	I am implementing DECAPS which is adopted for special needs learners according to different ability of learners in the classroom. According to my understanding there are four types of curriculum that we are implementing namely SID (Severe Intellectual Disabilities Curriculum), LSPID (Learners with Severe to Profound Intellectual Disability), TOC and DECAPS.
T8 and T9	In this school we are implementing SID (Severe Intellectual Disabilities) Curriculum, which is also called Differentiated Curriculum which is based on mainstream CAPS. According to our understanding there are four types of curriculum that we are implementing namely SID (Severe Intellectual Disabilities Curriculum), LSPID (Learners with Severe to Profound Intellectual Disability), TOC and Differentiated Curriculum.

Table 18: Departmental heads' responses on type of curriculum implemented in special schools

DH	Response
DH1	We are implementing CAPS which is based on mainstream CAPS. There is no different between us and the mainstream school. The only different is that we accommodate physical impaired learners but the curriculum is the same. In this type of curriculum, a good relationship between learners and teachers is very much important.
DH2	We are implementing CAPS which is based on mainstream CAPS. There is no different between us and the mainstream school. The only different is that we accommodate physical impaired learners but the curriculum is the same. In this type of curriculum, a good relationship between learners and teachers is very much important.
DH3	We are implementing CAPS which is based on mainstream schools. There is no different between us and the mainstream school. The only different is that we accommodate visually impaired learners but the curriculum is the same.
DH4	We are implementing SID (Severe Intellectual Disabilities) Curriculum, which is also called Differentiated CAPS which is based on mainstream CAPS but adopted for special needs learners according to different ability of learners in the classroom. All these curricula are meant to accommodate physical impaired learners.

DH5	Here we are implementing Technical Occupational Curriculum. This is provided to the special needs learners especially those who do not do well in mainstream schools.
DH6	We have three types of curriculum that we are implementing in this schools. We have DECAPS, Technical Occupational Curriculum and LSPID Curriculum.
DH7	Here we are implementing Technical Occupational Curriculum, LSPID and Differentiated Curriculum. Those who attend TOC and the cut off age is 25. We even push up until 25 years. This group is composed of those who are unable to read and write.

Table 19: Teachers' responses on type of training received

T1 to T9	Response
T1	Yes, I have attended training on CAPS for two weeks however the training was not sufficient to prepare teachers to implement curriculum effectively.
T2	I have attended workshop for a week. It should be stated that the training was not sufficient to prepare teachers to implement curriculum effectively. I think the DoE should continuously conduct workshops so that teachers can learn more and familiarise themselves with what is expected of them.
T3	I have been trained on how to implement NCS curriculum where all teachers including those from mainstream schools also attended. It is not like there was training conducted for special school teachers only.
T4	I did not receive any training and I don't have any background in the implementation of National Curriculum Statement Curriculum.
T5 and T6	Yes, I was trained to teach for SID, LSPID, and CAPS. The training was insufficient. Was trained for SID, LSPID, TOC and CAPS. I was also a facilitator of TOC whereby I was training other teachers. I was also trained to deal with LSPID and to deal with integrated class. I also have the opportunity to teach in Grade 6, 7, 8, 9 in the mainstream schools.
T7	Was trained to teach CAPS. I started teaching in mainstream school and that is the advantage. The challenge here is to teach multi grade classes. I was teaching grade 1, 2, 3 and 4 in the same class which was a challenge. Therefore, I divided the class into two blocks which is 1, 2, 3 and 4. I also divide the board for grade 1, 2, 3, and 4. Thereafter, I separate the preparation according to the CAPS and I presented the same topic.
T8 and T9	Yes, we have attended training but it was not sufficient to properly prepare learners to implement curriculum more effectively. There

	is a need for extensive training to be conducted to prepare teachers thoroughly
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Table 20: Departmental heads' responses on training received

DH	Response
DH1	In 2013 /2014 I have attended workshop in Cape Town where we were trained to teach and handle physical challenged learners. It should be indicated that we were taught that physical challenged learners cannot sit for the whole day in other words we have to move them around as a way of accommodating their disabilities. In the training it was indicated that teachers should be able to use flexible methodology and differentiated curriculum as a way of addressing the needs of the learners who are physical challenged. I also make sure that we share challenges with teachers and discuss strategies of dealing with the challenges. I was also trained in Pretoria for AAC which is Alteration and Adjustment Certificate which is aimed to equip special school teacher to know exactly how to handle learners who are physical challenged.
DH2	I have been trained to use sign language. I was also trained by Mass Tech in terms of using sign language. However, there are no DoE workshop conducted for Deaf. It is challenging because we don't have Curriculum Advisors who have been trained by the DoE on dealing with Deaf learners and how to use sign language. Some of the teachers lack knowledge on how to use sign language.
DH3	I have been trained to use teach as I have discussed before. I am different committees that are aiming to empower teachers on how best they can teach visually impaired learners.
DH4	I have been trained to use teach as I have discussed before. I am different committees that are aiming to empower teachers on how best they can teach visually impaired learners.
DH5	Limpopo Department of Education trained us on LSPID. In addition, also have a certificate of inclusive education. The DoE trained us on how to support special schools. We also conduct meetings quarterly to share information on inclusive education. Yes, I have been trained to be able to implement the curriculum for learners having intellectual impairment. Our school caters for learners with intellectual disabilities both mild and severe who has different level of competency/severity. They have been identified as having special Learning Disabilities and they are not coping with normal curriculum from mainstream schools.

DH6	I was trained for the implementation of special school curriculum. Yes, the kind of training was insufficient. It was just an introductory course that I have attended. The training was not comprehensive. It is a four-year curriculum course. We were trained in the first year one week, and in the second year, one week and in the third year one week and in the fourth year one week. Therefore, the training was not sufficient at all specially to prepare departmental heads to assist the teachers in the implementation of TOC. However, learners need to be certificated after they are done with this type of curriculum.
DH7	I was trained to implement curriculum for special needs learners but the kind of training was insufficient. I have attended workshops prepared by DoE.

Table 21: Teachers’ responses on their experience

T1 to T9	Response
T1	I have experience of teaching the curriculum discussed earlier on. However, as I said before the training was not sufficient. These learners’ visually impaired learners are easy to teach them. However, you need to have small and manageable group. The class ratio is supposed to be 1.7 or 1.8 but currently I have 14 learners in my class. The class is already overcrowded. However, I conduct extra classes to catch up with the learners. I am a hostel manager and reside with learners therefore it is possible to conduct extra classes and to offer more lesson on Saturday.
T2	I have no experience. We were trained for 1-month course for a sign language. Mass Tech trained us on how to use sign language. However, the training was not sufficient for teachers. It was not thorough training. It was not an advanced course that was conducted.
T3	Yes, I have experience of teaching in special school. I have been teaching for 17 years and the experience that I have gathered is helping learners a lot.
T4	Yes, I can say I have experience through teaching NCS although I was not trained. Yes, I have experience with regards to the implementation of special school curriculum because I have been teaching Grade 4 to 6 Social Sciences for 6 years. I know how to adapt with the content and I am able to use braille. Those who cannot use braille I read for them.

T5 and T6	Teacher 5 and 6 indicated that they have experience of teaching all the curriculum identified because they were trained and they explained in detail in question 1.
T7	I have the experience in the implementation of curriculum in special school. Since I started teaching in specials school and I have gathered a lot of experience.
T8 and T9	I joined this school in 2018. I have five years' experience teaching DECAPS therefore I have experience to teach this category of learners. However, I have observed that this curriculum is at a lowest level compared to the curriculum that I was teaching in Secondary School. This learners need more practicals than theory. They need 80% of practicals and 20% of theory. In this school you deal with differentiated learners and group work is essential to this category of learners.

Table 22: Departmental heads' responses on their experience

DH	Response
DH1	Yes, based on the training attended and teaching experience.
DH2	Yes, I have attended training on the implementation of special school curriculum.
DH3	Yes, I have attended training on the implementation of special school curriculum.
DH4	For this question I can say a bit of experience since I have attended a workshop for severe Intellectual Disabilities Curriculum. My role is to support teachers who are implementing SID Curriculum but focusing on CAPS. Group learners or place learners according to their chronological and developmental age group for their level of functionality or ability, which help us to assess them as per individual. My role also is to implement special school curriculum for learners who experience barriers to learning by doing the following: Use the language they are comfortable with; Use participatory approach in teaching and learning; Follow the subject statement offered to our school; and Use concrete objects.
DH5	Yes, I have attended training on the implementation of special school curriculum.
DH6	Yes, I have attended training on the implementation of special school curriculum.
DH7	Yes, I have attended training on the implementation of special school curriculum.

