

**IMPLEMENTING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN BOTSWANA
PRIMARY SCHOOL SETTINGS: AN EXPLORATION OF
TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF CURRICULUM,
CURRICULUM ADAPTATIONS AND CHILDREN WHO HAVE
LEARNING DIFFICULTIES**

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ABSTRACT

Mainstream education was declared by the government of Botswana as a priority for educating learners with special educational needs especially those with Learning Difficulties - LD since 1984. The Revised National Policy on Education (1994) articulates governments' commitment to the education of all children, advocating for an inclusive education as much as is feasible. This study is an exploration of what teachers do in their schools and/or classrooms to implement inclusive education particularly looking at how they understand curriculum, curriculum adaptations and what they do to differentiate for learners who have LD through their teaching. Six primary schools in urban, semi-urban and rural areas were purposively selected and data were collected through classroom observations, interviews and document analysis. Seventeen participants participated in the study.

The findings reveal that teachers' conceptualization and understanding of inclusive education seemed not to fit within the national requirements of using learner-centred approaches. The findings also reveal that the teachers' conceptualisation and understanding of inclusive education seem embedded within the cultural concept of 'botho' (respect for humanity), a discourse which takes into account accepting all individuals. Although participants embrace the concept of inclusive education, this seems to be on a theoretical basis since in practice it seems that learners who have LD were not given learning opportunities which allow them to participate in the teaching and learning process.

Finally, participants identify some barriers such as an examination oriented curriculum, class sizes and lack of teachers' skills and knowledge as areas which hinder the implementation of inclusive education. The study challenges the traditional use of authoritarian approaches of teaching as one way of perpetuating exclusionary circumstances within Botswana schools as it leaves learners who have LD with little chance of accessing the curriculum. A dynamic constructive relationship between curriculum, teachers and learners is suggested, moving from 'teaching the curriculum' to 'understanding and developing inclusive curricula' within a social constructivist discourse.

Key words: Inclusive education, curriculum, curriculum adaptations, Learning Difficulties.

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MOTIVATION FOR THE RESEARCH: How many learners are falling through the cracks?

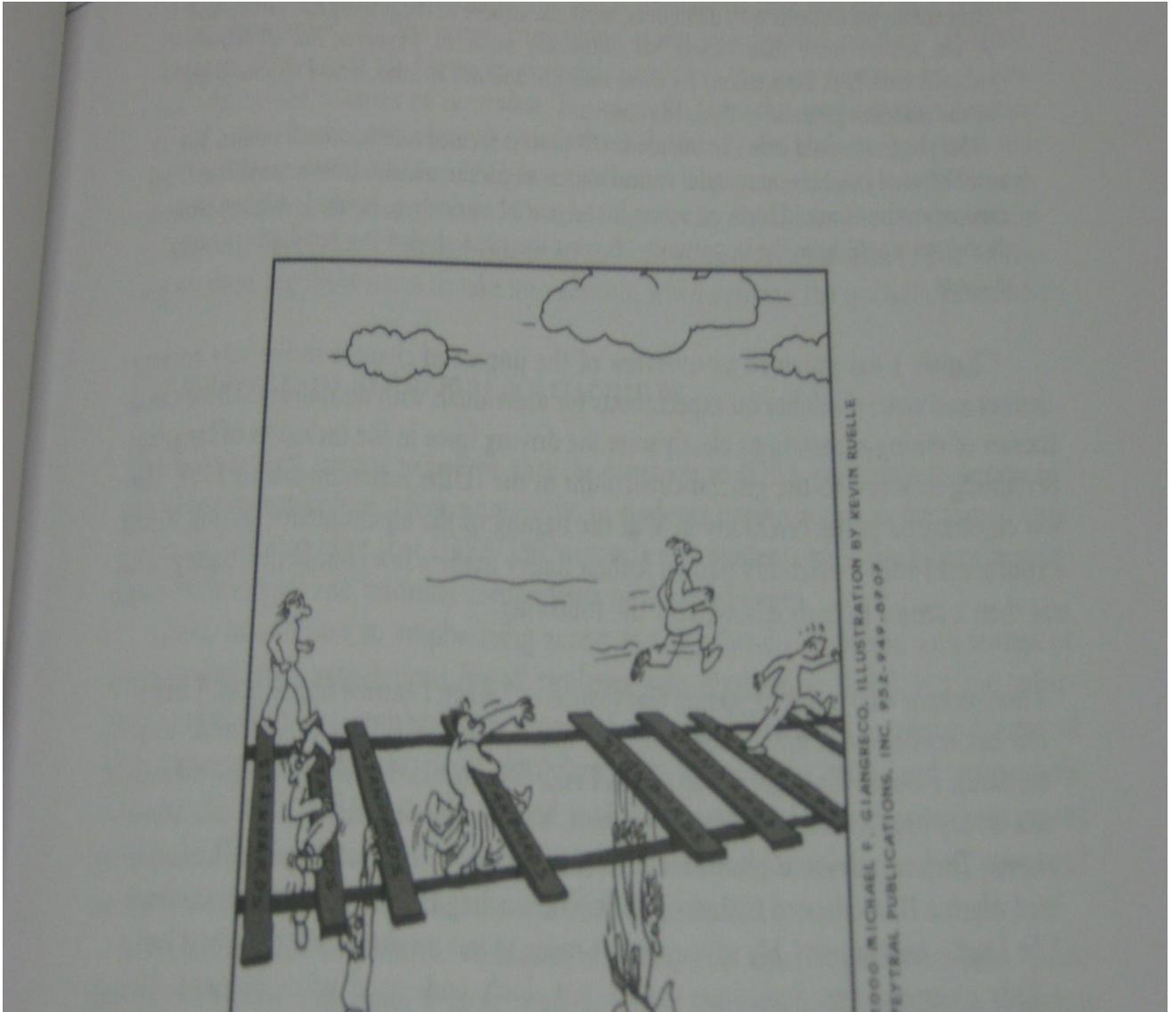


Figure 1: Motivation for the research – Adapted from Wehmeyer et al (2002)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It would take volumes to list all the individuals who assisted me in some way through this most challenging paradigm shift. In particular I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to:

- My Heavenly father who because of His mercies, I managed to do this.
- Dr. Phil Bayliss. Thank you for your guidance, support and motivation. Your passion for inclusive education truly inspired me. Your kind and constructive advice were very helpful.
- Dr. Hazel Lawson. I am very grateful for the time and effort you put into guiding me and giving academic support which eventually borne this piece of work.
- Professor C.O. Abosi. Thank you for believing in me and persuading me to join academia. You are there to witness this.
- All the head-teachers and teachers of the schools where I did my research, thank you for opening your doors for me and for participating whole-heartedly in this research.
- My husband Edwin. Thank you for your love and support. Being away from home was hard for both of us but you remained supportive regardless.
- My beloved son Lefika. I know how hard it was for you without me for some time, but am glad you survived all the pressures.

- My true and humble sister UDAH. I am humbled by the way you supported me during the 4 years I was away from home. You took care of all my belongings. You are the best, I would not ask for any sister.

- To all my friends in Botswana. Goitsemanang, Rose and Manesu you remain special and you are lilies among thorns. Thanks for your emails and telephone calls encouraging me to persevere.

- To all my friends in Exeter. Thomas, Sara and Tina. Thank you for being there for me and finding time in your busy schedules to look through and discuss my work.

- Last but not least. A big thank you to the University of Botswana for entrusting me with their huge sums of money, I am truly honoured by this.

DEDICATION

THIS THESIS IS DEDICATED TO:

My late father, Mr. Thebe Otukile-a-Mbikiwa, you were an inspiration in my life. My beloved mother Mrs Boikanyo Otukile -a-Tsholohelo - a -Maseba; Thank you for always praying for me, your prayers have taken me far mum, you are a shining star!

And to

All my late, my now and my future siblings, your inspiration will go a long way.

PRELUDE

I have been privileged to have had the opportunity to do this research in my home country Botswana, and to have worked with the participants who participated in this study.

I was born and raised in Botswana, attended my primary, secondary and part of my tertiary education there. I trained as a primary school teacher at the then Francistown Teacher Training College and obtained a Primary Teachers' Certificate after which I trained as a Special Education Teacher at the Lusaka College for Teachers of the Handicapped in Zambia specializing in teaching children with mental retardation (as it was called then) now learning difficulties (as referred to in Botswana). I did my first degree at the University of Botswana where I specialized in English and Setswana and also took some courses in Special Education. I completed my Masters degree in Special Education/Inclusive Education in the United States of America at the University of Northern Colorado. I have also attended summer school (Special Education) in Norway at the University of Oslo. I consider myself to have been privileged to have travelled to different countries to witness how these countries implement their special education programmes.

Having worked at different levels of education in Botswana for the past 26 years, from primary, college of education to university, I can boldly say this has been a journey worth the effort. This journey has linked me to teachers, parents, learners with special educational needs and government officials, and the link has immensely contributed to the person I am today. Above all, it has made me an advocate on issues of teacher education, equalization of opportunities for learners who have special educational needs and inclusive education, hence the current study.

I have contributed to a number of issues in Botswana including publishing papers on issues of inclusive education, advocating for the equalization of opportunities for learners with special educational needs through taking part in workshops and writing research papers on such issues, taken part in the development of inclusive education policy and have held several workshops for teachers in and around Gaborone (my work station) on issues of disability and inclusion. I enjoyed the positive reception I had during the phase of my field work for this thesis as the relationships built during the 26 years proved to be pivotal to gaining access to schools and government offices. I hope

this research will not only be beneficial to me as the sole researcher, but it will go a long way in assisting all who will want to learn more about issues of curriculum, inclusive education and learners who have LD.

ABBREVIATIONS

B.ED - Bachelors Degree in Education

CAPA - Creative and Performing Arts

DA - Document Analysis

DFID – Department of International Development

EFA - Education for All

FEU - Further Education Curriculum Review and Development Unit

IEP - Individualised Educational Plan

INT - Interviews

JCE - Junior Certificate Examinations

JSS - Junior Secondary Schools

LD - Learning Difficulties

MLD - Moderate Learning Difficulties

MoE - Ministry of Education (as referred to from 1966-2007)

MoESD- Ministry of Education and Skills Development (as referred to since 2008)

NCE - National Commission on Education

NDP – National Development Plan

NPE - National Policy on Education

OBS - Observation

OECD - Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

PE - Policy on Education

PL - Primary Lower

PSLE - Primary Leaving School Examinations

PTC - Primary Teachers Certificate

RNPE- Revised National Policy on Education

SEN - Special Educational Needs

SPED - Special Education

STAD - Senior Teacher-Learning Difficulties

STD - Standard

UN - United Nations

[] - My Own Words

DEFINITION OF TERMS:

Batswana: people of the country of Botswana

Bogwera: initiation traditional school for females in Botswana

Bojale: initiation traditional school for males in Botswana

Botho: respect for humanity

Learning Difficulty: in the Botswana context this refers to learners who have mild to moderate intellectual disabilities mostly found in regular schools. Teachers usually refer to these learners as ‘slow learners’ or underachievers.

Mental handicap/intellectual disabilities (referring to those with severe learning difficulties): All government documents before and after 1994 referred to this as mental handicap. Since 2010 mental handicap is now referred to as intellectual disabilities in all government documents even though in schools and elsewhere, teachers still use the word mental handicap.

Motswana: a person who is a Botswana National

Regular schools: refers to mainstream schools where general education provision for most learners is provided.

Setswana: is a national language of Botswana whilst English is the official language of the country.

Tswana: way of life of the Batswana.

CHAPTER ONE

1.1 Introduction

Providing access to the general curricula for learners with special educational needs (SEN) has become a worldwide concern. As Florian and Mclaughlin (2008:3) explain, ‘Many countries are experiencing an increase in the number of children being identified as in need of special or additional provision’. As a result, countries are now taking a new direction in making efforts to accommodate the needs of these learners. A paradigm that has gained ground in many educational circles is inclusive education. This shift proposes a rethinking of ways of making education accessible and equitable to all learners. Such commitment to including learners from diverse backgrounds and SEN in inclusive settings has been the aspiration of restructuring education in Botswana, the country of focus in this thesis. Many advocates of inclusion believe that inclusion is morally and ethically right for learners experiencing difficulties with learning. This belief of what is morally right has however fuelled debate and controversy surrounding inclusion. Armstrong et al (2010:7-8) explain that ‘in the newly globalizing discourse of inclusion the debate should be placed in the context of the intersection between colonial histories and post colonial contexts of countries’. Therefore globalization and its impact on how countries like Botswana view inclusion may be understood from this perspective which Armstrong et al refer to as ‘a technical rationalism’(any view appealing to reason as a source of knowledge or justification). Those in support of inclusion cite some advantages for growth in social cognition (Hick et al, 2009; Mitchell, 2008) whereas there are those who express concern about the impact of inclusion on academic learning for learners who are deemed not to have special educational needs (Irmsher, 1995; Douglas, 2010).

Regardless of the tensions arising from these debates, educators are expected to review their pedagogical approaches and classroom practices to see if they are responsive to the needs of learners who have SEN.

1.2 Background and rationale of the study

After Botswana gained its independence from colonial rule in 1966, the first National Commission on Education was appointed which was to look at enhancing access to universal basic education for all children. The Commission was charged with formulating the country’s philosophy of education, setting goals for the development of education/training and recommending the best strategies for achieving these goals. The

Commission came up with 134 main recommendations all of which were adopted by Parliament and have become the basis for the National Policy on Education now set forth in the Government White Paper No.2 of 1994 referred to as The Revised National Policy on Education (Matale, 2002). With reference to Botswana's Ten Year Basic Education Program's Curriculum Blueprint (1995:2), Botswana's education system aims at: promoting the all-round development of the individual; fostering intellectual growth and creativity, enabling every citizen to achieve his/her full potential, developing moral, ethical and social values, cultural identity, self esteem and good citizenship. Like many other developing countries, Botswana has put education at the top of its priorities during the last two decades. To achieve this, the Ministry of Education and Skills Development (MoESD) has initiated several projects to achieve a sustainable and reliable educational system for all children. The RNPE (1994) paid special emphasis to the education of children with special educational needs. The main issues in this strategy regarding the provision of education for children with special educational needs are related to access, quality, and system management. This strategy has paid more attention for providing education to children with SEN in inclusive settings as a means for achieving equality among all children.

Whilst there is a move towards educating children with SEN in inclusive settings to cope with the worldwide surge towards inclusive education, special education in Botswana is provided in a variety of settings: special schools, special units attached to 'regular' schools (the term used in Botswana for mainstream schools), resource classrooms and more recently, through inclusive arrangements in regular schools. The demand for services for children with special educational needs at all levels in Botswana has increased as a result of the government's commitment to the Education for All (EFA) goals (UNESCO, 2000), creating an opportunity for a large number of children to enrol in existing regular education schools and in the government owned special education schools (MoE, 2005).

After 17 years since the government of Botswana declared inclusive education as a priority for educating learners who have SEN especially those who have LD (RNPE, 1994), it was a timely response to visit schools to explore and see what teachers are doing in their classrooms to implement inclusive education and what their understanding is of what they do. As inclusive education is an innovation about change, it is argued that teachers have an essential role to play in the implementation of this change as they are responsible for implementing many of the changes necessary to put

this policy into practice. Most of the researches conducted in Botswana have been concerned with attempting to explain what inclusive education is or what it is not (Hopkins, 2004, Mukhopadhyay et al 2009). The current study examines teachers' understandings of what they do in their schools and classrooms within a cultural context, which is different from many other contexts especially western ones where inclusion is regarded as the prominent educational provision for children with SEN (Booth & Ainscow, 2000, Ocloo & Subbey, 2008). Through the journey of the current thesis, the study attempts to problematise these issues so it may contribute in exploring the concept of inclusion in an African context.

1.3 *Statement of the problem*

Existing research shows that many teachers feel neither competent nor confident in their ability to teach pupils with special needs in inclusive settings (Cains & Brown, 1996; Garner, 2001; Lombardi & Hunka, 2001). This pattern has been noted internationally where many researchers express concern about the extent to which all classroom teachers are prepared to teach pupils with a wide range of learning needs (Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996; Schumm & Vaughn, 1995). When it comes to different education systems, most were initially constructed to include some children and exclude others. This differentiation implied that those children who could not cope within the regular education system because of their differences be separated. 'This separation brought the idea of special and ordinary schools which promoted a traditional and medical view of special needs as the attention was focused on the problem affecting the individual child' (Carrington, 1999:257). This has greatly influenced beliefs, attitudes and practices in education. Du Toit (1996) explains that children identified as having 'special educational needs' were labelled and placed in special settings that excluded them from the mainstream of education and of society, frequently, if not always, in the genuine belief that this was in their best interests.

In Botswana, the Ministry of Education's Revised National Policy on Education (RNPE, 1994) provides a framework for implementing inclusive education in Botswana. However, teachers still find it a challenge to teach learners who have learning difficulties in inclusive settings [researchers' experience as a teacher trainer]. Some of the teachers go to the extent of concealing the fact that they have been trained as special educators for fear of being given a class with these children or fear of being used in the schools as resource persons to educate other teachers who do not have any knowledge in issues of inclusive education (Abosi, 2005). Having indicated that, this

situation as Abosi continues to explain, has left learners who have LD to continue lagging behind their counterparts of the same age and do not progress as they are supposed to because they do not equally access the curriculum.

How teachers deal with the situation of accessing the curriculum for learners who have learning difficulties, what their views are on issues of curriculum, curriculum adaptations, on learners who have learning difficulties and how these views influence or hinder the implementation of inclusive education is a concern for this study. This state of affairs developed my interest in finding out what teachers do in their respective classrooms to make curriculum adaptations for these learners as a way of implementing inclusive education as advocated for by RNPE (1994). It is my desire that this type of exploration could provide procedure for and insight into effectively including learners who have LD.

1.4 *Aims / objectives of the study*

The main aim of the study was to gain an in-depth understanding and insight into what teachers do in their classrooms or schools to meet educational needs of learners who have LD in inclusive primary school settings.

The objectives of the study were:

- To explore and describe the experiences of educators in inclusive primary school settings.
- To identify and describe factors in schools that influence or hinder the implementation of inclusive education
- To establish how classroom activities facilitate curriculum adaptations in view of implementing inclusive education
- To analyze and describe new ways of understanding curriculum which will assist teachers to come up with new ways of enabling learners who have LD to equally access curriculum.

1.5 *Research questions*

The following questions guided this study:

- 1) What is the nature of inclusive education in the classroom (from teacher's perspectives in Botswana)?
- 2) How do teachers understand issues of curriculum and/or curricula?
- 3) How does inclusive education relate to the concept of curriculum adaptations?