Table 23: Teachers' responses on their role

T1 to T9	Response
T1	<p>My role is to teach learners and to make sure that they should pass. It is my responsibility to make sure that learners should understand the content. However, in grade 6 we have 2 learners who are totally blind. I strongly feel that question paper for this category of learners should be adopted to differentiate. I also assess the learners. Another challenge is that question paper for examination come the morning and this is a normal question that are not in line with special school, therefore we apply differentiated curriculum. Teaching totally blind learners is a challenge.</p>
T2	<p>My role is to teach learners, mark registers, fill in the period register, set exam and test, compile memorandum for the test, conduct examination and assessment, conduct assessment, hold sign language classes, manage learners, look after learners. In addition, every Wednesday we have the sign language classes that we conduct in our school.</p>
T3	<p>My role is to teach and introduce lesson to all the learners. It is also my responsibility to make sure that learners participate in classroom activities. It is also my responsibility to assess learners accordingly. It is my responsibility to manage the classroom. Organise attendance register, keep the incidents book, keep record book, planning, grouping learners accordingly. Conduct assessment. Instil discipline in the classroom.</p>
T4	<p>My role is to teach and introduce lesson to all the learners. It is also my responsibility to make sure that learners participate in classroom activities. It is also my responsibility to assess learners accordingly. It is my responsibility to manage the classroom. Organise attendance register, keep the incidents book, keep record book, planning, grouping learners accordingly.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct assessment • Instil discipline in the classroom • To be close to the learners • To be passionate about teaching • Teach learners and guide them
T5 and T6	<p>My role is to teach and introduce lesson to all the learners. It is also my responsibility to assess prior knowledge in order to group learners accordingly. I also engage learners in the classroom groups. All this is done so that they can progress to the next grade. It is my task to administer continuous assessment for the learners. I also conduct observation assessment for all the learners. I administer oral questions and encourage learners to read and write. My role is also following:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adapt the content • Adjust with special school curriculum • Plan and identify challenges with learners • To check the progress of the learners • Organise attendance register • Keep the incidents book, keep record book, planning, grouping learners accordingly • Conduct assessment • Instil discipline in the classroom
T7	My role is to teach and introduce lesson to all the learners. It is also my responsibility to assess prior knowledge in order to group learners accordingly. I also engage learners in the classroom groups. All this is done so that they can progress to the next grade. It is my task to administer continuous assessment for the learners. I also conduct observation assessment for all the learners. I administer oral questions and encourage learners to read and write.
T8 and T9	It is my responsibility to manage the classroom, organise attendance register, keep the incidents book, keep record book, planning, grouping learners accordingly. Conduct assessment. Instil discipline in the classroom. My role is to set up roles and keep attendance register. It is very much important for me to use elective model that is relevant to upholstery. It is my role to make sure that I provided teaching tools and safety measures in the classroom. My role is to make learners to adjust in the classroom settings or environment. I assist the learners to focus more on practicals, assess learners and compile portfolio of learners.

Table 24: Departmental heads' responses on their role in supporting teachers

DH	Response
DH1	My role is to make sure that all the skills relevant to CAPS are implemented in the classroom settings. I have to make sure that teachers must use different devices of teaching as a way of helping learners to achieve on what is expected. I encourage teachers to provide learners with sufficient time in teaching because some are slow learners. I also encourage the teachers to adjust the curriculum accordingly so that learners could benefit. I make sure that teachers should also use computer remedial teaching which is more useful to physical challenged learners. It should be highlighted that we have different categories of learners in our class therefore extra classes are offered to cater slow learners. More remedial work is needed. I make sure that I establish a good relationship with teachers. Achieving this helps

	<p>us to work together without any challenge. As HOD I have to make sure that learners are fully equipped with teaching and learning materials. I have to encourage and make sure that all teachers have proper preparation for teaching learners, make sure that they have ATP, lesson plans, assessment program, personal timetable, class and period register. Since our learners are disabled or physical impaired I have to make sure that during lesson presentations, teachers must use different methodologies to cater them. Those who are unable to walk I make sure that they should be provided by wheelchairs.</p>
<p>DH2</p>	<p>We conduct training every Wednesday to train teachers how to use sign language. This another way of helping teachers to familiarise themselves with the sign language which they have to use daily in their classes. It is my role to encourage teachers to adopt individual learning or individual attention that should be provide to the learners because we have learners who are hearing impaired. I encourage them to teach according to the pace of learners. I also check the progress of learners because some are slow and other are fast learners.</p>
<p>DH3</p>	<p>It is my role and responsibility to make sure teachers have necessary teaching materials in the classroom. I have to make sure they have braille machines. I have to make sure that all learners in the section from Grade 1 to 7 have enough teaching and learning materials. The departmental head continue to list the following as his responsibility:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Circulate and deliver communication to teachers on what they are expected to do. • Provide necessary stationery for teachers and learners. I also make sure that all the classes have period register, learner register. • I have made sure that assessment is done properly and check quality of exam papers developed. Provide pre-moderation form. • I have to make sure that teachers have ATP provided by the DoE. • I also monitor classes and progress achieved by the teachers. • I also conduct classroom observation to check whether teachers are following the CAPS curriculum as prescribed by the DoE. <p>Fortunately, I am a member of committee that deal with marking exams, assessment, develop Time table and School Management Team member. I am also a member of South African Council for the Blind where I learn a lot in this committee</p>

	<p>and share my learning experiences with the teachers to improve the way they teach learners. I am a member of South African Braille Committee therefore all new development about new devices of teaching the blind I know them in advance and then I come to train teachers to implement curriculum correctly using new devices of teaching. South African Braille Council know all the developments that should be used in teaching and learning therefore in our school the advantage is that I am a member and well conversant with new development in teaching visually impaired learners. I am also fortunate that I did Inclusive Education and soon I will be completing my Master's Degree in Inclusion Education. So, I have a vast experience on how to implement curriculum especially for visually impaired learners. I am also in the DoE Committee which is responsible for setting examination for the visually impaired. Then I always guide teachers on how best they can teach learners who are physical disadvantaged. In addition to what I have said before I conduct braille workshop every Wednesday in the school. This is another way of preparing teachers to familiarise themselves with the new devices of teaching.</p>
DH4	<p>My role is to make sure that all the skills relevant to SID CAPS are implemented in the classroom settings. I have to make sure that teachers have braille machines to be used by the learners. I am also a Member of School Support Team responsible for screening learners to be admitted in the special school. It is also my role to identify barriers experienced by learners and address them accordingly. I also make sure that there is a sound relationship between the school and the parents. Where we experience challenges to some of the learners, I refer them to District Team to attend to their problem or challenges.</p>
DH5	<p>My role is to make sure that all the skills relevant to TOC is disseminated fully in the classroom situation. I have to make sure that all the teachers follow the correct programme for TOC. It is my responsibility to empower teachers in the implementation of TOC. I have to make sure that teachers have necessary materials and aid all the teachers where it is necessary. It is also my responsibility to give support to teachers and quality assure the programmes teachers are disseminating in the classroom. It is also my role to make sure that I motivate learners to participate in the class. I also invite external stakeholders to come and motivate our learners to value the importance of education. I invite individuals and NGO to assist learners in the school settings.</p>
DH6	<p>I am responsible of making sure that I have to provide assistants to 10 teachers in this school. It is my responsibility to make sure that teachers have relevant materials for teaching and learning. I</p>

	have to make sure that teachers have relevant materials for the implementation of the above-mentioned curricula. I also assist them on how to prepare lesson plans. I also check the books of the learner to find out how are they progressing. I also monitor practical work performed by the teachers and learners. I also monitor and check teachers' file to check if they are in line with the required standard.
DH7	My role is to monitor and support the teachers. I also conduct workshop to the teachers. It is also my role to conduct classroom observation and visit classrooms. I use learner to learner profile to classify the learners. Provide timetable and develop timetable. Provide the resources relevant to TOC, DECAP and LSPID. I help teachers to develop lesson preparation. I also screen the learners, conduct assessment and support the teachers. Learner and support staff discipline. Class observation, resource provision, policy implementation and I am also teaching.

Table 25: Teachers' responses on whether their role has been realised or not

T1 to T9	Response
T1	I can say partially achieved because there are many challenges that we are facing in terms of teaching visually impaired learners. However, one can say that some of the objectives are achievable but some are not achievable however we have to adapt with them.
T2	Yes, I think my role has been realised.
T3	Not yet, I want to see all my learners to know the content of SS or Social Sciences.
T4	Not yet. Why? I don't know.
T5 and T6	I think my role has been realised partially because there are some limitations and challenges in our school environment.
T7	Teacher 7 agreed and say yes, she has realised her role.
T8 and T9	Not yet. I am dealing with learners who are physical impaired and they can easily forget.

Table 26: Departmental heads' responses on whether their role has been realised or not

DH	Response
DH1	Yes, I think my role has been realised because there is a lot of progress in physical challenged classes. This role has been realised because the good relationship between teachers and HODs.
DH2	Yes, I think my role has been realised. Because it is long I have been teaching in special schools and I am familiar about the methodology that one should adopt in teaching Deaf learners or hearing-impaired learners.
DH3	Yes, I think my role has been realised. I have a very good relationship with teachers. Sometimes I delegate, I also make submission to the plans to teacher on how we can help visually impaired learners. Teachers always comply if there is anything that is needed. Teaching them help us to learn different types of disabilities. The attitude for the teachers also changes when they are dealing with disabled learners. I think you need to be a Christian in order to reach out to disabled learners.
DH4	Yes, no reasons given
DH5	Yes, no reasons given
DH6	Not yet because the majority of teachers were not trained to work with special needs learners.
DH7	Partially but not completely because there are many limitations.

Table 27: Teachers' responses on factors considered necessary for effective implementation of special school curricula

T1 to T9	Response
T1	I think continuous workshops on curriculum implementation can help a lot. Question papers from DoE should be provided with large font so that visually impaired learners can be able to read. The provision of magnified glass for learners who are partially sighted is important if we want effective learning to take place. We also need braille map. Common question papers for examination should be delivered on time so that we can do the adjustment on time or adapt them on time.
T2	I think we need gadgets, laptops, computers and overhead projectors. We also need a lot of reading aids. The learners are

	deaf learn more by seeing because they do not hear but if we use videos etc. they grasp very much quickly.
T3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I would recommend that the DoE provide the school with enough teacher assistants and provision of enough resources for the implementation of curriculum. • We also need proper training for the implementation of special schools. • DoE should stick to teacher pupil ration of 1:7, currently I have 15 learners in Grade 6 and 14 learners in Grade 5, this means that I am operating in the overcrowded classes. In addition, I think it is important for the Department of Education to reduce the workload of teachers. I am raising this because working with impaired learners is not easy, one need more time to provide individual attention to all the learners. Therefore, to achieve that teacher's workload should be addressed. The situation is worsened by overcrowded classrooms which is difficult to manage.
T4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enough visual teaching aids. • I would recommend that the DoE provide the school with enough teacher assistants and provision of enough resources for the implementation of curriculum. • We also need proper training for the implementation of special schools. • DoE should stick to teacher pupil ratio of 1:7, currently I have 15 learners in Grade 6 and 14 learners in Grade 5, this means that I am operating in the overcrowded classes.
T5 and T6	Teacher 5 and 6. A number of workshops should be conducted Extensive training for skills and knowledge to deal with different forms of curriculums should be conducted. Empowering teachers with eclectic methods or model of teaching is paramount. I recommend that ATP for TOC should be drafted by the DoE. Currently we don't have ATP for TOC. The DoE should provide teachers' guide and learners' books with preparations like what they do in mainstream school curriculum. I think it is important for the Department of Education to re-design special school curriculum. My observation is that mainstream curriculum is well developed compared to special school curriculum. In the mainstream school there are Annual Teachers Plans but in Technical Occupational Curriculum we don't have ATP so we are struggling when teaching Technical Occupational Subjects in our school. In addition, Teachers' Books and Learners' books are provided in mainstream school but we don't have learners' books in TOC.
T7	I think a number of workshops should be conducted. The DoE should reduce the workload of special school teachers. Provide

	<p>school with large print books. Provide special school with relevant resources to address special school learners.</p> <p>Extensive training for skills and knowledge to deal with different forms of curriculums should be conducted. Adopt the style of developing curriculum for mainstream schools in the special schools.</p>
T8 and T9	<p>Extensive training for skills and knowledge to deal with different forms of curriculums should be conducted. Provide school with picture books. Provide schools with educational TV because these learners learn more effectively when they see and relate.</p>

Table 28: Departmental heads' responses on factors considered necessary for effective implementation of special school curricula

DH	Response
DH1	<p>We need more and continuous workshops to be conducted by Department of Education. I would propose that teachers should attend short courses to aid them on how to deal with physical challenged learners. We need more gadgets and teaching devices. The Department of Education should provide us with more braille machines because they are not enough.</p>
DH2	<p>We need more and continuous workshops to be conducted by Department of Education in term of teaching deaf learners. I would propose that teachers should also attend short courses to aid them on how to deal with deaf learners.</p>
DH3	<p>Teachers must be trained for Braille. Teachers must know what they are teaching. Fortunately, the University of Venda is offering training on Braille 1 and 2 and teachers are certificated. Therefore, it is paramount for teachers to attend such courses. Teachers should be encouraged to attend as many workshops as possible. We need more and continuous workshops to be conducted by Department of Education in term of teaching visually impaired learners.</p>
DH4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuous in-house workshops conducted by Department of Education. We also need a lot of support from different structures like NGO, DoE, Business sectors, Civil Organisation. • Teachers must be trained on how to identify learners with barriers to learning. • Teachers should be trained how to modify curriculum to suit the needs of the learners not teachers. • The DoE should employ the scribe for those who are unable to use braille.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • However, it should be noted that when you are working with this special category of learners one need to be patience.
DH5	<p>Continuous in-house workshops conducted by departmental heads. We also need a lot of support from different structures like NGO, DoE, Business sectors, Civil Organisation. What I am saying is that we have to work together with other stakeholders to support special school. Necessary and relevant tools should be provided so that we can be able to achieve on what is expected from us. Provision of laptops are also needed so that teachers can access information from internet. We also need to invite learning experts so that we can learn best practices of teaching TOC in the school settings. The DoE should capacitate the district and circuits with curriculum advisors who were trained to manage special schools. We don't have curriculum advisors who are trained to support special school. It is only one curriculum advisor at the District level who has been trained to support special schools.</p>
DH6	<p>I strongly feel that teachers should be trained on how to implement TOC. We need well prepared workshop on how to implement the types of curriculum I have mentioned when we started with this discussion. The DoE should employ teachers who are competent to implement TOC because it focusses more skills related subjects. The DoE should capacitate the district and circuits with curriculum advisors who were trained to manage Differentiated and TOC curriculum in special schools. We don't have curriculum advisors who are trained to support special school. It is only one curriculum advisor at the District level who has been trained to support special schools. We need a well-furnished boarding school to house the learners because most of them they come from far. They arrived at school late and we have a number of them who do not come daily because they don't have money for transport.</p>
DH7	<p>I think special schools need resources especially TOC. We need support staff. Medical personnel, we need sports ground, infrastructure for workshops, dining Hall, Kitchen. We need curriculum advisors who are knowledgeable for special school curriculum.</p>

Theme 2: Barriers that teachers face in classroom settings

Table 29: Departmental heads' responses on meaning of barriers to learning

Departmental Head	Response
DH1	Barrier to learning are things that hinders learners to learn effectively in the classroom situation. It is when the learners are unable to help themselves. They need more assistants. These are things that hinder learners to learn.
DH2	According to my understanding barrier to learning is any obstacle that hinder learners to learn effectively.
DH3	According to my understanding barrier to learning is anything that can prevent the learners to learn effectively.
DH4	Barrier to learning are things that hinders learners to learn effectively in the classroom situation. Some of this barrier are intrinsic and extrinsic in nature. In addition, that is the conditions which prevent learners to master learning content and being able to recall or make use of it when needed.
DH5	Barrier to learning are things that hinders learners to learn effectively in the classroom situation. Some of these barriers are intrinsic and extrinsic in nature. In addition, that is the conditions which prevent learners to master learning content and being able to recall or make use of it when needed.
DH6	Barrier to learning is inability to learn effectively because of intellectually being impaired.