- 4) What do teachers do in practice to distinguish children who have LD from other children in the classroom setting'?
- 5) How do teachers' actions and understanding fit with the national requirements?
(Standards and curriculum)

These questions are qualitative in nature and were aimed at gaining insight into and understanding of what teachers do in their classrooms to implement inclusive education and their understanding of what they do. This is a qualitative research study, employing qualitative research methods including interviews, observation and document analysis. The study is exploratory because:

- It attempts to explore how teachers implement inclusive education in their respective classrooms through adapting the curriculum for learners who have LD
- It focuses on finding out the processes teachers use in making curriculum adaptations to implement inclusive education.
- Finally, the study seeks to facilitate the design of future research on the closing the gap between policy and practice so that implementation of inclusive education may be feasible.

It was beyond the scope of this study to evaluate the implementation of inclusive education or curriculum adaptations in Botswana hence the exploration.

1.6 *Significance and originality of the study*

This study as an exploration of what teachers do in their schools and classrooms to implement inclusive education particularly looking at how they understand curriculum, curriculum adaptations and what they do to differentiate learners who have LD through their teaching, has the potential to positively impact on a number of stakeholders, amongst whom are general and/or special education teachers, learners and parents. Teachers are likely to widen their scope as they acquire knowledge in understanding curriculum differently and how they can make curriculum adaptations to cater for different learning needs. They could incorporate this knowledge to make their teaching more inclusive for all learners. Classroom instruction may become more interesting, significant and worth the effort for learners experiencing problems in their learning. The study has the potential to contribute to scholarly research, improving policy and practice of teaching learners with LD as well as informing teacher trainers on

the gaps that exist in Botswana's special education programmes with regard to curriculum adaptations. Additionally they may be able to identify and collate the knowledge and competencies required by teacher trainees to enable them to have confidence and competence in teaching learners with LD within inclusive frameworks. The study will also has the potential to bring new insights to the Ministry of Education and Skills Development - MoESD, policy makers and policy implementers to examine the gap between policy and practice and find ways of closing this gap for the implementation of inclusive education to be effective in Botswana schools. Finally, I can claim originality in this study because no study exists at present which has looked at this before in the Botswana context.

1.7 *Theoretical framework*

This study will focus on a theoretical framework based on constructivist theory as a paradigm for teaching and learning particularly leaning towards the social constructivism approach. Constructivism refers to a collection of educational practices that are student-focused, meaning-based, process-oriented, interactive, and responsive to students' personal interests and needs (Honebein, 1996). In contemporary educational contexts, constructivism is the term used to describe student-centred, process-driven, loosely structured, and highly interactive instructional practices (Ernest, 1995; Prawat, 1996; Von Glasersfeld, 1996). Constructivism defines learning as a process of active knowledge construction and not as passive knowledge absorption (Freiberg, 1999; Reigeluth, 1999; Von Glasersfeld, 1996). Rather than absorbing information and ideas presented by teachers, or internalizing skills through rote memorization, constructivism posits that students construct or create their own knowledge (Phillips, 1995). This theory emphasizes that people construct their own understanding and knowledge of the world, through experience and reflecting on those experiences. Constructivist theory unlike other theories sees a teacher as a guide in a learning environment, who urges learners to be actively involved in their own process of learning. The teacher is conceptualized as a facilitator of student understanding as opposed to a transmitter of knowledge. The role of the teacher is not to dispense knowledge but to provide students with opportunities and incentives to make meaning (Von Glasersfeld, 1995).

This theory is relevant to this study as it stresses the importance of acknowledging that learners are different; as a result, from this view, teachers should vary their pedagogical strategies in order to cater for the differences in their classrooms. It advocates for a change in perspective [from teacher dominance to child centredness]

and suggests that a constructivist classroom should be where learning is constructed, reflective, collaborative, inquiry based and evolving. For constructivists, the emphasis is on learning processes as opposed to learning products. Although various interpretations and applications exist, constructivist instruction and constructivist classrooms are characterized by authenticity and by a focus on students Jonassen (1996) and Honebein (1996) points out that constructivist classroom create relevant environments in which learning is functional and instructional focus is on satisfying actual student needs and solving real problems. This theory takes in perspectives from philosophers like Bruner who initiated curriculum change based on the notion that learning is an active, social processes in which students construct new ideas or concepts based on their current knowledge. According to a Vygotskian perspective, dialogue is also central to the process of knowledge construction (Vygotsky, 1978).

The learner in this case is actively involved in meaning construction with the assistance of the teacher and other peers. The teacher plans activities and organizes scaffold learning processes for the learner to progress and develop to his or her full potential. This process of interaction is supportive of what Vygotsky refers to as the amount of support or intervention the learner receives from more knowledgeable others. Unlike previous educational viewpoints where the responsibility rested with the instructor to teach and the learner played a passive and receptive role, a constructivist view sees the teacher as a facilitator who helps the learner to develop his or her own understanding of the content (Von Glasersfeld, 1996). Moreover, social constructivism views each learner as a unique individual with unique needs and backgrounds. According to Wertsch (1997) social constructivism not only acknowledges the uniqueness and complexity of the learner, but actually encourages, utilizes and rewards it as an integral part of the learning process. From an inclusion point of view, learners are individuals and teachers are to recognize their individuality in the way they carry out curricular activities. Inclusion principles for inclusive practices further refer to classrooms as communities, where learning is socially mediated, the curriculum is contextually relevant and problem based, and assessment is authentic and meaningful (Vrasidas, 2000).

This study argues for a paradigmatic shift away from the individualistic models of development and learning to a social constructivist model that stems from views of learning and development first articulated by Vygotsky. Thus, Vygotsky theory of Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) provides the framework for effective inclusive

teaching and learning in the classroom. The theory of ZPD will assist in understanding learners' experiences as they progress through the process of teaching and learning. This means that teachers have the obligation to develop activities that will extend the learners current knowledge to new knowledge which can be absorbed by the learner and located within the learners' ZPD (Vygostky, 1978). Such a shift is supportive of the current movement for more inclusive classroom practices through an emphasis on the socio-cultural context, the role of social activity including instruction in learning, and the contributions of learners to their own development. Social constructivists insist that knowledge creation is a shared rather than an individual experience. As Goodman (1986) maintains, 'knowledge is developed by the dialectical interplay of many minds, not just one' (p.87). Therefore, learning according to these authors should be an interactive experience. The notion of interaction stresses the idea that this study proposes, that learners are to be exposed to constructivist learning principles and learn in an environment that promotes continuous interaction between the teacher, learner and curriculum. If learners are to be active participants in the process of teaching and learning, the theory of ZPD also allows the study to explore how teachers can shift from taking that which 'the curriculum' suggests to understanding curriculum with the view of implementing inclusive education.

1.8 *Description of the structure of the thesis*

The thesis is organized in 8 chapters including the current one. I begin with introducing the study to the reader, followed by describing how the thesis will be structured.

Chapter one presents the statement of the problem, significance of the study, research questions, purpose of the study, aims and objectives, theoretical framework guiding this study and definition of terms.

Chapter two presents the contextual background about Botswana and its general educational system before and after independence. It also encompasses policy issues guiding the education of learners who have Special Educational Needs (SEN) and a general historical overview of special education with reference to teacher training and the role that Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) play in the education of these learners.

Chapter three provides a comprehensive review of literature relevant to the main concepts and issues addressed in the study which are inclusive education, curriculum,

curriculum adaptations and learning difficulties. The literature provides different understandings of these issues in Africa and elsewhere and discusses and identifies concerns that lead to the derivation of main issues under discussion.

Chapter four outlines the research paradigm, justification of research paradigm and research methodology. These are followed by research design, research field, participants, and procedure prior to data collection, data collection methods, data management and analysis, trustworthiness and ethical considerations.

Chapter five includes presentation and analysis of the findings of the study based on six themes namely: 1) Curriculum (translation of curriculum, curriculum concept, curriculum adaptation) 2) Inclusive education (philosophical understanding of inclusive education, feelings about inclusive education, key areas of barriers for implementing inclusive education, benefits of inclusive education) 3) Pedagogy (pedagogical approaches, linguistic power and instruction) 4) Policy and practice 5) Difference and sameness, and 6) Support. Further, it provides interpretation and discussions around the findings of the study with reference to literature and provides responses to the five research questions. It is in this chapter that participants' understanding of inclusive education, curriculum, curriculum adaptations and learning difficulties are thematically presented.

Chapter six presents the theoretical and practical implications for practice, cultural context of the study, recommendations for further research, personal journey and conclusions.

CHAPTER TWO

CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

2.1 *Introduction*

The context of this study is based on the country of 'Botswana'; its people are 'Batswana'. The language spoken is 'Setswana' and way of life of Batswana is referred to as 'Tswana'. This chapter presents a brief profile of Botswana and its educational system. The emphasis will be specifically on the education of children with special educational needs particularly those who have learning difficulties (LD) a term used in Botswana to refer to learners who are educated in regular schools but continue to fail or lag behind their peers who do not have learning difficulties. Some policies guiding the education and welfare of these learners will be discussed including the Revised National Policy on Education (RNPE) MoE (1994) and the National Commission on Education (NCE) MoE (1993).

2.2 *Botswana in brief*

Botswana is in Southern Africa with a population of approximately 1.7 million and an area of 582,000 square kilometres. It was formerly known as Bechuanaland, being a protectorate of Great Britain until gaining its independence in 1966. Unlike most of its neighbours, there was no struggle to achieve independence, the process was relatively smooth. At the time of independence, it was one of the poorest countries in the world with a poorly developed economic, structural and educational infrastructure (National Development Plan, 2008). Botswana is landlocked by South Africa to the south, Zimbabwe to the east and Namibia to the west and north.

2.3 *Socio – economic background*

Traditionally, Batswana relied on cattle rearing for generating income and wealth. However, soon after independence large diamond deposits were discovered and the wealth from these drove growth rates to some of the highest in the world. The economy is still largely reliant on its diamond wealth although cattle and tourism also play a role. This wealth has been used for a massive expansion in health, education and general infrastructure. The government has been keen to diversify the economic base, but efforts to do so have continued to prove difficult because of the high unemployment rate of around 21% (Botswana Tourism Board, 2006).

2.4 *Pre, during and post colonial education system*

Botswana was a British 'Protectorate' for 81 years, from 1885 to 1966. During the pre-colonial era, Botswana had some form of education which was 'part of the whole system of belief, religion as well as a means of socialising children into the accepted norms of society' (Crowder, 1984:22). This form of education was referred to as traditional education. Parsons (1984) classifies traditional education into three categories: informal, formal and vocational education. There was informal education in the home, which was mainly parenting and it included relations among siblings with emphasis on the aged as repositories of wisdom. Formal education was characterized by *bojale* and *bogwera* (adolescent initiation schools for females and males respectively). In *bojale* young women were formally taught matters concerning womanhood, sex related issues, behaviour towards men, domestic and agricultural activities. *Bogwera* was formal instruction for young male adults where they were circumcised and taught skills such as sewing for shields and clothing and modelling clay cattle to reinforce practical knowledge of livestock. They were trained to be responsible men, warriors and fathers. Vocational education consisted of part-time individual apprenticeships in trades such as medicine, mining and smelting. Skills in agriculture and hunting were also imparted. No records exist as to how children with special needs were incorporated (or not) into these groups (Dart et al, 2003). Children who are deemed to have special needs within a modern system would probably have coped very well as the teachings focused on an oral method and the learning of practical skills. However, Mautle (2001) explains that this traditional form of schooling was highly discouraged by missionaries and the protectorate authorities.

The introduction of Western education in Botswana replaced this traditional pre-colonial system. Since churches financed education, they were in full control of the curriculum and its content (Molosiwa, 2004). When Botswana finally became independent in 1966, its education policy shifted from colonial education to the kind of education that would meet the needs of the emerging society. Molosiwa (2004) further explains that education was seen as a crucial aspect of economic development and the development of human resources. Therefore post-primary education was emphasized and expanded during the early years of independence. In his speech in 2005, the then Minister of Education said that the general strategy of RNPE (1994) was to increase access to education at all levels and to close a chapter of restricting access to only a few privileged individuals, which was a legacy of Botswana's colonial past (News from Africa, 2005).

2.5 *Botswana's general education system after independence*

The education sector has expanded enormously since independence (1966). The RNPE did not only identify basic education as a fundamental human right but also established the goal of preparing Botswana for the transition from being a traditional agriculture-based economy to an industrial economy (RNPE,1994). The government further committed itself to the provision of a ten year basic education. This is seen as a strong basis upon which further levels of education and training would develop. The policy seeks to make education accessible to all including children with special educational needs. Other RNPE strategies for the disadvantaged included coming up with a facility for the identification and referral of children with special needs, increased enrolments of these children, establishment of a Braille production unit and the introduction of diploma and degree programmes in SEN. The MoESD has authority over all of Botswana's educational structure except the University of Botswana. Primary education is the most important stage in the educational system and the government strives to make this level of education accessible to everyone. Botswana operates a 9 subject system and the subjects are: Mathematics, English, Setswana, Science, Social studies, Moral education, Creative and Performing Arts (CAPA), Physical education and Agriculture. A ten year basic education is available to all. Pupils attend primary school from the age of 6 to 13years [though some start later, particularly in the more remote areas] and work towards the Primary School Leaving Examinations (PLSE) for seven years. They then move to Junior Secondary Schools (JSS) for three years and sit for another examination referred to as the Junior Certificate Examination (JCE) a standardized examination according to internationally accepted criteria. Basic education ends here and those who proceed to Senior Secondary Schools should have passed the JCE examination as they are competing for fewer places. The examination is to produce results that are reliable for the selection of students into senior secondary education or other training programmes (Ministry of Education and Skills Training, 2008). Since 2006 school fees for secondary education have been introduced as a way of cost sharing and cost recovery as it was stated in the RNPE that it is 'necessary that educational financing in future must emphasize cost- effectiveness and cost sharing; the government will continue to provide basic education free but beyond this level beneficiaries will contribute in varying degrees the cost of their training' (RNPE, 1994 paragraphs 14.1 and 14.2). The official languages in Botswana are Setswana and English, presently the medium of instruction in schools is English which is used from Standard 2 as per the recommendation of the new Policy on Education (PE, 2002).

2.6 *Details of the system*

The average number of pupils per teacher is used to measure the level of human resource input in terms of the number of teachers in relation to pupil population size (UNESCO, EFA Technical Guidelines, 1998). On the whole, Botswana has experienced notable improvements in reducing class sizes from 40 to 30 in the mid-1990s. Class sizes are more favourable in rural areas particularly because of low population density as compared to urban areas where classes may have 46 or more students (National Development Plan 8, 2003). Boys and girls are educated in mixed ability classes from primary to tertiary level and the Education Statistics Report (1997) confirms, the participation of boys and girls at the primary level is about equal. For operation and management of schools, Botswana is divided into six primary education regions and all the regions in the country use the same national curriculum.

2.7 *Other methods of education systems in Botswana*

Pre-school education is available only to those children whose parents can afford to send them to expensive day care centres and pre-schools. The overwhelming majority of parents do not have access to preschool programmes (Ministry of Education, 2001). Another form of accessing education in Botswana is through private English medium schools. These schools, although they are monitored by the Ministry of Education, have the autonomy to control their curriculum and as Molefe and Pansiri (2010) explain, they continue to be progressive and pragmatic in curriculum delivery and have maintained a sustained record of good performance in the national examination.

Following is a table showing how the general education system is structured in Botswana:

Level	Age	Standard/ Form	Type of Exam	School/Gov ernment based exam	Progression
Pre-school	0-6	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Primary school	6-7	std 1	In-class tests	School	Automatic promotion to the next standard/next level
	7-8	std 2	In-class tests	School	
	8-9	std 3	In-class tests	School	
	9-10	std 4	Attainment test In-class tests	MoESD	
	10-11	std 5	In-class tests	School	Automatic promotion to Junior Secondary
	11-12	std 6	PSLE	School	
	12-13	std 7		MoESD	
Junior secondary schools	13-14	Form 1	In-class end of term tests	School	Grade A, B or C required to progress to next level
	14-15	Form 2			
	15-16	Form 3	Junior Certificate Examination	MoESD	
Senior secondary school	16-17	Form 4	In-class end of term tests	School	8 point scale from 'A* to G'. A to C required for entry at tertiary level
	17-18	Form 5	BGCSE	MoESD	
Tertiary Education	18 and above	Certificate, diploma, degree	Varies by institution	MoESD	Varies by institution

Table 1: General education system in Botswana

Key: PSLE: Primary School Leaving Examination

BGCSE: Botswana General Certificate of Secondary School Examination

MoESD- Ministry of Education Skills and Development

N/A: Not applicable

According to the directory of the Ministry of Education Skills and Development (2010) the educations statistics are as follows:

- Pre Primary Education Enrolment 2010 = 24,433, 50.2 percent female pupils and 49.8 percent males
- Primary schools = there were 331,195 pupils enrolled in with female enrolment accounting for 48.8 percent and male enrolment 51.2 percent.

The net enrolment rate for the 6-12 years age range stood at 89.4 percent in 2010 with an increase of 4.4 percent from 2009. This indicates that just over 10 percent of this school going age are not in primary school.

2.7.1 Examinations and progression

The standard 4 attainment test serves as a checkpoint to enable teachers to assess the learning problems of learners in order to plan remedial measures. World Data on Education (2010) explain the attainment test covers work in the four levels of the lower primary syllabus. Up to now standard 4 pupils have been writing attainment tests in English, Mathematics and Setswana. The Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE), taken at the end of the primary level, is no longer used for selection into junior secondary school. The introduction of a basic education programme and the availability of places at junior secondary level ended the selection role of PSLE in 2005 (Ministry of Education, 2005).

However, the Junior Certificate Examination (JCE) taken at the end of the junior secondary level is used to determine progression into senior secondary school. Those who do not meet the JC Examinations requirements find themselves out of the education system, although some enrol in vocational and technical institutions such as the brigades training centres. The Botswana General Certificate of Secondary Examination (BGCSE), which is taken at the end of senior secondary education, also determines entry into different tertiary institutions. (Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality, 1995-2010).

The Junior Certificate Examination (JCE) and Botswana General Certificate of Secondary Education (BGCSE) are national examinations, which are used to make placement, selection, and/or admission decisions. Letshabo (2011) argues that a seemingly benign and yet controversial use of these types of examinations is that they yield information which is used to pick winners from losers, thereby earning themselves a description of 'high-stakes'.