Table 30: Teachers' responses on meaning of barriers to learning

Teachers	Responses
T1	Barrier to learning is when learners experience barrier to learning. This are the obstacles that can lead learners not to understand which can be taught.
T2	Deafness itself is a learning barrier. When learners came here they know nothing and that is a barrier to learning. In this school there are learners who cannot distinguish between father and mother. According to my understanding barrier to learning is anything that hinder learners to learn.
T3	Barrier to learning means things that makes learning different for the learners not to learn effectively.
T4	Barrier to learning means things that makes learning different for the learners not to learn effectively.
T5 and T6	For me barrier of learning is anything that hinders learners to learn or anything that prevent the learners to learn effectively.
T7	For me barrier of learning is something that inhibit learners to learn effectively.
T8 and T9	For me barrier of learning is broad. Anything that can hinder learners to learn is a barrier.

Table 31: Departmental heads' responses on barriers to learning that are prevalent in their school

Departmental Head	Response
DH1	Some of the learners are visual impaired and some of the learners are unable to use their hands properly. Some of them are unable to hold pens properly. Some of them are unable to move from one place to another.
DH2	There are many barriers to learning in our school. Some of the obstacles that I have identified are as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hearing challenge • Difficulty in speaking and hearing • Unable to articulate properly

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language barrier • Communication barrier • Other learners are unable to read and write • Difficulty in reading sign language terminologies
DH3	Another barrier that I discovered is that there are teachers who does not have basic knowledge on braille. We have teachers who are unable to mark braille examination. There is also a serious language barrier between teachers and learners which is a barrier.
DH4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adaptation of learners • Lack of adequate teaching aids • Lack of qualified teachers - in my section most of the teachers are females and were not trained to implement SID. • Types of learners who are attending in this school have many barriers, we have learners who are epileptic, some with Down syndrome, short eye sighted • We also have learners who are unable to read and write • Then when you have learners who are unable to read and write is a serious challenge or a serious learning barriers.
DH5	<p>Lack of adequate teaching aids</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of qualified teachers - in my section most of the teachers are females and were not trained to implement TOC and that is a barrier on its own. • Types of learners who are attending in this school have many barriers, we have learners who are epileptic, some with Down syndrome, short eye sighted • We also have learners who are unable to read and write and TOC focuses more on practical than theory 80% is practical and 20% is a theory. • Then when you have learners who are unable to read and write is a serious challenge or a serious learning barrier.
DH6	We have Down syndrome learners, autistic learners, Cerebrals learners, Unable to speak properly, hard at hearing

	impaired and those who are unable to read and write.
DH7	We have learners who are unable to read and write. Some of them cannot move from one place to another and they have to be moved. In addition, we have learners who cannot be able to hold their pens. Some have Down syndrome challenge and lack concentration.

Table 32: Teachers’ responses on barriers to learning that are prevalent in their school

Teachers	Responses
T1	Visual impaired learners are a barrier itself. I have observed that some of the learners were admitted in this school by mistake. Learners who are hearing impaired. We have learners who are unable to read and write.
T2	We have learners who are unable to read and write. Some of the learners cannot even construct a sentence.
T3	We have a number of learners who are very slow <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hypertension learners • Slow learners • Learners who are unable to read and write • Inactive learners • There is a lot of limited concentration by learners in my class. • Learner’s condition. • Teachers without basic knowledge. • Lack of qualified teachers. • Curriculum designed for special school is too complex. • Language barrier.
T4	We have a number of learners who are very slow <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners are unable to write properly • Learners are unable to pronounce efficiently

T5 and T6	Learners who are physical impaired which makes it difficult for them to learn <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of braille knowledge • Serious reading and writing problems • Slow learners
T7	Their condition is a barrier by itself because they are intellectually challenged <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some of them are slow learners • Some of them are unable to read and write • Some are unable to use their hands properly
T8 and T9	Teachers are also barrier to learning especially when they have no background of curriculum it is a barrier. The family background also contributes especially poor background also contribute to barrier to learning. The two teachers mentioned the following barriers to learning in their schools: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have learners who are unable to read and write • We also have language barrier and we are forced to use mother tongue only • The structure of the curriculum itself is a barrier because it was designed in such a way that it is completed to the special school learners • Learners themselves are barrier because of their physical impaired. • Curriculum that was designed is too complex for special needs learners.

Table 33: Departmental heads' responses on dealing with barriers to learning that are prevalent in their school

Departmental Head	Response
DH1	We refer them to the therapist to assist them with their challenges. Teachers move them from point A to point B. That is the reason why we need more teacher assistance who can play that role.
DH2	The DoE should develop curriculum that suits learners with learning difficulties or special school learners. The DoE should provide workshop to address some of the

	barriers I have identified or discussed. Short course should be conducted for sign language but they are held but they are not enough.
DH3	I train teachers on how to use braille in the school every Wednesday like I said before. I teach them myself. I also create time in the afternoon to help the teachers. I also encourage teachers to develop themselves by applying Diploma to improve the language and to deal with visually impaired learners.
DH4	We adapt and adjust the curriculum according to the needs of the learners We use large print materials We change the classroom settings so that it can fit the learners Develop a large font material Monitor the quality of assessment and prepare accordingly Develop braille questions Apply for reader devices
DH5	We try by all means to provide them with example of what is happening in the outside world. Sometimes I invite an old man who is an artisan to come to school and encourage learners to learn. I also invite parental meetings to talk to parents to get working tools so that learners can do practicals in their home.
DH6	We identify the barriers and we assist the learners to develop the intervention strategy. We group them according to their impairments and develop the strategy to help them. We also change and adapt the methodology of teaching.
DH7	We combine DECAPS and CAPS. I look after autistic learners and sometimes I force them to learn.

Table 34: Teachers' responses on dealing with barriers to learning that are prevalent in their school

Teachers	Responses
T1	<p>We give learners extra lessons or classes. For those who unable to read and write, we involve the foundation phase teachers to help. Sometimes we call parental meeting to discuss some of the challenges we are experiencing with their children. Sometimes parents take their children to the specialists to assess and provide accurate and reliable information for them to make an informed decision.</p>
T2	<p>We Provision of textbooks with visual aids or sign can help to address the challenge. It is important for us to introduce visual technology and teaching aids with pictures can address the barrier to learning.</p>
T3	<p>Provision of extra classes is provided to those who are slow learners. We have established computer room where learners who are unable to write can use them. For those who cannot adjust at all I would prefer them to be transferred to special school that are offering life skills programmes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solution to address the barriers • Provide extra classes. • Provide textbooks with visual aids or sign language. • Divide learners according to their impairment. • Curriculum should be adjusted. • Teachers move them from point A to B. • The Department of Education should develop curriculum that suits learners with learning difficulties or special school learners • The Department of Education should provide workshop to address some of the barriers discussed. • Short course should be conducted for sign language. • Train teachers on how to use braille in the school every Wednesday like

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The DHs must create time in the afternoon to provide assistance to the teachers. • Teachers should develop themselves by furthering their studies to improve the language and to deal with visually impaired learners. • Schools should adapt and adjust the curriculum according to the needs of the learners • Special school should use large print materials to cater visually impaired learners • Special schools should change the classroom settings so that it can fit the special needs learners • Special school should develop braille questions • Apply for reader devices
T4	Provision necessary teaching aids.
T5 and T6	We divide them according to their impaired characters. In addition, resources are planned according to their barriers. We also conduct continuous diagnosis so that we can categorise them accordingly. We also invite professionals to support some of these learners. There is a need of proper diagnostic of learners by professionals so that they can place them to the relevant schools. SANA forms should be completed correctly. I applied individual attention methodology and build a good relationship between myself and the learners.
T7	I have no idea
T8 and T9	I think curriculum for special needs learners should focus on 80% practical and 20% theory. The curriculum should be adjusted. There should be the provision of experts of the curriculum that we are implementing in the school. We have discovered that it is only at District level where you have someone who has been trained for special school settings and in the circuit level there is no curriculum

	advisor trained for special school curriculum.
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Table 35: Departmental heads' responses on who else is to play a role in addressing barriers to learning that are prevalent in their school

Departmental Head	Response
DH1	My opinion is that there are various stakeholders who should play a role in addressing the challenges experienced by physical challenged learners. The School Management Team and Teachers, Different stakeholders, Department of Health, Civil Society, NGOs and churches can play a role in addressing challenges experienced by physical challenged learners. I think the involvement of DoE, SMT, school, Community members, Civil Society, NGO can play a major role to address the barriers.
DH2	The School Principal should play that role. I think support should come from the principal and coordinated by him. The Learners Teachers Support is very much crucial. The principal should allow teachers to go for training.
DH3	The School Management Team and Teachers. In addition, community should also play a role. Teachers should play a role; School-Based Support Team should play a key role in the school. Lastly community members should learn to accept special needs learners.
DH4	The School Management Team and Teachers. In addition, community should also play a role. Lastly community members should learn to accept special needs learners.
DH5	The School Management Team and Teachers, Teachers and Department of Education. In addition, community should also play a role. Is to assist the teachers to implement curriculum accordingly. Provide

	teachers with relevant resources to implement curriculum effectively.
DH6	DoE, Department of Health, Support Staff, social development, SASSA, the School Management Team and Teachers. In addition, community should also play a role.
DH7	My opinion is that there are various stakeholders who should play a role in addressing the challenges experienced by physical challenged learners. The School Management Team and Teachers, Different stakeholders, Department of Health, Civil Society, NGOs and churches can play a role in addressing challenges experienced by physical challenged learners.

Table 36: Teachers' responses on who else is to play a role in addressing barriers to learning that are prevalent in their school

Teachers	Responses
T1	I think teachers, parental involvement and specialist can assist a lot to address some of the challenges identified.
T2	I think teachers and parents can work together to address that challenge.
T3	Parents, Teachers, DoE and Professionals.
T4	Parents, Teachers, DoE and Professionals.
T5 and T6	Parents, Teachers, DoE, Professionals, Hospitals, SAPS, Social Development, Psychologists, and Social Workers. In summary this should be done in partnership with different stakeholders. Teachers also need to work with professionals for proper training for teaching this special category of learners.
T7	No response provided based on how the teacher answer the question above.
T8 and T9	Parents, Teachers and DoE should be involved to assist addressing the challenges identified.

Theme 3: The teachers' and departmental heads' attitude and perceptions on success and failures in implementation of special school's curriculum

Table 37: Departmental heads' responses on achievement for special school curricula

Departmental Head	Response
DH1	We have developed or initiated School-Based Support Team which is responsible for training teachers and solve problems that teachers and learners are experiencing in the school. We have extra classes that we conduct to help slow learners to catch up with others. We have Computer Lab which according to me it is big progress. We have Wi-Fi which is helping us to access information online. In this school we are technologically advanced. We also have a boarding school that is housing the learners. We have a lot of extra mural activities that normally takes place in our school. There is a good relationship between the school and parents.
DH2	When I compare the performance of learners in 2022 with 2021, I think the performance in 2022 has increased. Those learners who were unable to read and write can now read and write, they are able to write their names and where they stay which for me is great progress. And this was not happening in our school before. Pass rate has improved.
DH3	Learners were taught to use an ordinary computer. We have new devices and braille for visually impaired learners. New gadgets were provided to the school for the learners to use them.
DH4	We have developed or initiated School-Based Support Team which is responsible for training teachers and solve problems that teachers and learners are experiencing in the school. We are able to develop learner profile. We are committed as teachers in this schools. We also go

	extra mile in this schools to make sure that problems experienced by the learners should be addressed.
DH5	We have a number of learners that we have produced in this school who are doing well in the society. There are learners who started their own business and they are doing well. Some now have families and providing food for them due to the practical skills they have attained in this school.
DH6	A number of learners here are very much active in sports. There is a girl who once represented this school overseas who play black ball. However, she performed very well but the challenge was language and she was deprived her position because of the language issue.
DH7	We have a number of learners who participated in national completion. Some they managed to participate in the International Olympics. In 2001 there was a hockey team which participated in the international games.

Table 38: Teachers’ responses on achievement for special school curricula

Teachers	Responses
T1	We are proud of extra classes created or organised for those learners who experience challenges in learning. There is reading and writing program established by the Foundation Phase teachers which is helping a lot. For visually impaired learners we provide them with extra classes.
T2	Few learners managed to go to grade 12 because the majority of them don’t even managed to reach Grade 12. Most of them if they manage to go to secondary education they drop out because they don’t cope.
T3	We have learners who can effectively use computers. Through the assistance of Foundation Phase teachers those who

	were unable to read and write now they are competent in reading and writing. Some of the learners perform well and they were awarded bursary.
T4	We have learners who can write well now. Through the assistance of Foundation Phase teachers those who were unable to read and write now they are competent in reading and writing. Some of the learners perform well and they were awarded bursary.
T5 and T6	<p>We are proud because our school is offering technical occupational curriculum where 13 modules are offered in the school.</p> <p>Technical Occupational:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electives • Agricultural Studies • Art and Crafts • Civil Technology: Bricklaying and Plastering • Civil Technology: Plumbing • Civil Technology: Woodworking and Timber • Consumer Studies: Food Production • Consumer Studies: Sewing • Early Childhood Development • Electrical Technology: Electrical • Hospitality Studies • Mechanical Technology: Body Works: Panel Beating and or Spray Painting • Mechanical Technology: Motor Mechanics • Mechanical Technology: Sheet Metal Work • Mechanical Technology: Welding • Mechanical Technology: Maintenance • Office Administration • Personal Care: Ancillary Health Care • Personal Care: Beauty and Nail Technology • Personal Care: Hairdressing • Service Technology: Upholstery • Wholesale and Retail <p>They are learners who are doing very well after they complete their modules</p>

	such as carpentry, welding. They are self-employed and doing well in the society. There were some cubicles which were done by the learners in this school and we are very much proud about that. Most of the artisans produced in this schools are working in their communities like producing sofas for taxis. Some are hired to fit in kitchen unit for lodges. Some are busy doing frame of the gates and windows. There was a group of learners who were unable to read and write but now they are able to read and write. Some of the learners have resources to start they own businesses.
T7	No response provided based on how the teacher answer the question above.
T8 and T9	Parents, Teachers and DoE should be involved to assist addressing the challenges identified.

Table 39: Departmental heads' responses on factors contributing to achievement for special school curricula

Departmental Head	Response
DH1	We are working as a team and support from parents is playing a major role in some of the achievements I have highlighted.
DH2	I have observed that teachers are committed to their work daily. The sign language workshops that we conduct every Wednesday is helping a lot. In addition, we conduct extra classes for those learners who are not performing well during class periods. This is possible due to the fact that we have boarding school that is housing learners. All our learners reside in boarding school and we do not have days scholars.
DH3	There is outstanding commitment from teachers, SMT and the school principal.
DH4	Perseverance, commitment and dedication from both teachers and learners.

DH5	Perseverance, commitment and dedication from both teachers and learners
DH6	Commitment of the learners, support of SGB, commitment and dedication of teachers.
DH7	This was due to the commitment and dedication from both teachers and learners

Table 40: Teachers' responses on factors contributing to achievement for special school curricula

Teachers	Responses
T1	Teachers are passionate, commitment and dedication of teachers. Working together with other stakeholders, working as a team.
T2	Teachers are passionate, commitment and dedication but some of the learners are challenge themselves.
T3	Teachers are passionate, commitment and dedication of teachers. There are NGOs that are providing us with support. There are parents who are also supporting this school. There is a Dr who give bursary to 2 learners who passed grade 7 every year.
T4	Although teachers are committed to their work but it is very much difficult to work with special category of learners.
T5 and T6	Teachers are passionate, commitment and dedication of teachers. Motivation from current manager, communities, NGO, companies and SOSA (Special Occupation South Africa) Sub-Organisational Systems Administrator.
T7	Teachers' commitment and dedication of learners
T8 and T9	Teachers' commitment and learner's dedication.