High-stakes examinations have important consequences for examinees in Botswana, the most important consequence being that the opportunity to participate in the next cycle of education is extended to some learners, while such opportunity is denied others. Because of their high stakes nature, JCE and BGCSE are stressors for all candidates, even those candidates who have done the necessary preparations. Letshabo (2011) continues to point out that in Botswana, the transition from Form 3 to Form 4, or to gain admission into University of Botswana and other institutions of Higher Learning depends on the examinees' performance in the JCE and the BGCSE. This is the 'validity' of examinations central to any assessment activity. Loosely speaking, validity speaks to the extent to which results of individuals reflect their real performance, and

not error on the part of those who are trying to measure that performance. Education at this level becomes 'survival of the fittest', those who are not fit fall out of the system.

The rates of failure, as reported by Mmegi (2011), indicate that out of a total of 39,729 candidates who sat for the 2010 Junior Certificate Examinations (JCE) 24,240 scholars were admitted to Form Four. This follows the overall performance of the 2010 JCE results, which has shown a slight decline in the pass rate of 0.4 % compared to the 2009 results. The cut-off point was set at 45.61 %, which is an upper Grade C pass. From the summary of results, out of a total of 39,729 candidates who sat for the examination, 44 obtained Merit, 629 students passed with Grade A, 8,825 students passed with Grade B, while 19,902 obtained Grade C and 10,044 Grade D and 285 Grade E. The Botswana Government Certificate of Secondary Education (BGCSE) results released show a decline of 1.98 % in the pass rate (Baputaki, 2010).

Issues of school dropouts are also a concern in Botswana. Generally across all standards more boys drop out of school than girls, for instance, 65 % of the total primary school dropouts were boys in 2010 (Central Statistics Office, 2010). There has been a decline of 6.7 percent in primary school dropouts recorded between 2009 and 2010 from 3,425 to 3,195. It should however be noted that dropout figures are normally collected in the current year pertaining to those pupils who dropped out of the system during previous school calendar year. In both 2009 and 2010 years it is observed that most pupils drop out of school in standard 1. This could be due to various reasons such as distance from school or parents feeling the children might still be young to continue with school (MoESD, 2010).

2.7.2 Dropout by standard and gender 2009-2010:

Tables 2 and 3, show the number of boys and girls in primary schools from STD 1 to STD 7 including those who have special educational needs (SPED- as referred to by Central Statistics Office) who dropped out of school in 2009 and 2010 respectively. There were no data available for secondary school learners.

Sex	Std 1	Std 2	Std 3	Std 4	Std 5	Std 6	Std 7	SPED	Total
Boys	401	302	321	317	332	331	200	3	2,207
Girl	249	170	130	161	138	202	165	3	1,218
Totals	650	472	451	478	470	533	365	6	3,425
% =	19.0	13.8	13.2	14.0	13.7	15.6	10.7	0.2	100.0

Table 2:2009 Dropout by standard and gender.

Sex	Std1	Std 2	Std 3	Std 4	Std 5	Std 6	Std 7	SPED	Total
Boys	435	227	274	329	308	265	223	10	2,071
Girls	261	141	122	160	152	137	144	5	1,124
Totals	696	368	396	489	460	402	367	15	3,193
% =	21.8	11.5	12.4	15.3	14.4	12.6	11.5	0.5	100

Table 3: Dropout by standard and gender (Source- Central Statistics Office- Botswana, 2010)

2.7.3 Special education provision in Botswana

According to the Ministry of Education (2004) children with mental, visual, learning, physical and hearing disabilities are catered for on a full-time basis [Categories used in Botswana]. The MoE uses these categories for purposes of planning and budgeting. These categories are also used at the University of Botswana as areas of specialization and upon completion, graduates are placed in schools according to these areas of specialization [where possible] (Abosi & Murangi-Kandjii, 2002). Research has revealed that provision of special education [in Botswana] is developing through a two-pronged approach: Firstly this is through the expansion of provision through increasing the number and size of units attached to schools and secondly promoting SEN through School Intervention Teams (SITs) (Hopkins, 2003). SITs are intended to be an approach through which schools are empowered to meet the educational needs of learners identified to be having difficulties in their learning. The RNPE, (1994: Rec.92b) states that each school should have a senior teacher responsible for disabled children and who would coordinate these teams. The RNPE (1994:38) emphasised the improvement and access to education for all children and its goals which are relevant to inclusive education are expressed as follows:

- to ensure that all citizens of Botswana including those with special needs have equality of educational opportunities
- to prepare children with special educational needs for social integration by integrating them as far as possible with their peers in ordinary schools
- to enable all children with special educational needs to become members of the community...by enhancing their employment opportunities and to promote self reliance
- to ensure the support and active participation of the children's parents and community through an education and information program.

A number of specific objectives for special education appear in the National Development Plan (NDP 9) 2008/2009, but perhaps the feature to note is that the language has changed between RNPE and NDP from that of 'integrated education' to 'inclusive education'. Although there is an overlap between the two and they are often used interchangeably in Botswana, inclusive thinking demands that the structures and systems consider how they can best adapt themselves to a student's needs rather than adapting the student to meet their needs (Bergsma, 2000). This view is also supported by NDP 9 when indicating that those with special educational needs must have access to regular schools which should accommodate them within child centred pedagogy capable of meeting those needs. 'It is important that all children have access to education, but it is equally important that they are able to take part in school life and achieve the desired outcomes from their education experiences' (UNESCO, 2009:6). From this perspective, taking part in school life may lead to these learners having quality education.

It is the government's aim to educate all learners in mainstream settings as stipulated in the RNPE. Unlike developments in other countries where special schools preceded integrated programmes, Botswana identified mainstream education as a priority area and adopted the 'open' system of special education in which children with special needs are mainstreamed or included into regular schools and regular classrooms and they are taught by teachers with and without training in special education [it must be noted that there are a few special schools for learners with hearing impairment in Botswana]. Efforts to train teachers to have at least an awareness course in special education are being intensified as per the RNPE's recommendation.

The RNPE (1994) articulates governments' commitment to the education of all children and the NDP 9 (2003) advocates for an inclusive education as much as feasible. Defining inclusive education as an extension of an inclusive society should take into

account the fact that there was no formal government provision of special education in colonial times. A number of international agreements that impact on provision for children with special needs, to which Botswana is a signatory, have contributed to the country's participation in providing for these children. By adopting the Jomtein Declaration (The World Declaration on Education for All, 1990) the government recognised that the aims of education are common to all children and that education is a fundamental human right and therefore should be made accessible to all children including those with disabilities (RNPE, 1994). In signing the Dakar Framework for Action in 2000 (UNESCO, 2000) the government committed itself to achieving education for every citizen in every society and especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children. The national policy documents the government's expressed desire to support children with special needs. Though there was no mention of special needs in the first Education Policy (Vision 2016, 1997) the principle was that of Kagisano (social harmony) based on democracy, self-reliance, unity and development. In 1993, the National Commission on Education (NCE, 1993) concluded that the educational requirements of children with SEN were still not being met although universal access to basic education has been the declared aim and policy of the government of Botswana. The RNPE (1994) emphasises the improvement of access to education, assurance of provision of quality education and relevance of that education to children with SEN which it recognized as a disadvantaged group.

The MoESD is the biggest provider of educational services for several groups of children with SEN. Apart from the MoESD, churches and non-governmental organisations also play a role in the education and training of learners who have SEN in Botswana. Special education began to be formally approached in Botswana in 1969 through religious and non-governmental organizations. The Division of Special Education within the Ministry of Education was charged with the responsibility of overall coordination of early identification, assessment and education of children with SEN. The Division also advises other government ministries and non-governmental organizations on issues pertaining to the education of these children (Ministry of Education, 2005). The Ministry of Health's responsibility is to diagnose and care for the severely disabled while the Ministry of Local Government's responsibility is to maintain and equip all primary schools in Botswana. This three-way management has posed some problems in special education provision as observed by Botswana Federation of Trade Union (BFTU, 2006:14) that failure to review this may interfere

with the children's' progress in schools since they might wait for some equipment and or materials which the other ministry has not even budgeted for.

2.7.4 Current special education systems in Botswana

The RNPE recognises the need to increase participation for disadvantaged groups in basic education. Disadvantaged groups in the context of Botswana are those with various forms of disabilities, those who live in remote areas, learners from poor socio-economic backgrounds, HIV/AIDS victims, orphans and girls who drop out of school due to early pregnancy.

The RNPE delineated explicit goals for the provision of education for learners who have special educational needs and made recommendations for the alleviation of difficulties for other populations. One of the goals of RNPE is to mainstream special education services as part of the regular education system, and, where necessary, set up separate special education units (RNPE, 1994). For this reason, Botswana runs five types of systems to meet the education and training needs of learners who have SEN. The systems are: stimulation centres, special schools and centres, special units attached to regular schools, resource classrooms and inclusive arrangement within regular schools.

Stimulation centres

These are centres where children who are between the ages of 3 and 5 and have severe physical and intellectual disabilities are enrolled to receive therapy before they can have any placement in other settings discussed below. Stimulation centres are mostly owned and ran by churches and NGOs. They get financial assistance from the government of Botswana.

Special schools and centres

This includes schools or centres for specific disabilities such as hearing impairment and visual impairment. Specialists in areas of visual and hearing impairment teach in such centres.

Special education units attached to regular Schools

These are mostly units for learners with mental handicap (severe intellectual disabilities). These units are attached to regular schools and learners are able to mix with others during morning assembly, lunch break and they share playgrounds and

kitchen facilities. Recently there has been a new development of opening special units for learners with visual impairment in regular schools (MoESD, 2010).

Resource classroom within regular schools

This is ordinary class attendance plus supplementary instructional services with specialist teachers. The learner who has SEN spends most of their time in the regular class and receives instructions in a resource classroom for a certain period. The resource classroom is within a regular school and only used for purposes of remediation.

Inclusive arrangement within regular schools

This is where learners with and without SEN are taught in the same classroom, using the same curriculum by teachers with or without special education background. Mostly learners who have learning difficulties (mild to moderate intellectual disabilities) are under this arrangement. A Senior Teacher Learning Difficulties is responsible for assisting teachers as well as learners who have SEN during his/her spare time since she/he also has a class to teach (Ministry of Education, 2005).

Following is a table showing pre and primary schools owned by government and those owned by NGOs.

Type of Facility	Category	No. of schools	Government or NGO
Stimulation centres (Pre-school)	SID/PD	7	NGO
Special schools (Primary)	HI	3	NGO
Resource classroom (in Primary schools)	VI	6	Government
Units attached to regular schools (in primary schools)	SID	16	Government=15, NGO=1
Inclusive arrangement	LD	Not officially available	Government

Table 4: Pre and Primary schools in Botswana

Key: SID= Severe intellectual /physical disabilities

SPD= Severe physical disabilities

ID=Intellectual disabilities

VI= Visual Impairment

HI= Hearing Impairment

LD= Learning Difficulties

PD= Physical Disabilities

In line with the government's philosophy, the Ministry of Education and Skills Development has an assigned Special Education Division to ensure equal access to and quality of education for learners with special needs, including children with visual or hearing impairment, mental handicap (intellectual disabilities), speech and language disabilities, learning disabilities and physical disabilities. The ministry also offers grants to NGOs offering educational training and rehabilitation. NGOs should be registered and affiliated to Botswana Council for the Disabled (BCD) in order to qualify for the grant.

2.8 *Official categorisation of SEN in Botswana*

In the Botswana context, a child has special educational needs if he/she has a learning difficulty that calls for special educational provision to be made available to her/him. Such children are characterised by significantly greater difference in learning than the majority of children of the same age and by a disability that either prevents or hinders the child from making use of educational facilities of a kind provided for children of the same age in schools within the area of the local educational authority (Ministry of Education, 2006).

The MoE categorises these learners as follows:

- a) **Visual impairment** - these include those who are totally blind and those with low vision. Before learners with vision impairment are assessed, they are screened in hospitals by eye nurses who then refer them to eye specialists for medical assessment to determine the eye condition, visual acuity and field vision. At CRC they are assessed for functional vision and appropriate placement. Following assessment, different intervention strategies are suggested depending on the learners' educational needs.
- b) **Hearing impairment** - these learners are assessed by audiologists from the Rehabilitation Services Division and Bamalete Lutheran hospital who work in partnership with the Division of Special Education. After this assessment, learners are referred to CRC for appropriate educational placement at one of

the following: special schools, regular schools or special units where there is a concentration of resources.

- c) **Speech and language difficulties** - assessment is usually carried out by Speech and Language therapists to determine the receptive and expressive language of the child. These learners are placed in regular schools except for those who may have other conditions such as intellectual disabilities.
- d) **Intellectual disabilities** (as referred to now in Botswana) mental handicap (as it was previously referred to) - these are learners who have marked sub average intellectual functioning and may have difficulties in activities such as communication, self care and academic skills. These learners are assessed to determine the functioning level in cognitive, social and emotional development, speech and language, perception, fine and motor gross development. Learners with severe intellectual disabilities are placed in special units to follow a customised curriculum, with more emphasis on basic academic skills such as reading, writing and numeracy, activities for daily living which encompasses self help, social and communication skills. Where there are no special units, these learners are supported within the regular schools.
- e) **Physical disabilities** - these learners are found in regular schools and are expected to follow the same curriculum unless if the learner has some other disability which might hinder him/her in equally accessing the curriculum. Schools are advised in issues of accessing the curriculum, physical environment and other necessary support needed by these learners.
- f) **Learning difficulties**- these are learners who have mild to moderate intellectual disabilities and are integrated within the regular classes and follow the same curriculum. Officially these learners are assessed by CRC to determine their level of functioning. The MoESD (2010) indicates that assessment is concentrated more on reading, writing and numeracy. After assessment, learners are offered specialised support in their respective schools with all the recommended intervention strategies that are to be administered by the School Intervention Team (SIT), Senior Teacher Learning Difficulties (STLD) and class teachers. Learners follow the same curriculum and sit for the same examinations as regular school learners. It must be noted however,

that during data collection, learners who teachers referred to as having learning difficulties had not been assessed by the CRC but were only identified by the teachers within their classrooms. The assessment which teachers carry out is through in class tests where learners are tested in mathematics, English and Setswana. If they fail to meet the required level of attainment, they are termed to be having learning difficulties and are often referred to the senior teacher learning difficulties within the school for further support. Most schools which were visited in this study labelled these learners as 'slow learners' or 'underachievers'. Without any official assessment, it can be argued that most if not all these learners are misdiagnosed as teachers seemed to attribute failure to poor intelligence (Abosi, 2007). The CRC has well stipulated guidelines of how assessment of these learners is carried out, but unfortunately, what is documented on paper is not reflected by what actually happens in practice. Dart (2006) argues that the CRC is over stretched because of lack of resources and manpower.

Having given categories of learners who are deemed to have special educational needs in Botswana, it is worth mentioning that terminology and categories such as dyslexia and emotional and behaviour difficulties are not used in Botswana. (Autism has recently been mentioned especially by Ministry officials but there is no reference to it in the MoESD policy guidelines). If these learners are there in schools, they are incorporated within the set up which is already available. This study concentrates on one category (learners who have learning difficulties) as this is an area of interest to me as a researcher given the large number of learners who continue to fail and lag behind their counterparts in accessing the curriculum in Botswana primary schools (Abosi, 2007). Learning Difficulty (LD) is the terminology used in the Botswana policy context, but it should be noted that some teachers, some researchers (Botswana) use learning disabilities to refer to learning difficulties and vice-versa. For the sake of consistency, the term learning difficulty will be used throughout the thesis.

2.9 Identification, assessment and placement

Identification, assessment and placement of learners with differing impairments, disabilities or suspected of having some form of special educational needs is undertaken by a team of professionals from an officially recognised body in the Ministry of Education Skills and Development referred to as the Central Resource Centre (CRC). The CRC assessment team falls under the Division of Special Education and has the

responsibility for identification, assessment and support across the whole country. Children can be referred for assessment by schools, health personnel, parents/guardians or the district health teams. The CRC has different qualified professionals such as psychologists, speech therapists and occupational therapists who carry out assessments to gain some understanding of the learner with special educational needs in order to determine the learner's level of functioning and provide individualised intervention (MoESD, 2010). The initial identification process may be done by parents at home, local clinics and hospitals, teachers in schools or by the CRC team as they visit schools in the country. Recommendations for placement for children with special educational needs are determined by the assessment. These placements may be in special schools, units or the child's present school with relevant individualised educational programmes made available. The CRC also holds workshops for teachers and parents throughout the year both at the CRC and education centres in different districts in Botswana. In particular, CRC staff visit schools at specific times to screen and assess children who have been identified by teachers as having special educational needs.

Apart from the CRC there are educational psychologists, who have been decentralised in the northern and southern regions, who also conduct assessments in their respective regions. Additionally, there are School Intervention Teams (SITs); these are school based resource services for assisting and advising teachers who have children with special educational needs in their classes. The membership varies from school to school, however, normally the head-teacher, senior teacher learning difficulties, a social worker and the individual child's parents form the team (Kisanji, 1999). In some schools, educators can identify learners who have physical disabilities, but are not trained to identify those with learning need. World Data on Education, (2006) cautions by pointing out that identification of learners with special learning needs is a specialised area that needs highly specialised knowledge.

2.10 *The concept of LD in Botswana*

There is no particular definition for LD in Botswana; the concept is based on western definitions. 'Nonetheless, the term used in Botswana is 'learning difficulty' and it refers to children who experience learning difficulties independent of obvious physical defects such as sensory disorders. It is understood that such children have the ability to learn but it takes them a longer time to comprehend than the average child' (Abosi, 2007:198). However, teachers in Botswana are more familiar with children who they refer to as 'slow learners' or 'underachievers' on the understanding that it takes a

long time for them to comprehend that which is taught as compared to an ‘average child’. No statistics are provided (on the MoESD website) on the number of learners with LD in Botswana schools, The lack of statistics could be attributed to three reasons: 1) there is no common definition for LD in Botswana 2) many studies depend on predicted statistics which tend to exaggerate or underestimate the prevalence rate and 3) prevalence studies are costly and the government may be reluctant to invest on them. As a result, the country relies on estimates from the UN of considering that 10 percent of the population of school going age has disabilities (without being specific regarding how many have learning difficulties). Besides the UN estimates, Botswana relies on some small scale surveys carried out by individuals or district councils which in most cases are also not specific but general as they cover all disabilities. For example, a report by Kisanji (1994) to the Ministry of Education on Special Education in Botswana indicated that the figure of learners requiring special needs services should be over 60,000 as compared to the figure given by the North East where 11,648 learners were tested (no mention of which tests were used) and 8.9 percent of them had learning difficulties while the Kweneng Districts analysed a sample of 2,256 out of 27,869 children, a little over 8.1 percent were found to have serious learning difficulties (Abosi, 2007). Some researchers however have attempted to determine the prevalence of LD in Botswana. In 1986, for example, Yoder and Gholan (1986) used five measures to look at identification procedures and prevalence: 1) teacher identification of possible LD children, 2) a researcher-developed behaviour rating scale, 3) the Development Test of Visual Motor Integration, 4) Short Form Test of Academic Aptitude and 5) school performance. They found out that teachers identified 8-11 percent of the sample as LD, the Behaviour Rating Scale identified about 13 percent, and the Integration Test identified about 6 percent. They further explained that evidence of LD in Botswana suggested that there may be a neurological or genetic rather than strictly environmental interpretation of the origin of LD. Thus very little research has been conducted in Botswana concerning the prevalence and existence of LD. It must be noted, however, that this study is based on the children who are identified as having LD by their teachers.

2.11 Policy issues

The year 2016 features prominently in most Botswana programmes and education is no exception. The target year was set by a Presidential Task Group of 1997 which worked on mapping a long term vision for the country. The result was ‘The

Vision 2016 Report', which features education as a prominent aspect in preparing to 'own' the future and to enable Botswana to be an 'an educated and informed nation by year 2016'. There have been two major policy documents guiding the development of education in Botswana: 'Education for Kagisano (Government of Botswana 1977) and the 'Revised National Policy on Education' RNPE (Government of Botswana 1994). The Commission indicated amongst other issues that education of disabled people needed immediate attention (RNPE, 1994). Although special education had been an integral part of regular education since 1984, the RNPE gave it a new momentum, enabling the Ministry of Education to increase access and equity to education for children with SEN. In another development, the Ministry of Health published the National Policy on Care for Disabled People which aimed at improving the quality of life of disabled people by working closely with the Ministry of Education and to provide devices such as hearing aids to learners with hearing impairments (Eustice, 2001).

The Early Childhood and Education Policy also takes into account the needs of children with SEN by stating that 'any centre admitting children with SEN should liaise with the Division of Special Education for guidance and support' (Ministry of Education, 2004: 22.1). The National Policy on Vocational Education has also recognized that particular priority should be given to disadvantaged groups including disabled students and that special training programmes might need to be developed (Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs, 1997). [It must be noted that the Inclusive Education Policy (Botswana) was not yet finalised and was still under the adoption stage during the time this study was carried out January-March 2010].

The last policy to be discussed is the Language Policy which has relevance to this study in the sense that language can affect the way learners access the curriculum. The population of Botswana constitutes of various ethnic groups speaking 27 languages other than Setswana (the official national language). Both English and Setswana are the official media of communication although, as already stated, the medium of instruction in schools from STD 2 is English (Ministry of Education, 1994). A point to note is that the minority languages do not have any official status in Botswana. According to Nyati-Ramahobo (1997) Setswana is the mother tongue of approximately 80% of Botswana's population, and is spoken as a second language by another 10%. This situation means that other minority languages are not considered and thus, as Le Roux (2000) observed, minority cultural expressions are relegated to the private sphere. This explains why the

languages of other groups are not used in the public domains such as schools. This situation can impact negatively on the way children access the curriculum. Indeed Tabulawa (2008) cautions that unless the state abandons mono-culturalism, it is difficult to see how any other measures would mitigate the exclusionary effects of the state ideology in education.

Botswana's present language policy is based on the transitional bilingual model, which means the use of the child's first language (L1) as the medium of instruction at the initial stages of education. Nyati-Ramahobo (1997) strongly opposes this idea by arguing that 'the bilingual model used is the transitional model for children from Setswana speaking groups. For children from minority groups, it is a transitional submersion programme in the sense that their first language (L1) is not used at all and they are submerged into Setswana which is their second language (L2)'. Adeyemi (2008) cautions that the present transitional submersion model for minority groups needs to be reviewed and a more inclusive model developed.

Language of instruction can be a hindrance to accessing and progressing through the curriculum (Ministry of Education, 1994). Hume (2008) strongly supports this by pointing out that every language provides a unique point of view that is important to the cosmos of ideas, metaphors, miracles and metaphysics that comprise the totality of human experience (Hume, 2008). If learners are to access the curriculum, their first language has to be taken into consideration so that it is easier for them to transfer that which they know to new ideas presented to them. The current situation in Botswana regarding language issues is that some of the children are from families where Setswana and English are their second and third languages, resulting in them having to learn both of these languages as soon as they start school.

2.12 *Approaching an inclusive curriculum – The Botswana context*

A curriculum can be structurally exclusive by design, for instance, earlier curricular designs at both primary and secondary levels in Botswana tended to target the mainstream 'average' learners and disadvantaged learners who were either fast or slow and those with special educational needs (Ministry of Education and Skills Development, 2007). This implies that fast or slow learners were ignored as all the emphasis was on the average learners.

In Botswana, the RNPE (1994) has provided a roadmap for provision of inclusive education. As a way of making the curriculum more inclusive, the Curriculum

Development Division in Botswana has come up with a Universal Design of Learning- (UDL) which offers differentiated activities that take on board learners of different abilities. The curriculum design at primary level is spiral allowing for constant revision and a gradual development of concepts (Ministry of Education, 2007).

The inclusiveness or non inclusiveness of a curriculum partly is determined by the content to be taught in the school subjects, but the most crucial stage according to the Ministry of Education and Skills Training (2008) is in the classroom where the curriculum is transformed from ideal to reality. The effectiveness of a curriculum can only be determined when it is negotiated at the classroom level and in so doing practical subjects in the form of Creative and Performing Arts (CAPA) were taken aboard at primary school level, and this was to allow children who may not be academically inclined a chance to excel. At Junior and Senior schools, the national curriculum has been made more flexible to allow a broader choice of subjects to cater for different interests and abilities (National Report on the Development of Education, 2008). The report continues to explain that in order to ensure inclusive curriculum, teachers have been trained to reduce dependence on ‘chalk and talk’ and employ other instructional strategies on the recognition that children differ in terms of emotional, physical and cognitive abilities.

2.13 *Teacher training*

The RNPE (1994: Rec. 95) greatly emphasised teacher training as an area that needed to be developed. The recommendation stated that ‘all teachers should have some elements of special needs education as part of their pre/in-service training’. As a result, teacher training was localised and a major step was taken to include a special education element into the curriculum of teachers’ colleges throughout the country. Furthermore, the RNPE clearly stipulates that provision of special education is also developed through teacher training. There is a deliberate effort by the government of Botswana to ensure effective teaching in schools through special education. The RNPE (1994) recommends that all teachers should have some elements of special education in their pre-service training. Those who have not received such training should receive it during their in-service training. Appropriate programmes have been developed in the Primary and Secondary Colleges of Education. Pre-service programmes leading to the Diplomas in Primary and Secondary Education include Special Education as a mandatory component (University of Botswana, 2001).

The University of Botswana runs three programmes in Special Education. The programme is a double major which means that trainees take special education with one teaching subject for example, special education and mathematics. Areas of concentration are based on four categories and these are; learning difficulties, visual impairment, hearing impairment and mental handicap. The distribution of students to various areas of specialisation is based most of the time on the estimated number of each category of disabilities. Over 50% of students are encouraged to specialise in the area of learning difficulties because it is said to constitute the largest group of children with disabilities in Botswana schools. (There are no statistics available to back up why learning difficulties is said to constitute the largest group of children with disabilities in Botswana schools (Abosi, 2007).

Largely, recruiting and retaining teachers for special education remains unsatisfactory. College programmes are designed to raise awareness and once trainees complete their training, they are reluctant to use the basic knowledge that they received in their training because of lack of competence (Abosi & Murangi- Kandjii, 2002). Specialists trained at the University of Botswana also face problems upon their completion; some of these problems being that those posted to special schools [the few that exist] are disadvantaged in the sense that the criteria used for determining posts of responsibility is based on the size of the school. 'Special schools end up at the lowest group which means they do not have posts of responsibilities'. (MoE-Division of Special Education Task Force, 2001:3). This limits opportunities for promotion, and results in qualified teachers leaving special schools for promotion to become senior teachers, heads of departments and deputy head-teachers in regular schools. Some graduates tend to use their second major as an avenue for promotion and this means that their training in special education is highly compromised or is not used at all. The absence of a career structure is a major barrier to the extending of special education, as special education teachers are perhaps the quintessential case of 'scarce skills' (Tlale, 2002). Furthermore, the absence of incentives has discouraged teachers from implementing the School Intervention Team strategy. The few Senior Teachers-Learning Difficulties who have been appointed face demanding teaching loads (Division of Special Education Task Force, 2001).

Pre-service training

The University of Botswana operates three programmes in Special Education: a 2-year in-service diploma programme for teachers (these are teachers who have a

Primary Teachers' Certificate-phased out in 2007); a 4 year pre-service degree programme for undergraduates; and a 3 year in-service programme for holders of the diploma or its equivalent from the University of Botswana or one of the colleges of education in Botswana (Mukhopadhyay et al, 2009).

In-service training

Realising the importance of in-service training for teachers, the MoE has directed attention to in-service training to develop teachers professionally. The Division of Special Education in collaboration with the Department of Teacher Training and Development conducts workshops for teachers in the schools. These workshops are sensitisation/awareness workshops on special education where teachers are introduced to concepts of inclusion, disability and special education at both primary and secondary level. These workshops are held during school term and last up to a week depending on the time of the year. Senior Teachers Learning Difficulties together with School Intervention Teams can also organise in-school workshops to share ideas with teachers on issues of special/ inclusive education in their respective schools or regions.

The MoE, now MoESD, officially took an initiative as indicated in RNPE (1994) to upgrade the skills of teachers who have a Certificate or Diploma in Special Education by sending groups of these teachers to universities in UK, Australia and USA. The aim is to expose these teachers to different systems of education and study methodology. The training period is usually three to four years (Bachelors Degree in Special Education) depending on where they do their training. On their return teachers are expected to assist with the training of other teachers in issues associated with the educational reform (MoE, 2005).

2.14 Role of Non- governmental organizations (NGOs)

The role of NGOs is very crucial in Botswana in the whole exercise of providing services to people with disabilities. It is important to note that provision of services to the disabled was left to charity organizations up until 1995 when the Ministries of Education and Health started giving subsidies amounting to 3000,000 Pula, [Botswana currency, approximately £300.000] (Eustice, 2001). The subsidies from the mentioned ministries were and still are channelled through the Botswana Council for the Disabled (BCD) for distribution and monitoring. BCD is an umbrella body to all registered organizations giving educational and rehabilitative services to children and young adults

with severe disabilities. Because of a lack of sufficient professionals and expertise in government schools, NGOs are financially supported to cater for these children. Apart from that, children who are profoundly disabled are sent to neighbouring countries like South Africa and Zimbabwe where there are better facilities to cater for their needs. These NGOs depend largely on the international community for their cost recovering annual operating grants, capital funds and technical assistance [a situation which is slowly and surely changing because of the global recession].

Besides NGOs, there are a number of lobby groups in Botswana whose role it is to advocate for equalisation of opportunities for people with disabilities. Some parents with children with disabilities are members of these organisations and they use them as their representatives once they are aggrieved. Parents who are well versed in policy issues sometimes take government to court once they realise that their children are not receiving appropriate services or services that were stipulated in their Individualised Educational Plans (Eustice, 2001).

2.15 Summary

This chapter has provided a historical overview of Botswana and its education system, followed by the current situation in general and special education. The chapter highlighted the change in provision of education for all learners moving from integration to more inclusive approaches as guided by the RNPE (1994). I have also discussed policy issues by reflecting on policy guidelines that are used in Botswana to direct the implementation of inclusive education. Other important aspects such as teacher training, the roles of non- governmental organizations have also been reflected upon as they play a crucial role in the implementation of inclusive education in Botswana. Chapter 3 will present a literature review of different ideologies and theories about inclusive education, curriculum and LD, which are the main focus of this study.

CHAPTER THREE

LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 *Introduction*

This chapter begins with attention given to historical review of the concept of inclusive education and its implementation from a global context. Different assumptions about inclusion, learners who have SEN and LD, conflicting conceptions of curriculum, the contested nature of curriculum, curriculum adaptations and the role of teachers in making curriculum adaptations will be discussed.

Although the right to education is recognised in most countries, the actual provision of education to children who have LD still remains a huge challenge globally, including in Botswana. Some children with disabilities are catered for under a segregated arrangement with special schools earmarked for them to meet their special educational needs. This has been criticised by some educationalists as discriminatory (Abosi & Murangi-Kandjii, 2002). Singal (2010: 49) criticises such segregation and refers to it as a ‘discourse of difference which reinforces a belief that the needs of this category are qualitatively different from the needs of others and assume that because of this difference, these children can be legitimately denied entry into mainstream’. Burstein et al (2004) posit that, alternatively the concept of inclusive education seeks to move away from managing the deficits of students to the creation of a more inclusive classroom environment that responds to the diversity of children including their diverse needs. They argue that segregated educational systems perpetuate the discrimination of children with learning needs and implicitly blame the children for their disabilities.

The journey to inclusive education is indeed a long one and there is need to ensure that in each given situation, everyone is journeying together and heading towards the same goal. Furgerson and Asch (1989) point out that inclusion should not be seen as an ‘experiment to be tested’ but a ‘value to be followed’. Inclusion goes beyond focusing only on barriers to learning; it also involves a focus on cultures, policies and practices in education systems. Daniels & Garner (1999) caution that ‘inclusion is ultimately about the transformation of a society and its formal institutional arrangements such as education...this means change in the values, priorities and policies’ (p. 58). Some authors argue that inclusion should move from merely addressing exclusion of children with disabilities from general education to challenging all exclusionary policies and practices in the education system (Alur and Timmons,

2009). For inclusion to be successful it is argued schools should reconstruct themselves as communities (Bayliss, 2000) where children are treated with respect and ensured equal opportunities to learn together (Alur and Timmons, 2009).

Most teachers are apprehensive at the mention of the words accommodation or adaptation. Both regular and special education teachers are often challenged when asked to make changes for learners with SEN. Hargreaves (1994:11) contends that the fear comes as result of ‘the compression of time and space which is creating accelerated change, innovation overload and intensification in teacher’s work’. Popkewitz (1988) argues that in order to change we must question our underlying assumptions about society, culture, history, economy and politics: failure to do so will result at best in only ‘window dressing’. Even so before teachers can be expected to effect change, the vital thing that has to be looked into is to find out whether teachers themselves understand these changes. Change can be very complex and it can take a very long time to be effected. As Hargreaves (1994) points out, if change is to be meaningful it means more than teachers acquiring new knowledge of curriculum content or new techniques of teaching but it also draws our attention to their desire to change.

3.2 *Defining the concept of inclusive education – a global perspective*

The concept of inclusive education comes as a paradigm shift from the idea of placing people with disabilities in permanent institutional care which was a form of isolation to a paradigm which focuses on ensuring opportunities for participation and sharing (Singh, 2010:12). Sands et al (2000) also argue that historically, education authorities believed that separate education for learners with diverse needs was seen to address these needs. This is exemplary of the practice of focusing on impairments rather than on emphasizing on strengths of learners. Nind et al (2003) cautions that the move from segregated special education in special schools to integration and the development of units within schools, then to inclusion of pupils in mainstream settings has been fuelled by various ideologies and perspectives which marked their moments in history.

An international perspective on inclusion can be traced back to the United Nations (UN) Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (1993) and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989). These international strategies set the context to encourage more equitable forms of schooling. They specifically focused on meeting the needs of those who are excluded and marginalized as well as those with disabilities. This has led to the concept of inclusive education attracting a lot of interest from researchers worldwide. UNESCO (2001)

confirms that, in some countries, inclusive education is thought of as an approach to serving children with disabilities within general education settings. In many countries, however, it is seen more broadly as a reform that supports and welcomes diversity amongst all learners.

According to Slee (2000) inclusive education means there is no separate special education placement for any student, and that all students are placed full-time in the regular classroom with appropriate support within that classroom. Inclusive education in a more holistic approach means that schools need to be cognisant of the different learning needs and optimal learning environments for all learners, not just those with disabilities (Gartner & Lipsky 1999; Muijs et al. 2005). Inclusive education is about listening to the voices in a school community and empowering all members to develop an approach to schooling that is committed to identifying and dismantling actual and potential sources of exclusion as explained by Gillies et al (2004). Above all, it is about a philosophy of acceptance where all people are valued and treated with respect (Carrington, 2000). Leitch (2006) points out that while general concepts such as acceptance, value and respect are noble when defining inclusion, they are not particularly helpful in defining what actually should be found in an inclusive environment. The goal of inclusive education is not to leave anyone out of school but giving equal opportunities for all to be full members of school and to be later included in the society. Such a view of inclusion presents a challenge to existing structures and systems that are still contributing to the barriers that learner's experience. Mittler (2000:2) supports this by pointing out that 'Inclusion involves a process of reform and restructuring of the school as a whole, with the aim of ensuring that all pupils can have access to the whole range of educational and social opportunities offered by the school'. He continues to argue that this process of transformation not only has radical implications for the way we think about the origins of learning and behavioural difficulties, but also requires 'systematic change and a national policy' (p.5).

The concept of inclusive education is thus a very complex one and it is multifaceted in the sense that there is no one 'inclusion'. Masalela (2008) explains that inclusion can be viewed as a government rhetoric, inclusion as seen by schools and teachers within those schools, inclusion according to parents, inclusion according to children themselves and inclusion as contested by various academics. Inclusion therefore is contentious since it has multiple interpretations and means different things to different people. As a result, its implementation will depend on how it is viewed or

interpreted in a given context. No matter how it is viewed and interpreted, the bottom line is that inclusive education has to acknowledge that each learner has unique abilities and needs. According to Shanker (1995) there are attitudinal and contextual realities associated with the general education classroom that might affect inclusion success or failure. Another view is from Baker & Zigmond's (1990) study where they indicated that the general education classroom was a place where undifferentiated, large group instruction dominated and teachers were more concerned with maintaining routine than meeting individual differences. They continue to explain that teachers cared about children and were conscientious about their jobs, but that their mindset was conforming, not accommodation. Any student who could not conform would likely be unsuccessful in this setting (regular education classes). The focus in the wider definition for inclusion is on the restructuring of schools and systems to increase the participation of those with special educational needs and that they be provided with opportunities and be treated with respect. This kind of approach encourages those involved to view the need of a person not evaluated as good or bad, but is considered as ordinary. Therefore, within inclusion, education and other services are improved to overcome barriers to learning (Ainscow, Booth & Dyson, 2004).