Table 41: Departmental heads' responses on failures of the implementation of curriculum

Departmental Head	Response
DH1	Although there are many progresses in our school but there is a shortage of teaching and learning materials. Sometimes we use to buy books by ourselves. We don't have the full support from DoE.
DH2	Although there are many progresses in our school but there is a shortage of teaching and learning materials. We don't have Curriculum advisors who have been trained to provide support to special schools. We don't have sign language curriculum advisors. We don't have a curriculum special designed for special school learners because we are implementing CAPS which is a challenge to this category of learners.
DH3	What I observed is that teachers attend training conducted by DoE but they come back knowing nothing or without them knowing basic information. There are also learners who are struggling unable to read properly. I think some teachers are less committed to their work. I think it is because those teachers are sighted they don't understand the visually impaired learners and how they feel. Some of the teachers are negative and have negative attitude in terms of teaching visually impaired learners. Some of the learners are ignorant.
DH4	Here we do not have a problem of absentees because we have boarding school to accommodate learners. We have a serious shortage of resources because the district provides normal print and not large print for examination papers.
DH5	Some learners because of their poor financial background do not finish their courses. We have a serious challenge of absenteeism and absconders because they don't receive financial support from Social Development. Therefore, they

	<p>failed to get money for transport because some of them come from far. Unfortunately, we don't have a boarding school to lodge those learners. We also have drop outs because of the lack of financial support and as I said before, some they abscond school due to financial restrains.</p>
DH6	<p>We have a serious challenge of drop outs because they don't have money to pay for transport to come to school. SASA is not providing with grants and this is one of the challenges because we have a self-built boarding but it cannot accommodate all the learners because we don't have enough budget to build boarding to house those learners. Some learners because of their poor financial background do not finish their courses. We have a serious challenge of absenteeism and absconders because they don't receive financial support from Social Development. Therefore, they failed to get money for transport because some of them come from far. We also have drop outs because of the lack of financial support and as I said before, some they abscond school due to financial restrains. However, since we have built boarding school drop outs has gone down. We have professionals who assess learners whether they qualify to attend special school or not and because of inconstant in terms of report writing learners are wrongly placed in special schools.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There an element whereby community members failed to accept disable learners or children.
DH7	<p>The content of curriculum that we are implementing in this school is above the level of the learners.</p>

Table 42: Teachers' responses on failures of the implementation of curriculum

Teachers	Responses
T1	I think the DoE is not conducting enough workshops to assist the schools to implement the curriculum successfully. There is also lack of involvement of parents in their children's education. We also have learners who are not fit and qualify to attend in this school. Some learners become sick for a very long time and when they are back to school it is not easy for them to catch up.
T2	No response
T3	Insufficient workshops to prepare teachers to implement curriculum effectively and sufficiently.
T4	Insufficient workshops to prepare teachers to implement curriculum effectively and sufficiently. My observation is that teachers are deprived of workshops. One of the main challenges is that Curriculum Advisors assigned to our special school are from mainstream school who know nothing about special school curriculum. There is shortage of resources and effective planning by the teachers.
T5 and T6	There is no access to workshops I mean workshops that are meant to conduct Technical Occupational Curriculum like upholstery, carpentry etc. In addition, we as teachers are deprived of workshops. One of the main challenges is that Curriculum Advisors assigned to our special school are from mainstream school who know nothing about special school curriculum.
T7	I think shortage of enough workshops. Furthermore, there is a serious lack of parental involvement in their children's education. That on its own is a great concern. You will agree with me that our current system of education encourages parental involvement in their children's education. However, my observation is

	that there is a serious lack of parental involvement in their children’s education in our schools.
T8 and T9	Lack of sufficient training and lack of resources to support the implementation of special school curriculum. There are no Technical Occupational Curriculum workshops conducted by DoE. There are no curriculum advisors for TOC and LSPID. We are expected to implement curriculum that is implemented in mainstream schools which is impossible.

Theme 4: Challenges that teachers face in classroom settings

Table 43: Departmental heads’ responses on specific challenges that they are encountering in the execution of special school curricula

Departmental Head	Response
DH1	It should be highlighted that we are unable to assist learners who are unable to write. Learners who are unable to move from one place to another is a challenge because we don’t have enough teacher assistants as I said earlier on. There are learners who mess up in class so if you are alone you must stop teaching others and focus on helping one who has messed up and that affect teaching and learning. There is a serious shortage of human resources. Another main challenge we have the support from curriculum advisors who are not knowledgeable about special school curriculum. There are lack of basic service to be provided to special schools. In addition, the attitudes of community members towards physical challenged learners is not good. They label them which result in negative stigma against them.
DH2	The student teacher ratio is not implemented and considered by DoE. We were supposed to implement 1:5 teacher learner ratio. Currently we have a class with 17 and 18 learners which is creating

	<p>overcrowding and this makes it impossible to cater learners individually. We don't have grade 12 graduates. Our learners when they are done with Grade 7 they must move to mainstream schools which makes it difficult for them to cope. I have said before that we don't have enough sign language in our school therefore when they move to mainstream schools it becomes worse because no teachers have been trained to use sign language in those schools. Therefore, most of them they become dropout. We have also had a serious challenge that we don't have sign language markers. Therefore, the markers especially to those who reach grade 12 their scripts are marked unfairly because none of them were taught how to mark scripts for the deaf. In addition, some of the learners who are admitted here are not fit to attend to this school. This according to my experience is informed by professionals who provided unreliable information when they do assessment of learners. Shortage of teachers. Overcrowding. Admission of learners is not done properly based on incorrect information provided by professionals when assessing the learners.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">DH3</p>	<p>There is a lack of support from the DoE. The DoE officials failed to identify problems that the school is experiencing and propose strategies of solving those problems or challenges. LSTM - Most of the LSTM are not in braille.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">DH4</p>	<p>The curriculum that we are currently implementing is not clearly defined. Another main challenge is that we don't have the support from curriculum advisors because they were not trained to support special school curriculum. As the departmental head I have observed that we are on our own. We don't have a curriculum expert in for SID CAPS. No necessary equipment's to implement SID.</p>

	There is no creativity in terms of developing assessment.
DH5	The curriculum that we are currently implementing is not clearly defined. Another main challenge is that we don't have the support from curriculum advisors because they were not trained to support special school curriculum especially TOC. As the departmental head I have observed that we are on our own. We don't have curriculum expert in TOC. No necessary equipment's to implement TOC. In plumbing is worse we don't have necessary materials to use. We have a serious shortage of professional to support special schools such as psychologists, artisans, social workers, nurses, doctors. In addition, we have a serious shortage of teaching aids. Lastly, we don't have teacher assistance in our classes who should play a role of supporting learners during class interaction.
DH6	There are learners who are unable to read and write. Some of the learners are scared of machines especially in TOC classes. Some they just cry uncontrollable.
DH7	There are a number of challenges that I could identify: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of vocational classrooms. There are no classes to conduct workshops for other subjects like carpentry, upholstery • Shortage of relevant materials • Shortage of tools • There is a lack of infrastructure relevant to TOC. The DoE is providing enough budget for catering but not for infrastructure.

Table 44: Teachers' responses on specific challenges that they are encountering in the execution of special school curricula

Teachers	Responses
T1	Lack of resources/materials. Question papers for exam are not delivered on time. No teaching materials for partially and totally blind learners.
T2	Lack of resources/materials. We don't have enough teachers or we have shortage of human resources especially teachers to teach special learners. We don't have enough teaching aids. It is my opinion that learners here are not given opportunity to go for tour so that they can explore the outside world or the world work.
T3	Shortage of human resources, shortage of therapist, vacant of posts not filled, no psychologists and there is no experts for assessing reliable learners to be place in the special schools.
T4	Learners who are slow to speak <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners who are unable to read and write • Learners who are unable to control their arms • Some produce liquids in their mouth and they are not manageable • Some learners cannot pronounce effectively • We have slow learners • Shortage of human resources, shortage of therapist, vacant of posts not filled, no psychologists and there is no experts for assessing reliable learners to be place in the special schools.
T5 and T6	Lack of resources/materials. No teaching aids, No Teaching Guides, No Learners' workbooks. No resources in library. No proper monitoring in the classroom. No gadgets. No gadgets. No technical advancement teaching aids for TOC. Implementation of TOC is not done properly. No assessment is done by

	curriculum experts. No follow up in whatever that we do. There are no curriculum advisors who were trained for assisting us as special school. No knowledgeable curriculum advisors for TOC. We are offering 13 streams for TOC but we are not fully capacitated with workshops. TOC should focus on 80% of practicals and 20 % of theory but due to the shortage of resources we focus on 5% of practicals, medium of instruction which is English is difficult to this category of learners.
T7	Lack of resources/materials. Not enough teaching aids.
T8 and T9	Shortage of teaching and learning materials. Lack of support for DoE and Curriculum advisors.