The crucial element in our understanding of inclusion in schools at both national and international level depends on the wider social context. Pijl et al (1997) argue that inclusion is more than a school problem; it has to do with people's lives outside school, with family and with community. This argument is very true in the sense that schools are limited in the 'real life' experiences they can offer to learners if they work in isolation and Nind et al (2003) support this by pointing out that 'schools need to mobilize and utilize the resources that communities can offer by way of facilities and personnel to further students' learning' (p.16). The inclusive school viewed in the greater social context of community building is recognised as one aspect in the development of an inclusive society. For other investigators, inclusive education is more philosophical in nature and Dyson (2000) advocates for the consideration of various types of inclusions that can be viewed along a continuum as opposed to competing paradigms. Having pointed that out, it has to be acknowledged that there is no one philosophical paradigm which is more important than the other. While there are those who advocate for inclusion based on human rights and those who support an efficacy based model, for the field of special needs education this refers to the requirement that adaptations will be necessary in order for some individuals to access the general

curriculum. As Burstein et al (2004) conclude, inclusion is an educational practice based on the notion of social justice that advocates access to educational opportunities for all students regardless of the presence of a disability.

3.3 *Integration versus inclusion*

The concepts of integration and inclusion in some cases are terms used interchangeably, mostly referring to children being ‘integrated’ or ‘included’ into regular classroom. These two terms are, however, different, and for the sake of clarity for this study, their significant difference will be explained. According to Thomas (1997:103) ‘the stress in integration is on the physical movement of the child from one place to another without a concomitant expectation of necessary change by the mainstream’. In other words the integration ideology believes that the learner has to be ready to fit into the system. On the contrary, inclusion (Clough & Corbett 2006) is about participation of all children and the removal of all forms of exclusionary practices. While integration is about making additional number of limited arrangements (Frederickson & Cline, 2002), ‘inclusive education is made up of a myriad forms of practice, it is not merely about providing access into mainstream’ (Clough & Corbett, 2000:7). Access into mainstream according to Thomas (1997) means the policies, practices involves everyone and ensures that everyone belongs.

One other important aspect to note between integration and inclusion is that integration usually focuses on particular kinds of children, for example, according to Thomas (1997) those with learning difficulties, challenging behaviour, sensory impairments or physical disabilities (focusing on the medical model of disability). But inclusion focuses on all children and generally employs a social model of disability to describe and analyse the conditions of oppression for students described as having special educational needs (Slee, 2003). Therefore, the notion of inclusion does not set limitations (as it is with integration) around helping particular kinds of students. Inclusion is a process (Black-Hawkins et al, 2007) which calls for a broader restructuring of schools to ensure they are more responsive to student diversity.

For the purpose of this study, inclusion and integration will be used interchangeably for the following reasons: (1) to encompass the range of models used to include learners with SEN in Botswana schools and (2) because participants in the study do not distinguish between the two terms as both of them appear in the policy guidelines guiding the education of learners who have LD. The term inclusive education shall be

employed to this paradigm shift in providing education to learners who have LD in the inclusive framework.

3.4 *Special educational needs – SEN - a global perspective*

The term SEN, according to Stakes & Hornby (2000) is relatively recent, emanating from the language and philosophy of the Warnock Report (1978) which was an important milestone in the development of education for children with SEN in the United Kingdom- (Uk). It describes a broad variety of difficulties which affect children's ability to achieve during their time in school. The definition of SEN is concerned with what is required to enable a child with a difficulty to learn; Fish & Evans (1995:8) explain that any 'special educational needs' definition should not concern itself with the conditions or circumstances which may give rise to a learning difficulty'. A definition should focus more on the strengths of these children a move which may help teachers to have a starting point. According to Frederickson & Cline, (2002:39) definitions of SEN are generally based on 'individual deviation from normal expectation or significant difficulties in learning compared to the majority of children of a given age'. This study will focus on learners with SEN particularly those with learning difficulties, since this group of learners is the main concern not only to the researcher but also to the government of Botswana. A concern has been raised by the government of Botswana as to the alarming rate of learners who continue to fail in schools.

3.5 *Learning disabilities/difficulties (LD) - a global perspective*

The terms learning disability and learning difficulties are used differently in different countries to operationalise a construct. The use of these terminologies, as Florian and McLaughlin (2008:227) argue, 'are cross-cultural phenomena'. In the USA, for example, learning disabilities was initially referred to as mental retardation, then developmental disability, intellectual disability and now referred to 'specific learning disabilities and it means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, which may manifest itself in imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculations' (Speece, 2008:227). In the UK 'learning difficulties' is a term referring to those with general learning difficulties. The term was recommended in the Warnock Report (DES, 1978) to replace the term 'educationally sub-normal' with the more positive sounding term. This is then qualified by moderate learning difficulties (MLD), severe learning difficulties (SLD) or profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD). LD differs from one person to the other; some will have general LD meaning

that they have difficulties in one or more areas of learning whereas specific LD means that they have one particular area of difficulty while they manage well in everything else. Children who have LD generally have a range of difficulties which often are realised when they are in school, without some form of special provision many of these children may not develop sufficiently to realise their potential. Unlike other disabilities such as visual impairment, learning disabilities as indicated by Muijs et al (2005) refers to problems connected with linking information in different parts of the brain, and it takes a number of different forms, which the American Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (1994) categorized in three main subparts 1) Developmental speech and language disorders 2) Academic skills disorders and 3) Co-ordination and other learning handicapping conditions. As noted above, LD ranges from mild, moderate, severe to profound multiple learning difficulties, but this study will only discuss those with mild to moderate LD as they are found in most of the schools in Botswana. Stakes and Hornby (2000) agree and point out that in most schools today children with severe, profound and multiple learning difficulties are small in number compared to those who have mild to moderate learning difficulties.

The core problems in learning difficulties according to Montgomery (1990) which teachers may observe are:

- Memory – when a child shows poor retention of ideas, this means that they easily become confused by lengthy instructions
- Language – limited vocabulary and limited powers of expression both oral and written
- Thinking – the child lacks spontaneous curiosity tending to be passive and unresponsive
- Behaviour – the child may display inappropriate behaviours at a point or when faced by a task or a challenge.

Children with MLD have attainments significantly below the expected levels in most areas of the curriculum; they have much greater difficulty than their peers in acquiring basic literacy and numerical skills and in understanding concepts (Florian and McLaughlin, 2008).

Regardless of these core problems, teachers are to be aware of the fact that children with LD form a broadly differing group of learners; therefore the focus should be more on individual's strengths than on their difficulty. This calls for a move for

teachers to understand the nature of curriculum and understand its processes to adequately cater for the needs of these learners.

3.6 *The concepts of inclusion and inclusive education in Africa*

In African society traditional education included every member of the society and was provided on an equal basis within the community and everyone participated at his/her own level (Kochung, 2011). The essence of inclusion in Africa was evidenced by the way individuals were respected, given equal opportunities and no person was permitted to suffer because he/she was different from other people. As positioned by Kenosi (2000) each individual was regarded as a contributing member of society. Transformation in the early 1960s, especially in developing countries, resulted in societies becoming less prescriptive and formal, and this meant that educational practices no longer reflected societal ideology (Engelbrecht, 1999). For example, in South Africa prior to 1994 (before independence) education for many became a casualty because of its politicised nature, divided on racial grounds and inequitably funded (Donald, 1993).

Societies across the globe are unique and have specific agendas; for example, Botswana has set for itself the year 2016 as the year whereby all Batswana should be educated and informed, this means ‘all’ without leaving out any person. Many authors, however, have extensively pointed out that there are universal principles that seem to transcend international borders. Dyson (2001:11) states ‘human rights to equality, basic education and democracy result in the commitment to build a just society that is responsive to the needs of its citizens’. This is supported by Sands, Kozleski & French (2000) when pointing out ‘the ever changing social, political and economic trends of society are met when all citizens regardless of differences are responsible for the continuity of that society’. Any education system is a subsystem of a society and should similarly respond to the needs of its learners, rather than vice-versa (Sands et al, 2000). However, the operational situation of any educational system governs policy and practice, including provision of special education. Hopkins (2003) argues that this milieu includes features that determine what a system or a component of special education may be allowed or not allowed to do; what is expected or not expected and possibilities that can be achieved through special education. Since learners have diverse learning needs, re-evaluation of most education systems in the world is needed as a matter of priority if not a matter of urgency.

3.7 *Perspectives on inclusive education in Africa*

Developing countries continue to grapple with terms, concepts and phenomena around the inclusion of children with disabilities (as they are mostly referred to in most African countries) in regular schools. Chimedza (2007:123) explain terms such as ‘mainstream’, ‘integration’ and now ‘inclusion’ that emanate from developed countries may not mean exactly the same across different cultures and in particular to developing countries. Today, however, inclusive education is viewed in a broader sense where the notion of special needs learners has been extended to include contextually disadvantaged, interpersonally challenged as well as individually disabled learners (and systems) (Donald et al., 2002). In order to understand the concept of inclusive education within the African context, there is need to reflect on perspectives of inclusive education of some countries in Africa. For example, the South African Education Department prior to 1994 was split into 18 racially divided education departments (Inclusive Education Site, 2011). Each education department had their own policies regarding learners who have SEN, there were extreme disparities and discrepancies in the provision for specialised education and for the different race groups and virtually no provision for black disabled children who were therefore marginalised.

Apartheid education in South Africa promoted race, class, gender and ethnic divisions and emphasised separateness, rather than common citizenship and nationhood (Naicker, 2000). In the pre-democracy climate of racism in education there were not surprisingly, differing provisions made for children with disabilities. White children with mild to moderate disabilities were educated within regular education with several supports in place. For example, a psychological services unit was established in each area with itinerant remedial teachers, educational psychologists, speech therapists and occupational therapist. But blacks, especially those living in rural areas, had little or no access to any support, despite representing the majority of the population (Maher, 2007). The separation and categorisation was not only based on the grounds of their disability, but also on race and culture. Apartheid education produced a dual system of education which included a mainstream and special education component (Naicker, 2000) and this dual system according to Naicker was characterised by racial disparity which resulted in large numbers of learners being excluded from the mainstream of education.

After the first free and fair elections in South Africa 1994, there was major reconstructing of schools and, the country has been in the process of social, political, economic and educational transformation aimed at developing a more inclusive society

(Hay et al, 2001:213). The move towards inclusive education in South Africa is influenced by international and national trends and patterns (Sparks, 2003). Engelbrecht (1999) indicates that major changes at national level took place as a result of the new democracy in South Africa with the South African Federal Council on Disability calling for the development of a single inclusive education system with a central theme 'Learners with special educational needs have a right to equal access to education that is responsive to the diverse needs of all learners'. As a result of historical and other factors, Khoele (2008) points out that schools in South Africa are at different stages when it comes to the implementation of inclusive education because some schools feel ready to implement inclusive education while some are not ready to do that because they are overwhelmed with the challenges of finding basic resources to continue to exist from day to day.

Engelbrecht and Green (2001) indicate factors such as poverty, violence, crime and substance abuse, the prevalence and spread of HIV/AIDS and community attitudes to both learning and disability are major barriers to inclusion. Engelbrecht (1999) further states that becoming inclusive is one part of the broader challenge of building a culture of learning and teaching where quality of education becomes a reality. The challenge that South Africa has in the implementation of inclusive education involves transforming the dual system of education (special and ordinary) to a single inclusive system which has its own theory, assumptions, models, practices and tools. Naicker (2000:11) argues 'for South Africa to implement inclusive education there has to be a paradigm shift from a contents based apartheid education system to an inclusive outcome based system which must focus on redress and equality'. According to Naicker this shift entails moving from racist, sexist, and classist assumptions to non-racist, non-disabilist, anti-class and non-sexist assumption.

In Ghana, according to Ocloo and Subbey (2008), education has traditionally been organised on a two-tier basis: special schools for children with disabilities such as deafness, blindness and 'mental retardation' and the regular school system. Ghana's concept of inclusive education is aligned with its policy on increasing access, retention and participation of all students of school going age in education and not the movement and provision of education to all children with disabilities in regular schools (Agbenyaga, 2007). The main emphasis in Ghana according to Agbenyega is more on building capacity in special and regular schools to offer new opportunities to learners who may have previously or continue to experience learning difficulties. The concept of

inclusive education in a Ghanaian perspective is not about where to educate learners who experience barriers to learning but it is about attracting and retaining children under their two-tier school system. The attraction and retention is implemented through different policy initiatives such as the 'Capitation Grant'. This policy according to Agbenyega (2007) provides feeding programme for children in deprived settings, for example in 2006, an equivalence of US\$10.4 million was allocated for Capitation Grant. Since in Ghana, the emphasis is on offering new opportunities, according to Agbenyega (2007) it means changing school culture and organisation, providing resources and building capacity in special and regular schools.

In the Zimbabwean context, inclusive education involves the identification and minimisation or elimination of barriers to students' participation in traditional settings (i.e. schools, homes, communities and workplaces) and the maximisation of resources to support learning and participation (Mpofu et al, 2007; Chimedza, 2007). Although there is no legislation for inclusive education in Zimbabwe (Mpofu et al, 2007) a number of government policies are consistent with the intent of inclusive education. For example, the Education Secretary's Policy circular No. P36. 1990) requires that all students, regardless of race, religion, gender, creed and disability have access to basic or primary education (up to Grade 7) (Mutepfa et al 2007). However, the Disabled Persons Act (1996) does not commit the government to providing inclusive education in any concrete way; in fact, it specifically prevents citizens with disabilities from suing the Zimbabwean government for lack of access to government facilities (Chireshe, 2011). However, the Zimbabwean 1987 Education Act, revised in 2006, specifies that there should be inclusion of children with special needs into regular schools. The Zimbabwean Ministry of Education, Sport, Arts and Culture adopted the concept of inclusion and ceaselessly calls for the integration and participation of children with special needs in all subjects (Mudekunya et al, 2010).

In Lesotho, a consultant hired by the Ministry of Education in 1987 recommended the move towards inclusive education because it was cost effective and fitted within Lesotho's cultural framework of extended family and care taking of all children. Just like in other African countries discussed earlier on in this section, the concept of inclusive education in Lesotho is culturally and morally inclined. Inclusive education is understood as a practice whereby students with physical, sensory or intellectual impairments that affect learning (students with disabilities) are educated in regular schools (Johnstone & Chapman, 2009).

In summary, education in Africa has gone through major transitions, including from systems that were organised on the basis of race, language, ethnicity, social status, disability or poverty. To provide equal and quality education for all will depend on how each country transforms its education system in order to remove barriers that prevent many learners to participate fully in education. In some contexts, for inclusive education to be effectively implemented, it is important that, for example, within the South African context, inequalities resulting from apartheid and economic deprivation be dealt with (Forlin, Douglas & Hattie, 1996). It is for this reason that inclusion as a practice will be difficult to mean the same thing to different countries hence its difference in implementation.

3.8 *Perspectives on inclusion and inclusive education in Botswana*

Botswana's population is characterised by diversity in the sense that its success as a multiparty liberal democracy is based on an ethnically homogeneous population. The Ministry of Culture (2001) points out 'this fiction may indeed have supported the building of an officially non-ethnic, state-oriented society, but has come under sharp challenge in the 1990s as minority groups requested the privileges of official recognition'. However, Maundeni et al (2007) note that these challenges are an influence from outside especially from non-governmental organisations that are aiming at destroying current social relations and the stability of Botswana and the Batswana.

Ingstad (2005) points out the Tswana traditional residential area is a compound often housing several closely related family groups. However, besides that Batswana had multiple residential areas where different responsibilities of members of the extended family were portrayed. This pattern of multiple residences meant that some members worked in the fields, others tended cattle and others lived in the village (www.cultureofBotswana/2001).

Modern village-based households are again dispersed through school placements, labour migration and urbanization and these patterns have placed strains on the cooperative extended family. Ingstad (1995) points out that Tswana values stress the collective before the individual, and to contribute to the family is considered one of the highest virtues. Hopkins (2001) indicates traditional mores, practices and relationships are important features of the lives of the Batswana. They feel a clear obligation to attend weddings and funerals where traditional practices are observed and all who attend are fed. Weddings and funerals were and are still important events at which a wide range of

relatives, neighbours and other associates are expected to attend in large numbers and are all fed at the expense of the host family. Contributions of various gifts often times including cattle and goats are offered to the family as a way of showing appreciation and a collective spirit.

As an inclusive society, Botswana has developed a National Vision (Government of Botswana, 2006), as encapsulated in the document Vision 2016 Task Force in which various stakeholders were invited to make inputs. The diversity of the groups which participated in drawing up the vision and its implementation indicates its inclusivity of the political system (Maundeni et al, 2007). This move is supported by Putman (1993:40) by alluding that ‘Participation in civic organization inculcates skills of cooperation as well as a sense of shared responsibility for collective endeavour’. However, globalization has affected a sense of cooperation and shared responsibility in Botswana as the social and political consequences of post-modernity arguably license a retreat from active involvement in community and democracy into more private and isolated arena (Welch, 2001). High economic growth rates have been sustained over a long period of time because government has diversified the economy and enhanced citizen participation in economic development. The influence of globalisation on economic issues has widened the gap between rich and poor, powerful and weak (Mc Ginn, 1996). Welch (2001) confirms that in some countries, too, popular alienation is increased by government actions which appear to be more in support of global business interests than the populace which elected them.

Defining inclusive education as an extension of an inclusive society should take into account the fact that there was no formal government provision in colonial times, and governments’ commitment to the education of children with special needs came only in the last two decades. The Government and people of Botswana did not willingly neglect those in need of special education. The African Exception (2002) states one key to the neglect is that at independence Botswana was among the poorest countries in the world, even though in less than four decades it has become a middle income country. Ingstad (2005) has challenged the assumption that traditional attitudes towards disability in Botswana were negative by claiming society’s response was a rational and considered one to a situation in a particular context; for example, sending a disabled child to live at a farm placed him in a position where he could be both cared for and find a role. Livingstone (2001) concludes that the picture is a complex one, and current attitudes are a result of a series of sociological changes over the last 150 years such as

the rise of wage labour in the mines of South Africa and modern medical techniques both leading to a visible increase of disability in a society that saw itself under threat and breaking down in the face of colonialism and industrialisation. Botswana like many other developing countries has followed the international shift towards inclusive education as a means of accommodating the full range of learners' needs in regular schools. According to MoESD (2008) in line with other policy documents (RNPE, 1994, NDP 9, 2003/4-2008/9) in Botswana, inclusive education refers to the education system that ensures that children in the neighbourhood attend the same regular school and classroom, regardless of their differences in their learning needs as well as their disability, health, social and economic background. It is upon this definition that Botswana has intensified efforts to increase access to education for children with SEN. 'The situation in Botswana regarding those with SEN still remains, and in practice the principal focus is to ensure that those covered have: equality of educational opportunities; are prepared for social inclusion through being in the mainstream schools; are assessed at an early stage so that they receive individualised education' (The Revised National Policy on Education 1994:8).

Although Botswana has adopted inclusive education as a strategy of meeting the educational needs of children with SEN, the RNPE's commitment to social inclusion which implies that society has obligations to take care of each member of the society regardless of mental, physical, behavioural and emotional status has been neglected and Hopkin (2003) argues that when putting policy into practice, the government failed to place an obligation on the society to acknowledge the essential role it has to play in order for inclusive education to be effective, or for it to be have more meaning to the society.

As Botswana has been and is modernising at an astonishing speed (Lewis, 1993) the shift to an increasing wage earning population has brought strains on traditional relationships and this has impacted on special education provision in a negative manner. It is therefore difficult to define the model of inclusion that is being practised in Botswana as culture, which was to be used as a regulative dimension, has been left out. Mitchell (2006) points out that culture is an important source of insight since it affords researchers an analytic tool. As regards to Botswana's situation, policy makers failed to acknowledge the essential part culture can play in informing their decisions. Most policy makers in Botswana having been educated in America, United Kingdom or Australia bring with them knowledge based on policies of these countries; unfortunately

these practices are not necessarily compatible with systems of developing countries (Gaie, 2005). Imported western inclusive education models became superimposed on existing models in the country. In many instances, these models are divorced from the social and cultural indigenous structures of the society, as well as from peoples' needs.

The debate on inclusive education from an African or any other perspective has to be coloured by the context in which it has to be implemented. Implementation within each context will have its own unique outcome depending on policy and practice in that particular context. While inclusive education may be a way forward to access quality education for all in Africa and Botswana included, it is worth acknowledging the barriers that might hinder its implementation.

3.9 *Barriers to Achieving inclusive education*

African governments often face similar problems with the implementation of inclusive education. The challenge is how to remove these barriers to open the way for social and educational inclusion for learners.

Teachers' attitude and concerns - Since inclusive education in most African countries is based on the concept of teaching learners with SEN within regular education systems, it means all teachers are to be involved in this process. Many teachers, as Agbenyega (2007) explains, feel unprepared and fearful to work with learners with SEN in regular classes and they display frustration, anger and negative attitudes towards inclusive education. In his study to investigate the perception of basic school teachers towards inclusion in the Hohoe District of Ghana, Agbenyega found that the attitudes and concerns of teachers affect their acceptance and commitment to implement inclusive education. On a different note Engelbrecht and Chris (1998) caution the need for relevant teacher training to implement inclusion in South Africa and that the teacher training curriculum has to revolve around how to cope with differences.

Socio-economic barriers- access to basic services is a big problem in many African countries. Poor living conditions, poverty, undernourishment, lack of proper housing and unemployment, violence, HIV/AIDS have a negative impact on all learners (Pottas, 2005). These conditions may arise within the social, economic and political environment in which learners live. A lack of resources is perceived as a barrier to inclusion across cultural, geographical and economic boundaries. It is therefore important to understand what we mean by resources and begin to tackle the problem.

Miles (1989) points out that resources can be divided into human resources, material resources (money) and access to information and knowledge. He argues that the attitudinal barrier to inclusion is so great that the level of resourcing is irrelevant. It is people's attitude to those resources, and the way they utilise them, that is crucial to the promotion of inclusive education.

An inflexible curriculum – Any curriculum which is rigid and inflexible and which does not allow for individual differences can be a hindrance to the implementation of inclusive education. Kenosi (2000) explains education of pupils with SEN in Africa has to be implemented within an education system characterised by its isolation from society and its academically focused curriculum. While Pottas (2005) agrees and points out lack of relevance of subject content, lack of appropriate learning materials, inflexible styles of teaching and concentration on academic outcomes can lead to ineffective implementation of inclusive education. In some countries, tensions of including learners with SEN emanate from how those particular countries view difference in schools. For example, the Namibian government published a separate curriculum for 'learners who are intellectually impaired'. Croft (2010) cautions that, this raises questions about how the selection of students for this 'different curriculum' are likely to be difficult in a country living with the legacy of apartheid. Other challenges dominating schools in Africa concerning curriculum is the orientation towards examinations. Examination results in most African countries are used to judge the success of learners and such definition of success as the 48th International Conference on Education (2008) pointed out that achievement should relate to outcomes of learning across the curriculum, not merely test or examination results and should not be restricted to academic achievement. The exam-driven assessment system however, fails to capture other important aspects in the learners' experiences, most of which occur in the classroom setting.

Medium of instruction – English as a second language has become the dominant medium of instruction in Southern Africa (De Klerk, 2002:3; De Wet, 2002:119). Most African societies, having been colonised by countries like Britain, France and Portugal, maintained the languages of the colonisers. Kenosi (2000) observed that in spite of their independence, many African countries have maintained the former colonial language as the medium of instruction in schools, instead of replacing it with indigenous languages. The use of English as a medium of instruction in schools can be a disadvantage to young learners. Adkins (2008) cautions that young children learn better when they are

taught in their birth language. For many learners found in schools, for example in Botswana, English becomes their second or third language and therefore they experience learning difficulties since all subjects are taught in English except for Setswana. In South Africa, according to Webb (2004), the high prestige of English and the negative social meaning of the African languages in high-function public contexts have led to a strong preference for English as medium of instruction. In many schools, governing bodies consequently adopt a language-in-education policy in which English is the official medium of instruction. Such a policy, however, presents a serious problem since black learners' English-language proficiency in South Africa is often not adequate for using it as language of learning. In Namibia (Brock-Utne and Holmarsdotir, 1997), the emphasis of English as a medium of instruction has contributed to people developing negative attitudes towards their languages. They explain, if you know English well, you are considered educated. If you just know Namibian languages, even though you may know several of them and speak them well, you are considered dumb and uneducated. Having explained that, in most African classrooms, English acts as an obstacle to educational development.

Class sizes and pedagogical approaches - The drive for universal primary education has seen school enrolment rise dramatically in most African schools. Many developing countries are making rapid progress toward the Millennium Development Goal of universal primary education by 2015. A number of African countries have seen very large increases in enrolment following the elimination of school fees (Duflo et al. 2001). For example in 2002, the Kenyan government introduced free primary education, eliminating all school fees in government primary schools. This led to a large increase in enrolment, particularly in the lower grades. These advances have been accompanied by a decrease in educational quality due to enlarged class sizes and a 'one size fits all' approach which neglects individual learning needs. As a result, many children are in school but unable to participate effectively, and still more remain completely excluded from the education system because of large class sizes. Ehnrenberg et al (2001) point out the number of students in a class has the potential to affect how students interact with each other- the level of social engagement which inclusive thinking advocates for. They continue to argue that teachers may choose different methods of teaching and assessment based on the class size. Teaching pedagogy is under question, for example in Botswana, UNESCO (2008:19) points out 'there is lack of cross curriculum teaching both horizontally and vertically, it has been found out that teaching is basically anti-

dialogue and designed to stifle the potential of the promotion of the learners to develop a critical perspective towards the programme they are taught'. The 1977 National Commission on Education, however, urged teachers to 'relate to pupils as people, not just as receptacles for cognitive materials' (Republic of Botswana, 1977: 107). What the Commission was calling for, among other things, was a change in the student-teacher relationship which, in the case of Botswana, has been found to be excessively teacher dominated (Tabulawa, 1997). Tabulawa continues to argue that the authoritarian pedagogical style in Botswana schools is instrumental to certain aspects of Tswana social structure in which the child is dominated and subordinated. Such structures are therefore carried to the classroom by teachers and learners. He describes these structures as cultural baggage which informs teachers and learners actions and their respective classroom roles. Contrary to this, Miles and Singal (2010:12) explain that inclusive education provides an opportunity for society to critically examine its social institutions and structures. It challenges didactic, teacher-centred teaching practices, such as rote learning, and so opens up opportunities for developing better pedagogy and greater competence. Development of better pedagogies may pave the way for access to the general curriculum for many learners who might be having difficulties because of such structures and practices.

Support mechanisms - Responding to the diverse needs of learners in schools may leave mainstream teachers with a considerable amount of pressure in the bid to cater for learners with SEN. Ellins and Porter (2005) argue if children with SEN and disabilities are to succeed in the mainstream education system, then their needs must be met within the classroom and teachers who are expected to meet them must be willing to provide for them. If teachers are not willing to meet their needs due to the stressful nature of the task, the child could be placed in the classroom but that is no guarantee of participation or achievement. To facilitate inclusive education in many African schools Agbenyaga (2007) argues support must be provided including having policies to provide clear guidelines specific to each context and to involve classroom teachers in all stages of inclusion policy development. Lack of support systems may have serious repercussions not only to the innovation itself but also for those for whom the innovation is intended to benefit. To empower teachers to drive the implementation process in schools requires the united support of governments, parents, community and all other significant role players for effective implementation of inclusive education. For example in Botswana, The Ministry of Education in Botswana has set up School Intervention Teams (SITs)

within schools in order to help school teachers to respond to the learning needs of individual children (Kisanji, 1999). These teams were set up to prevent the unnecessary referral of children with relatively mild learning difficulties to the Central Resource Centre (CRC) for special education. Whether or not these teams give the support they are supposed to give to teachers and to learners who have LD is yet another issue which needs to be pursued further. Support for implementers should be continuous, short term training, one-off workshops often fail to meet stated objectives because teachers may lack a clear image of what implementation will look like in their professional schema (Spillane et al. 2002).

Teachers' knowledge and skills - The concept of inclusive education is new to many practising teachers in African schools. Ocloo and Subbey (2008) explain that this is especially true for those teachers who started teaching long before the concept of inclusion gained acceptance. They indicate that most head teachers in Ghana reject the admission of students with disabilities into their schools with the reason that such disabled children will lower the academic standards of the school. In his study of primary school teachers' views and experiences about inclusive education in Ghana, Mapsea (2006) found out that most teachers supported the notion of inclusive education and would like to implement it. However, teachers admitted that they needed more training in the field of educating children with special educational needs in order to accommodate and teach them. In the South African context, Ngwenya (2009) found that teachers' perceptions were that their fear of facing up to the challenges of inclusion was the result of their lack of adequate specialised knowledge and skills for meeting the diverse needs and the implementation thereof.

3.10 *Rationale for inclusive education*

Transformation in the early 1960's especially in developing countries resulted in societies becoming less prescriptive and formal, and this meant that educational practices no longer reflected societal ideology (Engelbrecht, 1999). What is being emphasized is the role education plays; it is a vehicle for the realization of societal values, beliefs and principles that are expected of a citizen of that society. Societies across the globe are unique and have specific agendas; for example, Botswana has set for itself the year 2016 as the year whereby all Botswana should be educated and informed, this means 'all' without leaving out any person. Many authors have

extensively pointed out that there are universal principles that seem to transcend international borders. Dyson (2001:11) states ‘human rights to equality, basic education and democracy result in the commitment to build a just society that is responsive to the needs of its citizens’. This is supported by Sands, Kozleski & French (2000) when pointing out ‘the ever changing social, political and economic trends of society are met when all citizens regardless of differences are responsible for the continuity of that society’. Any Education system is a subsystem of a society and should similarly respond to the needs of its learners, rather than vice-versa (Sands et al, 2000). However, the operational situation of any educational system governs policy and practice, including provision of special education. Hopkins (2003) argues that this milieu includes features that determine what a system or a component of special education maybe allowed or not allowed to do; what is expected or not expected and possibilities that can be achieved through special education. What has become apparent is that learners have diverse learning needs and re-evaluation of most education systems in the world is needed as a matter of priority if not a matter of urgency.

3.11 *A shift in discourse*

Worldwide, there is an emergence of a movement that is advocating inclusion of children with SEN and it grew out of a paradigm shift from a focus on managing children’s deficits (disability) to modifying the current education systems and environment to accommodate them. Nind et al (2003) alludes to the fact that ‘many handicapping conditions were solely treated as impairments that individuals have which need to be put right’. They further argue that today medical science tries to identify the genes that may account for children’s deficiencies and impairments such as autism, speech and language problems. The post modern- era brought with it the scrutiny of those dominant discourses of society and in education it was the medical discourse (Naicker,1999).The medical discourse implies that the deficit is within the learner, giving the impression that the deficit is the primary characteristic of the learner, the second characteristic being the person (Allan, 1999). Segregation of these learners was a result of the medical model which diagnosed them as ‘disabled’ therefore unsuitable for regular education along their ‘normal’ counterparts. Since their needs could not be met by the ‘one size fits all’ system and curriculum, a suitable place for their education was a segregated setting. This contradicts the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994:16) where it has been explained that ‘human differences are normal and that learning must

accordingly be adapted to the needs of the learner, rather than the learner fitted into pre-ordained assumptions regarding the pace and nature of the learning process'. The medical discourse however contradicts the universal principle referred to above; as a result, a shift reflective of post modernism to a rights discourse has transpired. Studies of disability require us to move away from the clinic toward the community, where individuals and families live with differences (Ingstad et al 2005). The OECD (1999) supports this idea by indicating that the concept of Special Educational Needs covers a wide range of disability or learning difficulties. It stresses the need to develop a continuum of educational support and shifts the causal attribution away from a within child 'medical' model to one which stresses the interaction between the child and his/her environment. When the child interacts with his/her environment possibilities of social interaction become highly feasible. From the social interaction model, a shift reflective to a rights discourse transpired (UN, 1989; UN 2006; UNESCO, 2007).

The rights discourse seemed to provide a scaffold for inclusive education and the guiding principle stipulates that 'schools should accommodate all learners regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic and other conditions' (UNESCO, 1994). In keeping with this principle Meijer et al (1997) points out that societies worldwide are responsible for ensuring that all of their future citizens (learners) are exposed to the same principles and views; implying that it is the responsibility of each and every society to create inclusive settings that will adopt these principles and values. Education when seen within the rights model requires that the environment be adapted to make education accessible to all people. Having acknowledged this philosophy of inclusion, school systems around the world began accepting the need for inclusive education (Sebba & Ainscow, 1996).

3.12 *Educational reconstruction*

Countries have engaged different approaches in education to support inclusion and these approaches differ from one country to the other. Some focus on teacher training, others on curricular issues, whereas others focus on support systems. According to Quicke (2008), inclusion is not just about integration of pupils identified as having special educational needs, it involves working for changes in a schools' values, priorities and curricular so that education of all children will be improved. He continues to argue that inclusion implies that a system which is dysfunctional for the education of most children needs to be reconstructed. Approaches to teaching should

shift from teacher control towards a greater pupil responsibility. Leith (as quoted by Entwistle 1987) explains that formal methods of teaching are likely to emphasize teacher control, orderliness, obedience to rules, attentiveness and time-table regularity whereas there is need for spontaneity of responding, enthusiasm, individuality in contribution, no time-table limitations and informal seating. A process of change in inclusive education means adopting more inclusive ways of thinking and working. UNESCO (2003) points out that 'Inclusion should be linked to the missions of the education systems at a larger and not specific groups such as disability or ethnic groups'. If inclusion is not connected to the mission of education systems, the stakeholders might not be willing to devote their time to the process that does not seem to make any contribution to the development in general.

Political will is pertinent to the change process, given the general unwillingness of national governments 'to think in terms of a national comprehensive plan to meet the needs of disabled people' (Daunt, 1991, cited by Nind et al, 2003). Strong support demonstrated by leaders and governments may translate into devotion of time and resources, a move which may allow the process of change to be more effective. Moreover, the organisation and structure of many schools are often not conducive for effective learning for the majority of children. Loreman et al (2005) argue that 'structural and organisational changes made can allow schools to become more inclusive as inclusive settings encourage high levels of social interaction, social competence and communication skills of children with disabilities'. King-Sears (1997) argues that for appropriate inclusion to occur in general education it should be implemented with appropriate attitudes, accommodations and adaptations and Quicke (2008) explains that diversity in schools is not a fixed phenomenon but one which both reflects and contributes to the production of school cultural practices. This therefore means that schools are to provide a platform where cultures and culturally produced individuals could develop freely without fear of being discriminated against. To support that idea Kavale and Forness (2000) caution that the failure of inclusion is attributed to a continuing culture of segregation in the school. Other things which might pose a barrier to accessing the curriculum include, but are not limited to, having a hostile political atmosphere, inability to access the learning environment, funding and lack of support to teachers. Lastly teachers as agents of change need to be given support to exercise their professional autonomy. Bell et al (1996) argues 'loss of professional autonomy may destroy teachers' ability to make informed decisions about teaching and

learning strategies which are in the best interest of the pupils'. The support of teachers is critical for any educational undertaking and in particular for inclusive education.

3.13 *Defining curriculum*

It is difficult to get wide public or professional consensus on the definition of curriculum because of the diversity of values and experience of authors and researchers. As Ornstein (1992:1) points out, 'curriculum as a field of study is elusive and fragmentary and what it is supposed to entail is open to a good deal of debate and even misunderstandings'. To understand more adequately the broad range of beliefs about curriculum it may be useful to adopt Tanner and Tanner's conflicting conceptions of curriculum as indicated in (table 5).

Having seen the limitations of each view presented, Tanner and Tanner (1980:38) came up with their definition of curriculum as 'the construction of knowledge and experience systematically developed under auspices of the school to enable the learner to increase his/her control of knowledge and experience'. Thinking about curriculum planning may be different according to how it is defined, though generally the organisation of schooling has long been associated with the idea of a curriculum. Lovat and Smith, (2003:9) suggest that 'there is an underlying politico-economic philosophy which impact on education and curriculum', adding another dimension from which to view curriculum, that is, to look at trends in its definition. However, it must be noted that definitions of the word curriculum do not solve curricular problems, but they do suggest perspectives from which to view them (Stenhouse, 1975).

Concepts of curriculum	Controlling Mode	Function
Cumulative tradition of organized knowledge	'Permanent' studies, 'essential' studies and skills established disciplines	Cultural inheritance Skilled learner Specialized knowledge
Modes of thought	Disciplinary enquiry Reflective thinking	Specialized knowledge production Personal-social problem solving
Race experience	Cultural norms for thinking and acting	Cultural assimilation
Guided experience	Community life Felt needs	Effective living Self-realization
Planned learning environment	(Eclectic) (usefulness of theory to curriculum decisions)	Facilitative education process
Cognitive/affective content and process	(Eclectic)	Gain knowledge, develop skills Alter affective processes
Instructional plan	Stated intentions for instruction	(Eclectic)
Instructional ends	Identification of ends (maybe construed as behavioural objectives)	Attainment of measurable ends

Table 5: Conflicting conceptions of curriculum (Source: Tanner & Tanner, 1980:37)

It is certain that curriculum has been a matter of intense debate in the twentieth century. According to Aoki (1998) curriculum was developed as a discipline in the United States, as an administrative category within education and was seen as a management tool. From its origins, in Latin, the word curriculum referred to a racing chariot and it is taken from the word 'currere' which means to run (Smith, 1996). Grundy (1987) cautions that curriculum is not a concept, but a cultural construction, that is, it is not an abstract concept which has some existence outside and prior to human experience rather it is a way of organising a set of human educational practices. She continues to explain that to understand the meaning of any set of curriculum practices, we need to know about the composition and organisation of the society and we also need to understand the fundamental premises upon which it is constructed. It is

necessary to further explore what exactly curriculum is before even attempting to know its characteristics and its operations.