Table 45: Departmental heads' responses on solution to address challenges encountered in the execution of special school curricula

Departmental Head	Response
DH1	The DoE should address most of the problems I have identified above. Provision of professional will assist a lot to deal with most of the challenges discussed above. In addition, training of teachers is a key for the successful implementation of CAPS which is implemented in the school.
DH2	I think DoE should train sign language teachers in mainstream schools and train markers for the deaf examination papers. The DoE should address most of the problems I have identified above.
DH3	I think DoE should take special school seriously. If we can employ visual impaired teachers I think they can do better work than sighted teachers. The DoE should provide us with LTSM designed in braille.
DH4	The DoE should address most of the problems I have identified above. Provision of professional will assist a lot to deal with most of the challenges discussed above. We need to employ multi-

	<p>disciplinary approach where all stakeholders should come together and work hand in hand. We need to have support from the following stakeholders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers need more workshops • NGO • School-Based Support Team • Partnership with SAPS • Local hospitals adopt our school to render medical services
DH5	<p>The DoE should address most of the problems I have identified above. Provision of professional will assist a lot to deal with most of the challenges discussed above. We need to employ multi-disciplinary approach where all stakeholders should come together and work hand in hand. We need to have support from the following stakeholders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NGO • School-Based Support Team • Partnership with SAPS • Local hospitals adopt our school to render medical services
DH6	<p>We check the profiles of the learners and allocate them to bakery or hair and dressing saloon. Some of them we refer them to professionals. Those who are unable to read and write we provide them with more practicals until they master reading and writing. We also need to have support from the following stakeholders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NGO • School-Based Support Team • Partnership with SAPS • Local hospitals adopt our school to render medical services
DH7	<p>The DoE should inject budget for infrastructure and resources. In addition, the DoE should employ enough staff. DoE should also provide enough professional for health like nurses, physiotherapist, psychologists etc.</p>

Table 46: Teachers’ responses on solution to address challenges encountered in the execution of special school curricula

Teachers	Responses
T1	The DoE should conduct a fully-fledged workshop. The DoE should provide books on Braille. Maps on braille should be provided. I think we have to introduce APEX to replace braille. APEX is the new devices to teach visually impaired learners.
T2	The School Management Team should buy materials that are relevant to learners who are physical challenge. Large amount of budget should be allocated to teaching and learning materials. The examination papers should be adjusted to learners who are impaired because the standard of examination papers is too high because it was meant for mainstream school.
T3	Government should employ enough human resources and fill in vacant posts. The DoE should provide the school with therapists and psychologists.
T4	The DoE should forge relationship with Hospitals to provide the school with professionals to deal with challenges that are health related. Teachers should adopt new approach of teaching. The DoE should provide us with Educational TV to assist the learners.
T5 and T6	Provision of teachers’ and learners’ workbooks. The DoE should conduct a fully-fledged workshop for 13 streams that we are offering for TOC. To attend training and receive accredited certificate.
T7	The DoE should conduct a fully-fledged workshop for 13 streams that we are offering for TOC.
T8 and T9	Provision of teachers’ and learners’ workbooks. The DoE should conduct a fully-fledged workshop and provide special school with Curriculum Advisors trained for special schools.

Theme 5: Interventions that may assist in addressing obstacles faced by teachers in the implementation of special school curriculum

Table 47: Departmental heads' responses on additional support needed to fully support the implementation of special school curriculum

Departmental Head	Response
DH1	We need more sponsors to assist buying blankets, food, pads etc. especially this can be done by NGO. Involve parents by sharing some of our frustration so that they can also help in decision making. We need more computers and wheel chairs. We need fully fledged workshops.
DH2	We need Human Resource Development where teachers can be thoroughly trained in sign language and markers of deaf examination papers. I would recommend that enough or sufficient teaching and learning resources should be provided to the special schools. We also need enough deaf class assistants. Overhead projector. We also need sign language booklets and pamphlets with South African Language Terminologies. We need DVD's for Sign Language. The departmental head has proposed that the following additional support are needed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sign language laboratory • Assessment for sign language • Cubicles with computers • Workshop on sign language assessment class • Overhead projectors • Distribution of teachers according to Teacher Learner ratio • Redesign curriculum because the one who are implementing currently is not meant for deaf learners but for mainstream schools.
DH3	I think we have to work together to address some of the challenges. NGOs, Civil Society. Establish good relationship with Blind SA is very much important. I thinks Teams should be developed to continue to

	support visually impaired learners. We must develop action plan, we must also develop strategies to assist the visually impaired learners.
DH4	<p>We need fully fledged workshops</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enough manpower like teacher assistants to help learners to navigate in the school. • Special school instructors to assist learners in the school • Enough and tailor-made infrastructure relevant to CAPS in line with Special School • Resources relevant to teaching CAPS in line with Special Curriculum
DH5	<p>We need fully fledged workshops and the workshop should focus on 80% of practical work and 20% for theoretical work. In addition, we need regular workshops and support from other stakeholders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enough manpower like teachers who are competent and capable of teaching special needs learners. • Enough and tailor-made infrastructure relevant to Technical Occupational Curriculum • Resources relevant to teaching Technical Occupational Curriculum • Supply school with enough teachers like artisans' teachers
DH6	<p>We need fully fledged workshops and the workshop to be established in our schools. We need more training of teachers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers should also adjust their teaching and methods. <p>It is important for the Department of Education to provide special school with tailor-made infrastructure relevant to Technical Occupational Curriculum</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resources relevant to teaching Technical Occupational Curriculum • Supply school with enough teachers like artisans' teachers
DH7	There are three key additional support that are needed in our school namely: Personnel, Resources and Infrastructure.

	We also need equipment for workshops and assessment tools to be used. We need relevant assessment tools. We need subject's statements. I would recommend more workshops to be conducted to the teachers.
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Table 48: Teachers' responses on additional support needed to fully support the implementation of special school curriculum

Teachers	Responses
T1	What is needed is sufficient training or proper training on the implementation of curriculum. The DoE should provide each class with teacher assistants who will be able to help learners together with teachers. Special school learners demand attention and observation and therefore teacher assistants can play a major role with regard to that. The DoE should make sure that the teacher learner ratio of 1:7 is maintained. This will help to address overcrowding.
T2	What I would recommend is training for teachers on advanced sign language. More teacher assistants for deaf should be provided. In each class we should have two teacher assistants, currently we have a very few of them. We also need advanced training in sign language course of workshop. The DoE should capacitate special schools with curriculum advisors who have been trained to work with special schools mostly in sign language. The DoE should make sure that the teacher learner ratio of 1:7 is maintained and adhered too. Currently I have 21 learners instead of having 09. Therefore, I am operating and managing overcrowded class daily.
T3	Equipment's like wheel chairs and therapists
T4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equipment's like wheel chairs and professionals to assist the learners • Budget to buy educational equipment's

<p style="text-align: center;">T5 and T6</p>	<p>What is needed is sufficient training or proper training concerning TOC Curriculum.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Education to conduct continuous workshops. • The success of curriculum implementation entirely depends on the nature of curriculum training conducted by the Department of Education. • Provide sufficient teaching and learning resources • Insufficient time for preparation • Provision of infrastructure. • Special education teachers to be involved in curriculum design and development. • Adopt the approach of developing curriculum for mainstream schools in the special schools • Provision of Human resources • Forge relationship with different structures to support special school curriculum <p>I think it is important for the DoE to capacitate our district and all the circuits with curriculum advisors who are trained to support special schools.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support from other stakeholders.
<p style="text-align: center;">T7</p>	<p>We need infrastructure that will allow teachers to conduct workshops especially for TOC subjects. We also need machinery for carpentry.</p> <p>We need proper training and equipment's to empower teachers to implement curriculum</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We need training of the trainees • We need skills instructors • We need proper infrastructure • Curriculum development should also involve teachers or the DoE should involve teachers in curriculum development especially for special school.
<p style="text-align: center;">T8 and T9</p>	<p>What is needed is sufficient training or proper training concerning TOC Curriculum</p>

Table 49: Interventions proposed by departmental heads

Departmental Head	Response
DH1	Limpopo Department of Education to thoroughly train us on CAPS and Differentiated curriculum. Renovation of pools in our school is critical. Provision of enough resources is critical. For proper implementation of CAPS in special school there is a need to have professional support or support from professionals and team support.
DH2	Limpopo Department of Education to thoroughly train us on CAPS and use of sign language. Curriculum should be redesigned to suit special category of learners. Various stakeholders such as NGO, Civil Organisation, Churches, DoE, Department of Health and other relevant stakeholders to work together to assist special schools. Limpopo Department of Education to thoroughly train us on CAPS and use of sign language. Curriculum should be redesigned to suit special category of learners. Various stakeholders such as NGO, Civil Organisation, Churches, DoE, Department of Health and other relevant stakeholders to work together to assist special schools.
DH3	Limpopo Department of Education to train teachers on CAPS and braille.
DH4	<p>Collaborative approach I think it is necessary for different stakeholders to work together to support the special schools. This collaboration between different stakeholders can add a lot of value in the provision of relevant materials, infrastructure and solving challenges pertaining to the special needs' learners together.</p> <p>Stakeholder engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder engagement is the best approach that can be adopted by all the special schools. This will assist the special school to plan education and challenges with relevant stakeholders who are

	<p>knowledgeable about special school curriculum and settings.</p> <p>DoE and NGO to work together.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DoE and NGO should work together to assist special school to achieve its mandate • The DoE Should employ mobility instructors to help learners to navigate in the school • We need mobility instructors to assist the learners how to navigate in the school since all the learners are visually impaired • I think teachers who are teaching in special school should receive incentives • Braille paper should be provided to school because questions papers are done in an ordinary language • Braille question papers should be distributed to the school • Curriculum advisors should be trained in inclusive education in curriculum is critical • Curriculum advisors should be trained for inclusive education. • Donation to support the school • Use disabled teachers who will be able to understand special category of learners better. <p>We also need the involvement of SAPS In our school we have learners who are involved in drugs and anti-social behaviour. Therefore, SAPS can play a major role in addressing these learners not to be involved in drugs and other dangerous activities that are harmful to the learners.</p> <p>Social Development There are learners who does not come to school because of the shortage of money for transport. Therefore, Social Development can assist by making sure that learners are given grant that could assist them in transport.</p> <p>Forge relationship with Local Hospital</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special school should forge relationship with local hospitals because in our schools we don't have nurses and there are
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	<p>problems or infirmities that can be addressed by hospitals and the nurses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Therefore there is a need to involve professionals such as social workers, psychologists, physiotherapist which we do not have currently. <p>Community involvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What I have observed is that some of community members discriminate and marginalise the special needs learners• They must treat them with fairness and dignity <p>Special school teachers should be involved in curriculum design and development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• I think it is important for the special school teachers to be involved in curriculum design and development for special schools.• This is due to the fact that they know what is working in the classroom and what is not working in the classroom situation.• They can assist a lot in terms of designing curriculum which is relevant to the special school because they know and understand the nature of learners they are dealing with and the methodology which can work better.• In addition, subjects to be offered in special schools should be designed by the special school teachers• DoE should adhere to teacher learner ratio in special school like for example 1:4 or 1:5. In addition, the DoE should provide relevant and enough materials• The Department of Social Development should support parents with learners with disabilities by providing them with grants so that they can be able to pay for transport because some of them they come from far that is the reason why we have the challenge of absenteeism.• Forums should be organised with parents of learners with disabilities so that we can share with them on how to assist them
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	<p>whilst they are at home in terms of their homework's etc.</p>
<p>DH5</p>	<p>Yes,</p> <p>Collaborative approach I think it is necessary for different stakeholders to work together to support the special schools. This collaboration between different stakeholders can add a lot of value in the provision of relevant materials, infrastructure and solving challenges pertaining to the special needs learners together.</p> <p>Stakeholder engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder engagement is the best approach that can be adopted by all the special schools. This will assist the special school to plan education and challenges with relevant stakeholders who are knowledgeable about special school curriculum and settings. <p>We also need the involvement of SAPS In our school we have learners who are involved in drugs and anti-social behaviour. Therefore, SAPS can play a major role in addressing these learners not to be involved in drugs and other dangerous activities that are harmful to the learners.</p> <p>Social Development There are learners who does not come to school because of the shortage of money for transport. Therefore, Social Development can assist by making sure that learners are given grant that could assist them in transport.</p> <p>Forge relationship with Local Hospital</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special school should forge relationship with local hospitals because in our schools we don't have nurses and there are problems or infirmities that can be addressed by hospitals and the nurses. • Therefore there is a need to involve professionals such as social workers, psychologists, physiotherapist which we do not have currently.

	<p>Community involvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What I have observed is that some of community members discriminate and marginalise the special needs learners • They must treat them with fairness and dignity <p>Special school teachers should be involved in curriculum design and development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I think it is important for the special school teachers to be involved in curriculum design and development of special schools. • This is due to the fact that they know what is working in the classroom and what is not working in the classroom situation. • They can assist a lot in terms of designing curriculum which is relevant to the special school because they know and understand the nature of learners they are dealing with and the methodology which can work better. • In addition, subjects to be offered in special schools should be designed by the special school teachers • DoE should adhere to teacher learner ratio in special school like for example 1:4 or 1:5. In addition, the DoE should provide relevant and enough materials • The Department of Social Development should support parents with learners with disabilities by providing them with grants so that they can be able to pay for transport because some of them they come from far that is the reason why we have the challenge of absenteeism. • Forums should be organised with parents of learners with disabilities so that we can share with them on how to assist them whilst they are at home in terms of their homework's etc.
DH6	<p>Yes, Collaborative approach</p> <p>I think it is necessary for different stakeholders to work together to support the special schools. This collaboration between different stakeholders can add a</p>

	lot of value in the provision of relevant materials, infrastructure and solving challenges pertaining to the special needs' learners together.
DH7	<p>Yes, I strongly feel that the DoE should involve teachers who are working in special school in the development of curriculum. The DoE should adopt bottom-up approach in terms of developing curriculum for special schools. I believe teachers can provide relevant information to inform the development of the curriculum. I think if DoE involve teachers in curriculum development it will help them to achieve the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual attention will be considered for special school learners • Consider the language issue • Promote language development suitable for learners • Modify curriculum according to the needs of learners • Consider behavioural changes of learners into consideration

Table 50: Interventions proposed by teachers

Teachers	Responses
T1	The DoE should play their role of providing relevant resources for learners with special needs, capacitate special schools with curriculum advisors trained for special school. We need curriculum advisors who are knowledgeable on special schools' settings and its classroom settings. The DoE should provide continuous training. I think Civil Society, NGOs and parents should support the special schools. Working together I think it can make teachers' job easier.
T2	The DoE should involve special school teachers in curriculum development. The curriculum advisors should be thoroughly trained to support special schools. Bottom-up approach of developing curriculum could assist because they can share their

	classroom experiences and even to share with curriculum developers what is working and not working in special schools.
T3	The DoE should develop special school curriculum and not providing special school with curriculum that is implemented in mainstream schools.
T4	I think SGB, NGO, Parents and special schools should work together to assists in special school education.
T5 and T6	<p>The DoE should apply the bottom-up approach in terms of developing curriculum for special schools. They should involve special school teachers in the development of curriculum because they know exactly what the limitations, challenges, what is working and what is not working in terms of teaching special needs learners are.</p> <p>Curriculum advisors for special school should be training thoroughly so that they can be able to assist the special schools accordingly. We also well-designed curriculum with ATP, lesson plans and assessment strategies for special school learners. Teachers' and learners' books should be designed for special school. I would like to recommend collaborative approach where the following structures can work together to assist the special schools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Education to use bottom-up approach in terms of developing special school curriculum • Special school teachers to be involved in curriculum development. • Special School Curriculum advisors to be trained • Involvement of hospitals and nurses • Involvement of professionals like psychologists, social workers, physiotherapists etc. • Involvement of Special Development specially to provide grants to special needs learners

T7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The DoE should work together with other government departments to achieve what is expected in the special schools. • Parents should be involved in their children’s education. • Special school departmental heads and teachers should be involved in curriculum design and development. • Collaborative approach is one of the interventions to address challenges experienced by departmental heads and teachers in special schools.
T8 and T9	<p>The DoE should redesign the curriculum for the special school and involve teachers in the development of special school curriculum.</p>