Following are some of the diverse views about curriculum, Kerr (as quoted by Kelly, 1983) defines curriculum as all the learning which is planned and guided by the school, whether it is carried on in groups or individually, inside or outside the school. This definition is based on the two concepts namely; *planned* and *guided*. What is sought to be achieved should be specified in advance. The definition also makes reference to school, it should be recognised that curriculum theory and practice emerged in the school and in relation to other schooling ideas such as subject and lesson (Smith, 2000). The Queensland Curriculum Assessment & Reporting document (2007) defines curriculum as everything a school does to support student learning including what is taught, and the knowledge and skills acquired by students. Coles (2003) argues that curriculum is more than a list of topics to be covered by an educational programme, for which the more commonly accepted word is a 'syllabus'. A curriculum is first of all a policy statement about a piece of education, and secondly an indication as to the ways in which that policy is to be realised through a program of action. Coles continues to explain that it is useful to think of a curriculum as being much wider; it can be further defined as the sum of all the activities, experiences and learning opportunities for which an institution, society, teacher takes responsibility. Kavale (1990) and Kelly & Vergason (1978) define it as the content of the school. Therefore the term 'curriculum' may be referred to as a blanket term that encompasses everything that influences the teaching and learning process.

Kelly (1999:3) argues, 'a definition of curriculum must offer much more than a statement about knowledge-content or merely the subjects which schooling is to 'teach', it must explain and justify the purposes of such transmission and an exploration of the effects that exposure to such knowledge and such subjects is likely to have, or intended to have, on its recipients'. In addition to the above explanation of curriculum, the Queensland Curriculum Assessment and Framework (2007) adds another dimension 'the hidden curriculum' and explains that the behaviours, knowledge and performances of the learner are inferred. Coles (2003) points out that in the hidden curriculum you decide what to do at the spur of the moment. This then implies that, in an inclusive education framework, the curriculum should consider its recipients more than the imposition of the values implicit in the selection of the content (Kelly, 1999).

3.12.1 Multiple interpretations of curriculum

There are other interpretations associated with curriculum; Beauchamp (1975), for instance, gives an example of how curriculum and instruction are frequently depicted as interchangeable terms. He further explains that at other times, instruction is conceived to be part of curriculum, or curriculum is thought to be subordinate to instruction. Though there are vast attempts in trying to make a distinction between the two, Sands et al (1995) subscribe to the view that curriculum is the ‘*what*’, while instruction is the ‘*how*’ part of the process. And another way of expressing the same idea as suggested by Macdonald & Leeper (cited by Marsh 1997:5) is that ‘curriculum activity is the production of plans for further action while instruction is the putting of plans into action’. Despite the fact that it is important to separate the functions of *what* and *how*, Marsh (1997) argues that teachers do not separate out the two functions because they are constantly planning, implementing and monitoring in their respective classrooms. If this is the case, then it means separating intentions from actions becomes hard for them. To analyse and discuss all curriculum definitions and designs would be a massive undertaking and beyond the scope of this research because each definition is contextually construed. However, it would be helpful if this study could have a working definition of curriculum which could be applicable.

3.12.2 Working definition of curriculum

Another way of looking at curriculum is through process. In this sense ‘a curriculum is an attempt to communicate the essential principles and features of an educational proposal in such a form that is open to scrutiny and capable of effective translation into practice’ (Stenhouse, 1978:4) in other words, curriculum is what actually happens in the classroom and what people do to prepare and evaluate. Nunan (1988) views curriculum in terms of ‘what is’ rather than ‘what should be’. The definitions provided by Crowe, (2005) and Vaughn, Hughes, Moody & Elbaum, (2001) have both guided a working definition of curriculum for this particular study: *Curriculum is a key component during instruction and a process that requires decision-making which includes identification of goals and objectives, articulation of the expectations for the learner’s performance, determination of the content to be taught and instructional strategies to be used.* Defining the curriculum as a set of performance objectives to be achieved, as described by Marsh (1997), is a very practical orientation to curriculum, and this approach focuses upon specific skills or knowledge which are considered should be attained by students. Proponents of this approach argue that if the teacher knows the targets students should achieve, it becomes easier to organise other

elements to achieve this. Such elements include appropriate content and teaching methods. Though content is considered to be what is selected for teaching and learning in regard to the learning needs of children, Marsh (1997) argues the fundamental concepts of curriculum include content, purpose and organisation. Tripp (1994) indicates that characteristics of curriculum factors to look for include intentions, planning, explication, harmony and relations. Basically, curriculum is not the aspirations but it is what happens to children in school as a result of what teachers do. It includes all of the experiences of children for which the school should accept responsibility.

3.14 *Contested nature of curriculum*

3.14.1 Curriculum as process

Looking at curriculum as process is supported by The Further Education Curriculum Review and Development Unit (FEU, 1980) by describing that process approaches to the curriculum are more open-ended, more concerned with continuous development and the outcome is perceived in terms of development of certain desired processes and potentialities. Smith (1996) points out that the process approach looks at the curriculum as the interaction of teachers, students and knowledge. If we assert that curriculum belongs to the dominion of human interaction and in this logic between teacher and learners, and then Grundy (1987) concurs by pointing out that if curriculum is a practical matter, it entails that all participants in the curriculum event are to be regarded as subjects, not objects. This in turn raises issues concerning the participants' right and status within the event, which also has implications for decision-making regarding the purpose, the content and the conduct of curriculum. In other words curriculum is what happens in the classroom and what people do to prepare and evaluate. It is an active process. FEU (1980) further explains this by pointing out that 'while learners may acquire knowledge as a product, that is, the thinking of others, knowing is a process which involves them in developing their own useful strategies' for, in the words of Bruner (1996) "reducing the complexity and the clutter".

If curriculum is an active process linked with the practical form of action, then an obligation is placed upon educators to know the situations in which the curriculum texts are to be applied. Grundy (1987) points out that educators should also take seriously the status of the students as learning subjects and this means that learning, not

teaching will be their central concern. The argument by Grundy is that curriculum is a particular form of specification about the practice of teaching and he continues to clarify that if learning is to be the main focus, it should involve the making of meaning. Being able to interpret the curriculum texts to understand what they prescribe is not sufficient, teachers are to reject as legitimate educational content that which does not have at its heart the making of meaning to the learner. This is clearly elaborated by Grundy (1987) by pointing out that ‘when the practice of reading comprehension is informed by a technical interest, the exercise becomes one of decoding a piece of writing to arrive at pre-determined answers. When the same practice is informed by a practical interest the task will be regarded as an interaction between the author and the reader for the generation of meaning.’ Grundy believes curriculum is an active process and his idea has been illustrated in figure 2.

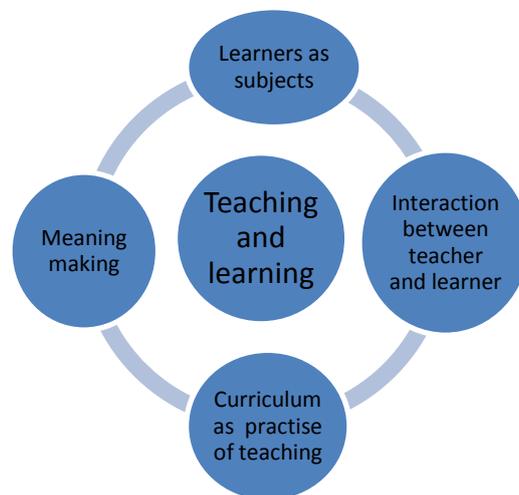


Figure 2: An active process of teaching and learning

What we have in this model is a number of elements in constant interaction. It is an active process and all its components are linked and the central point or focus is teaching and learning.

3.14.2 Curriculum as practice

Curriculum is more about the practice of teaching and a way of translating any educational idea into a hypothesis testable in practice. Many as already stated link curriculum to a package of materials of ground to be covered and this does not take us anywhere since it does not really explain as to what happens to the content and means which are to develop as teachers and students work together. Since learners are not objects to be acted upon, the practical approach as argued by Grundy (1987) tends towards making the process of learning central concern of the teacher, the reason being

that, the way of thinking emphasizes interpretation and meaning making. As described by Smith (2006) this approach places meaning-making and thinking at its core it can lead to very different means being employed in classrooms and a high degree of variety of content.

When curriculum and teaching are both seen as practice, Reid explains that they will both be concerned with the interests of individuals and with how all components are to be reconciled, not treating each as a separate entity. If these two are brought together (practice of curriculum and practice of teaching) then they can be seen as a reflection of each other. Both teachers and learners will enter into what Reid refers to as curriculum deliberations where their intentions will be communicable to the settings and translated into action. Once these two are viewed as Reid suggests, then the classroom or the learning environment has to be re-defined as a curricular space and Barnett et al (2005) points in a curricular space, though participants (learners and teachers) are at various points, knowledge is co-produced as they engage in the practice. As members of the practice, learners exercise their agency in order to keep the practice going. In a way what the authors are pointing out here is that teachers, learners, knowledge and curricular space all have a relationship and they share common forms and purposes to the realisation of curriculum practice. As this study has engaged constructivist theory as its framework, curriculum from a constructivist perspective views all learners as capable members of the learning environment who are continuously striving to make sense of new ideas. By doing that, constructivism places responsibility on educators to adjust standard teaching practices to accommodate the diverse needs of learners. In contrast to the hierarchical and authoritarian tendencies of transmission- oriented teaching, constructivist teaching promotes critical thinking, problem solving and recognition of multiple perspectives and also promotes preparing learners to become active participants in the classroom (Villegas & Lucas, 2002).

3.14.3 Curriculum as product

Curriculum as ‘product’ has been explained as an attempt to achieve certain ends in students. Kelly (1999:60) argues, ‘this is to reduce education to a scientific activity and to assume that it is legitimate to mould human beings, to modify their behaviour, according to certain clear-cut intentions’. If this is the case, the purpose of education becomes a technical exercise in that the curriculum is planned to produce a particular outcome. This way of thinking about curriculum can therefore be ‘characterized as the instrumental pursuit of particular predetermined aims and objectives’ (Peach, 2007: 23).

With curriculum conceptualised as a product, then the focus of learning is on competition rather than cooperation as advocated for by inclusionists. In an inclusive school, ‘the student competes only against herself/himself developing a process called self-knowledge or meta-evaluation of her/his own learning’ (Glat, 2007:10). The curriculum as a product notion has been criticised as reducing education to a scientific activity and as such, as Kelly (1999:62) describes, it becomes ‘indoctrination’ rather than an education. Moreover, it is important to be aware of the fact that curriculum as a product often represents as Bloomer (1997:14) explains, the ideal rather than the actual curriculum and cautions that there may be well differences between the intended or ‘ideal’ curriculum as prescribed and what actually happens in practice.

3.15 *What is curriculum adaptation?*

For the sake of consistency in this study curriculum adaptations will be used referring to efforts to modify the way in which content is represented or presented or the way in which the student engages with and responds to the curriculum (Lee et al 2006). According to Maghuve (2006:2) curriculum adaptations are modifications that relate specifically to instruction or contents of the curriculum. Curriculum adaptation, according to Sawyer (2000:345), ‘involves both content and the enactment of curriculum, ideally creating a process of dynamic interaction among teachers, learners, subject matter and multiple settings’. Content can be described as the shape and matter of teaching and learning, Hernandez (1989:7) points out that ‘the context in which the curricular content is transmitted, and the processes involved in doing so may involve the less formal and visible aspects of classroom life’. Further, these could be adjustments or modifications to teaching and learning environment, teaching and learning techniques, teaching and learning support material that enhances a learners’ performance or allows at least partial participation in a learning activity, learning programmes and assessment. To adapt the curriculum is not sufficient when teachers do not know what to adapt, how to adapt it and when to adapt it and on whom to do the adaptation. Janney and Snell (2000) suggest adaptation can be in four faces the *what*, *how*, *where* and *when* of curriculum adaptations and they particularly focus on these factors: a) curricular- adapt what is taught b) instructional- adapt how it is taught c) how learning is demonstrated and d) ecological- adapt the setting (where, when and with whom).

Despite many educators’ reservations regarding curriculum adaptations, Labon (in Pijl et al 1997) Lewis and Norwich in (Corbett, 2001:24) point out ‘curriculum

adaptation is nothing more than good teaching', thereby implying that strategies that work for learners without barriers to learning [those without learning difficulties] will similarly work for learners with barriers to learning. Armbruster et al (2001) agree that for many students with disabilities and for many without, the key to success in the classroom lies in having appropriate adaptations made to the instruction and other classroom activities. Curriculum adaptations are therefore about recognizing individuals learning styles and finding ways to employ the style most effectively in the learning situation (Corbett, 2001). Looking into the kind of diversity in our schools today, teachers are compelled to take analytic approaches when dealing with these learners. Pritchard (2005) supports this by alluding to the view that 'we learn in different ways to each other and we often choose to use a 'preferred learning style'. 'Curriculum adaptation must provide the setting and climate in which learners can grow and develop their capacity, and criteria for selecting curricular content should be based on an understanding of the learners' disability and needs' (Taylor & Harrington, 2003:204). Evans (1997) explains it simply means that the greater the learner's learning difficulties, the more the educator would need to act as a mediator between the learner, the learning environment and the learning content.

When teachers are aware of what learning styles are, this arguably enables them to adequately cater for the differences in learning. Pritchard (2005) defines learning style as a preferred way of learning and studying; for example, using pictures instead of text, working in groups as opposed to working alone, or learning in a structured rather than unstructured manner. If a learner is aware of what his/her preferred way of learning is and understands the learning process it can lead to improved learning outcomes. The role and responsibility of any given education system, any school and individual teacher is to ensure that differences are catered for within the system. Reid (2005) supports that catering for differences 'is a tall order' and perhaps an idealistic desire; it represents an attitude shift and such a shift is necessary if teachers are to be able to accommodate to the range of differences within most classrooms today. Learning styles are about individuality and diversity in much the same way as inclusion.

3.15.1 Rationale for curriculum adaptations

The design and development of teaching and learning processes, use of materials and the learning environment often do not take into account the learning needs, aspirations and uniqueness of learners. Reid (2005) suggests that, it is a challenge that many believe is at odds with the practical reality of meeting the needs of all learners

within an inclusive setting. 'Curriculum' has always been one of the major obstacles or tools in the education system to facilitate the development of more inclusive provision, the reason being that it is frequently extensive and demanding, often rigid and non-flexible leaving teachers with little or no room to try out new approaches. UNESCO (2003) explains sometimes the content might be too distant to the reality in which the student lives and therefore inaccessible and un motivating. There is a need for teachers to adapt the curriculum as without those adaptations, some students would never be challenged whereas others may never experience success. This is supported by Lorenz (1998) in that, by adapting the curriculum, learners receive optimal exposure to the curriculum and are encouraged to become independent learners because they learn to persevere with challenges. While good instructional design for the entire class can minimise the need for adaptations, Loreman et al (2005) point out that sometimes the only way to cater for children with these diverse needs is to adapt the curriculum in order to accommodate their learning goals. Before these adaptations can be made, teachers are to ask themselves questions regarding why there is need to adapt the curriculum. Loreman and Deppeler (2000) suggest that, teachers should ask the following questions in identifying curriculum adaptations:

1. *Can the learner take part in the curriculum in the same way as others? If not...*
 - a) *Can the learner take part in the same way as other students if the environment is modified?*
 - b) *Can the learner take part in the curriculum in the same way as other students if instructional strategies are modified?*
 - c) *Can the learner take part in the curriculum in the same way as other students but with different learning outcomes?*
2. *What adaptations are needed to maximize learning and participation?*

Going beyond what Loreman and Deppeler are suggesting, other questions that are to be asked include but are not limited to: Can the learner construct knowledge while taking part in the curriculum? If these questions cannot be answered then an individualised programme may be justified to allow individuals to progress at different rates and at their own pace. Muijs and Reynolds (2005) point out that 'The use of 'individual learning plans' is another variant of individual learning strategies. In this strategy, used in several countries for pupils with special needs or learning difficulties, teachers develop specific individual learning plans which set out the goals that pupils

should be able to acquire and the means by which teachers can help them acquire these goals'. Other authors, for example like Taylor & Harrington (2003) refer to this as an Individualised Educational Plan (IEP). However, using an IEP does not necessarily mean that the individual learner should be isolated. Loreman et al (2005) contend that for an IEP to assist in the process of inclusion, it must be infused into the class curriculum rather than be taught in isolation. A range of methods can be used by educators to guide the process of curriculum adaptations depending on the needs of learners and context from which these adaptations are made. It is therefore important to note that accommodation is not a change of educational input crafted for overall or general curriculum, but it is a modification of instructional methods and strategies which are targeted to meet individual learners' needs. Adaptations may be practices in inclusive classrooms which can occur when teachers decide to conduct lessons which meet individual learners' unique needs by working on adapted assignments (King-Sears, 2001). Curriculum adaptations or modifications do not only benefit students with SEN, but also facilitate successful learning for learners without difficulties or disabilities in acquiring mastery of context. For example, William (1998) contends for many students with disabilities and for many without the key to success in the classroom lies in having appropriate adaptations, accommodations and modifications made to the instruction and other classroom activities.

3.15.2 Types of curriculum adaptations

The main aim of adapting a curriculum is to meet the learning needs of individual learners within a given context and therefore adapting a curriculum has no recipe since each teacher, each learner and each classroom is unique and whatever adaptations made will be specific to each situation (Hall, 2009:1). However, for purposes of this study, the Nine Types of Curriculum Adaptations from Browning (2005) have been adopted: Adaptation by:

- Quantity - adapting the number of items the learner is expected to learn
- Time - adapt the time allotted and allowed for learning, task completion or testing
- Level of support - increase the amount of teacher assistance to keep the student on task
- Input - adapt the way instruction is delivered to the learner

- Difficulty - adapt the skill level, problem type or the rules on how the learner may approach the work
- Output - adapt how the learner can respond to instruction
- Participation - adapt the extent to which a learner is actively involved in the task
- Alternative goals - adapt the goals or outcome expectations while using same material
- Substitute curriculum - provide different instruction and material to meet a learner's individual goals.

The individual learners' needs will determine what type of adaptation the teacher engages to help the learner reach his/her maximum potential.

3.16 *Role of teachers in making curriculum adaptations*

'Doctors want their patients to get well, lawyers want justice for their clients and teachers want their pupils to become educated' (Langford, 1978:15). For learners who have learning needs, their education will depend on whether they access the curriculum or not and whether they are given opportunities to construct knowledge. A teacher is not only to teach but he /she has a duty to teach. Crawford et al (2009: 55) spells out the duty of the teacher as: 'knowing students' strength and weaknesses and needs related to learning, creativity and socialization with peers'. This places a teacher in a better position to know how to achieve a desired result and knowing how it can be achieved. Teachers should understand principles of teaching before they can understand the different children they are supposed to teach and understand the diverse learning needs they bring into the learning environment. Woods (1995:2) points out, 'creative teachers seem guided by particular theories of pedagogy and of learning, they have a holistic perception of the pupil, of learning and of the curriculum and they are concerned with the affective as well as the cognitive- (body and mind, feelings and intellect)'. When teachers are creative, they will promote creative learning in pupils. Teachers as well as learners play a major role in the changes of curriculum strategies in order to achieve the intended curriculum outcomes. Because of their involvement in classroom situations, the role of teachers is crucial for noticing these gaps and bringing about change or improvement. Using a variety of approaches and/or adaptations in a learning

environment usually requires more teacher effort and time than simply changing instructional methods or access. Since they spend a lot of time with learners and are expected to have more knowledge of learners, classrooms, and school environment they can use this knowledge to point out weaknesses, shortcomings, and conditions which should and can be changed. Their knowledge, attitudes, concerns and needs are the starting point of curricular process. Teachers' expertise about classroom reality is deemed as being crucial for discerning practical problems that call for curricular remedies. Westbury (1972:30) characterizes Schwab's (1983) approach to the practical as drawing upon 'an image of a creative and practical reformer discerning problems through an awareness of apparent gaps between what should be and what is, then seeking solutions from his understanding of what might be done, and finally moving to bringing about change or improvement'.

One other aspect to note is that teachers are the immediate agents of change who by their instructional activities can implement appropriate curricular solutions. They are, therefore, viewed as starting points in curriculum deliberations. The role of the teacher needs to change from the transmitter of information to a facilitator of learning, a view shared by the constructivist approach. For teachers to effectively meet the needs of their students, the mode of curriculum delivery is to change so that they facilitate successful learning for those experiencing difficulties. Some of these changes include but are not limited to understanding processes of learning. As Pritchard (2005:2) explains, 'a basic understanding of processes of learning is essential for those who intend to develop activities that will have potential to lead to effective learning taking place in classrooms'. Individual preference for different approaches to learning has the potential to make a big impact on what happens in classrooms.

An understanding of how learning proceeds is supported by Gardner's (1993) work on 'multiple intelligences'. He explains that an individual's particular strength in intelligences have a direct bearing upon the way their learning takes place. Teachers may want to take this into consideration when planning activities in which children are expected to take part. Pritchard (2005) supports this by alluding to the fact that in planning for multiple intelligences, teachers should consider the range of activities related to the content of the lesson and the intended learning outcomes which will give a range of opportunities to the children's different intelligence strengths. One other aspect which teachers may employ is allowing for a wide variety of responses to particular task to allow a balanced and equitable multiple intelligence environment. Teachers are to be

aware that each learner will adopt an approach to learning with which they feel comfortable with. According to Reid (2005: 111) 'Learning styles are integral to the process of learning and this must be considered when curriculum adaptation is taking place'. The use of the 'one-size fits all' curriculum no longer meets the majority of learners (Tomlinson, 2002), and ignoring these fundamental differences may result in some students falling behind, losing motivation and failing to succeed (Tomlinson and Kalbfleisch, 1998). As a response to addressing curriculum adaptations to cater for learners with LD, Armbruster et al (2003) conclude by cautioning that using instructional accommodations increase chances of students becoming better learners throughout their school years and beyond.

3.17 *Summary*

In this chapter I have reviewed inclusive education from the context of Botswana and different models of understanding inclusion from a global context. Also, I have pointed out how the implementation of inclusive education has a bearing on the political, cultural and economical status of a country. Different assumptions about the concept of curriculum and its contested nature were also discussed. Finally, curriculum adaptations and the role of teachers in making curriculum adaptations to support inclusionary practices were dealt with. The next chapter will focus on the methodology used in this study including the research questions and aims of the study and the justification for using the qualitative methodology and methods.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH PARADIGM AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 *Introduction*

This chapter presents an in-depth description and justification of the research paradigm and methodology employed using an interpretative-constructivist paradigm and a qualitative approach as the overarching framework. It starts with discussion of the research paradigm, methodology and justification of the research paradigm, followed by description of the research field and data collection, data analysis and data management processes. Finally, the chapter concludes with discussing the research trustworthiness and ethical issues pertinent to this study.

4.2 *Research paradigm*

A research paradigm provides a conceptual framework for seeing and making sense of the social world. According to Guba and Lincoln (1994) a paradigm maybe viewed as a set of beliefs, it represents a worldview that defines for its holder, the nature of the ‘world’, the individual’s place in it, and the range of possible relationships to that world and its parts. Since researchers have different beliefs about how knowledge is created and how we recognize ‘truth’ or knowledge it is important to give a brief difference of such beliefs and explicitly state the philosophical stance that this research adopted. (Fig.3 illustrates)

Theoretical perspective and philosophical stand

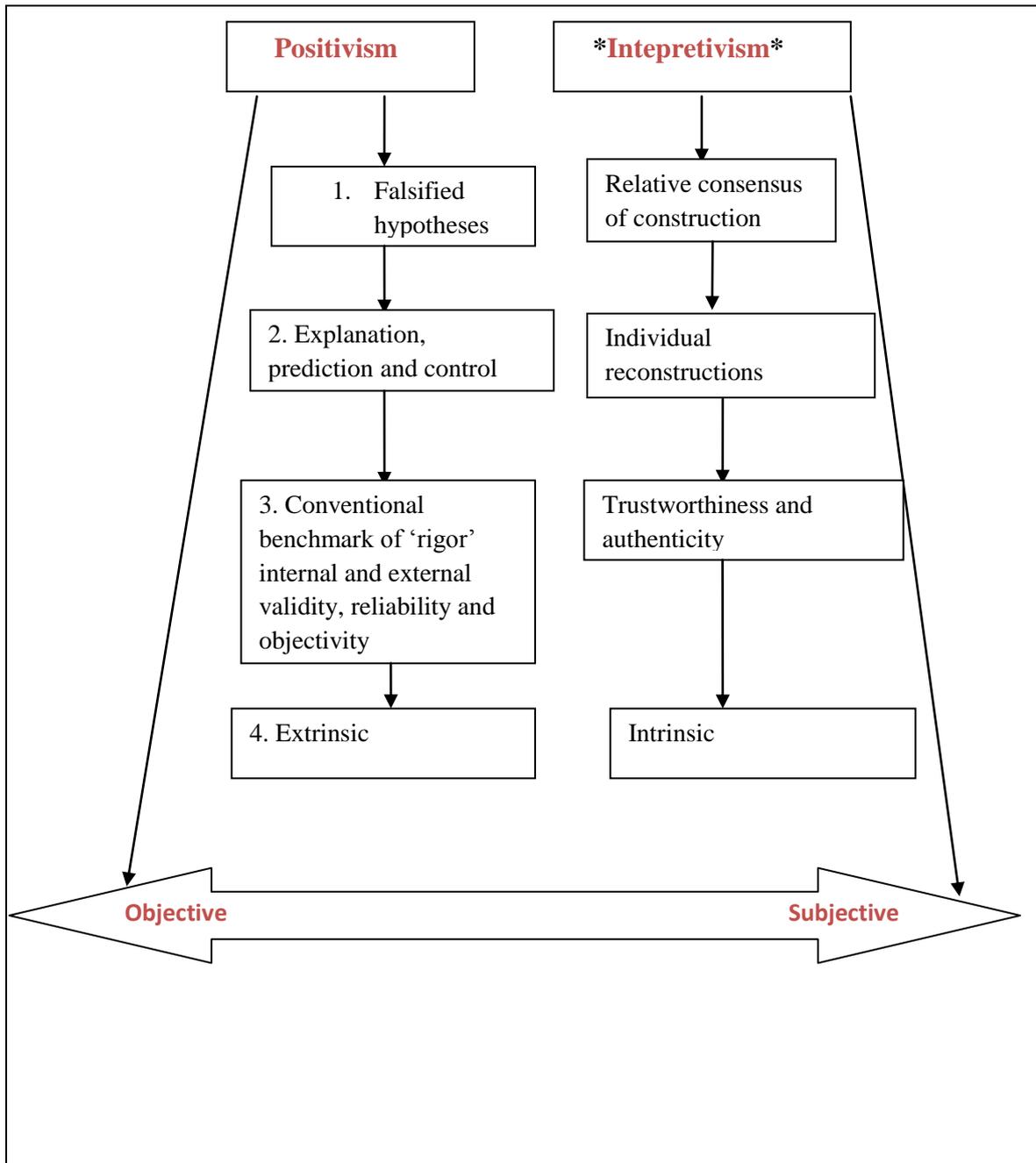


Figure 3: Theoretical perspective and philosophical stand

Based upon Blaikie (2000); Hesse-Biber et al (2004); Lincoln & Guba (1994)

Key: 1) inquiry aim, 2) nature of knowledge 3) quality criteria and 4) ethics

* Philosophical stand of this study

The research paradigm selected for this study was an interpretative paradigm, using a qualitative research approach with an exploratory and descriptive focus. The interpretative paradigm was chosen for this study as my underlying aim was to explore what teachers do in their classrooms and their understanding of what they were doing with regard to the implementation of inclusive education. The use of ‘what’ and ‘how’ in my research questions clearly described my intention to explore and gain an in-depth understanding of what teachers did. Having explored and described the phenomenon under study, an interpretation of what teachers did in their classrooms and their understanding of what they did has been provided (fig.3 – individual reconstructions).

The interpretative nature of this study was motivated by a belief that there is no one reality, but that reality is ‘multi-dimensional and ever changing’ (Merriam, 1998:202) and that its interpretation will be different depending on individuals and their connection with the issues at hand (fig.3 – relative consensus of construction). The aim of using the interpretative paradigm was to portray a representational picture of what is being studied so that readers may understand the experiences as if there were there. Interpretivists share the goal of understanding the complex world of lived experiences from the point of view of those who lived it. Therefore, Grix (2004:83) concurs ‘Interpretivists believe that the world is socially constructed through the interaction of individuals and the separation of ‘fact’ and ‘value’’. Through this approach, I was able to interact with my participants in order to understand the phenomenon under study from their point of view. Patton (1990) underscores that being in a natural setting is critical in helping the researcher understand what is being studied. Looking at what teachers were doing in the classrooms at the time I was collecting data helped me to see what they were doing and their understanding of why they were doing it (fig.3 – subjective). Any research paradigm is based on certain ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions (Patton, 1990).

4.2.1 Justification of the research paradigm

Educational research is a critical enquiry aimed at informing educational judgements and decisions in order to improve educational action (Basse, 1999). To realise this goal, a new approach is required which Bayliss (1998) explains will start to problematise basic understandings in order that complex situations relating to children and adults are not simplistically researched in ways which yield adverse or aversive interventions for children or adults who are different. On the same vein, Singal (2009) argues, historical and current efforts towards the education of children with disabilities

have been largely shaped by a focus on redistribution of resources and access. She continues to argue that although such efforts are important, they are inherently limiting in nature, as there is danger that they will be shaped by individualistic assumptions. This shift which the two authors are advocating for urges researchers to be responsive to change and the unexpected.

The shift in paradigm presumes a different set of beliefs and assumptions about different issues including shifting the blame from teachers for failure to implement inclusive education. Kershner (2007) argues for more qualitative studies that tap into the social world of the classroom because teachers' knowledge does not rely on a body of factual information, but is practical, interactive and responsive to wider political and social change. The reality of what happens in classrooms requires what Singh (2009:17) describes as 'engagement in a socio-political process that require at all levels to engage in the 'phenomenology of change''. To support Singh, the use of an interpretive approach has the potential to uproot the deep complexities underlying particular understandings of teachers' actions and reactions. Since the aim of interpretative approach is to understand the different realities of the situation under study, the use of methods such as observations, interviews and document analysis helped in revealing such realities. These different realities I believe could have not come out the way they did, had I used other methods which are not interactive.

Having used an interpretive approach to explore what teachers were doing in their classrooms and their understanding of this in view of implementing inclusive education, helped me to describe the situation from teachers' point of view. This may offer insightful explanations not only in the practices such as pedagogy, but it can also offer a shift in existing beliefs (Singal, 2009).

Any research paradigm is based on certain ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions (Patton, 1990). From Crotty (2003:3) I noted the following definitions for the key terms mentioned this far.

- Ontology – 'the nature of being', 'what is', 'reality'
- Epistemology – 'theory of knowledge'
- Methodology – 'strategy, a plan of action', 'design', 'linking method choices to desired outcomes'.

4.2.2 Ontology

Ontology has been described by interpretivists as the branch of philosophy that is concerned with existence of multiple, socially constructed realities unguided by any natural laws, casual or otherwise (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). In the interpretative world, the ontological assumption is that the social world is best understood from the viewpoint of the participant in action. In this study, I accepted the premise that it is through the speech, gestures and actions of the participants that I can understand what they were doing in their classrooms and their understanding of what they do. Furthermore, from this perspective multiple realities exist within the social world, Hesse-Biber & Leavy (2004) point out realities are apprehendable in the form of multiple, intangible mental constructions, socially and experimentally based, local and specific in nature. These realities are perceived as constructions existing in the minds of people as they are a product of the people's consciousness and a result of their cognition, influenced by the social environment and the culture in which they find themselves (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2004).

Constructions come about by virtue of the interaction of the knower with the already known and the still to be known (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). For this particular study, I used various attempts to uncover these multiple realities or constructions that my participants held and how these realities influenced their way of understanding issues of curriculum, curriculum adaptations and learners who have learning difficulties. Additionally, uncovering these realities helped me to understand participants' conceptualisations on issues of curriculum, curriculum adaptations and learners who have learning difficulties.

4.2.3 Epistemology

Epistemology is defined as 'a philosophical grounding for deciding what kind of knowledge is possible and how can we ensure that they are both adequate and legitimate'. (Crotty 2003:8). Adherents of the constructivist paradigm answer the epistemological question by asserting that 'it is impossible to separate the inquirer from the inquired into' (Guba & Lincoln, 1989: 88). These authors believe that it is the interaction of the inquirer and the inquired into that creates the data that will emerge from the inquiry. For this reason, constructionists eliminate the ontology-epistemology distinction by arguing that the 'what is there that can be known' does not exist in isolation but only when it is connected to the inquiry process. Having explained that, to

understand participants' understanding of the phenomenon under study, I had to interact and connect with these participants through a formalised process of research.

4.4 Methodology

According to Anderson and Burns (1989:45) methodology refers to 'how evidence is gathered and meaning derived from it'. Guba & Lincoln (1994) explains, the methodological question is answered by adherents of the constructivist paradigm by asserting that the inquiry must be carried out in a way that will expose the constructions of the variety of concerned parties. Since the interpretative paradigm aims at discovering the meanings from those involved in a particular study and from a particular context, the use of a qualitative approach and the collection of qualitative data helps in better understanding such constructions. The aim of this study is not to evaluate changes in Botswana with respect to inclusive education, instead it aims to understand how concepts of inclusive education, curriculum and learners who have LD are understood and enacted in Botswana classrooms.

If the study is approached qualitatively, Henning (2004) explains, and then qualitative methods will be used. I used observations, interviews and document analysis to gather information on teachers' understandings about curriculum, curriculum adaptations and learners who have LD.

Since the aim of the research was to explore what teachers do in their classrooms, observing them helped me to see what they were doing, interviewing them helped me to understand the rationale behind their actions and document analysis helped me to understand the overview conceptualisation of the school and government regarding the implementation of inclusive education

Given that the current study is based on the interpretative paradigm, using the exploratory and descriptive approaches, I will further explain how these were related to this study.

4.4.1 Exploratory

Since the aim of this research was to obtain a realistic representation of what teachers do in their classrooms to implement inclusive education, I used the exploratory approach which enabled me to enter a natural setting in which these activities occurred to gain rich in-depth data. Creswell (1994) supports this by pointing out that a qualitative study is defined as an inquiry process of understanding a social or human

problem, based on building a complex, holistic picture, formed with words, reporting detailed views of informants, and conducted in a natural setting.

4.4.2 Descriptive

Creswell (1994:125) describes qualitative research as descriptive ‘in that the researcher is interested in the process, meaning and understanding through words or pictures’. In this study since the aim was to gain an in-depth understanding and insight into what teachers do in their classrooms as their way of implementing inclusive education. I observed, interviewed and analysed documents and data gathered were described and presented without any pre-conceived framework or categories and it was described from the context of participants' beliefs, understandings and actions.

Using exploratory and descriptive approaches enabled me to provide a systematic and illuminating description of the phenomenon (Phelps, Fisher & Ellis, 2007). Particularly, different participants had different views about curriculum, curriculum adaptations and learners who have LD. By exploring these views, it helped in better understanding of the issue under study.

4.5 Research field

The study was conducted in six primary schools in Botswana, situated in urban, semi-urban and rural areas. All were inclusive schools (that is, schools where learners who are deemed to have learning difficulties are taught in the same classrooms together with those without learning difficulties) with a population ranging from 150 to 950. Two schools were chosen from each of urban, semi-urban and rural areas. The reason for choosing schools in different areas was to find out if teaching in such areas had any impact on teachers' ways of approaching the curriculum and or teaching in inclusive settings.

The schools were chosen by education officers based on the information I gave with an understanding that all schools in Botswana are expected to operate within the new policy guidelines of inclusive education. It was assumed in this study that since inclusive education has been adopted by the government of Botswana as a way of educating all learners, all teachers would be aware of the concept of inclusion and their understanding would provide valuable information to this study.

Classroom observations were carried out, teachers and head-teachers were interviewed and documents were obtained and analysed.

4.5.1 Participants

The sample size of the study was 17, inclusive of teachers, head-teachers and two officials from the Ministry of Education and Skills Development – MoESD. The choice of teacher participants in each school was made by head-teachers based on our discussions. In each school teachers and head-teachers (depending on their availability) were interviewed. Teachers who participated were purposively chosen from different sections: lower (STD 1-3), middle (STD 4-5) and upper (STD 6-7). For example: each section had two or four classes and only one teacher was selected (by the head-teacher) from a section. In one school, one teacher would be from upper whereas the other teacher would be from lower section, or it could be lower and middle section depending on how the school found it fit. The reason using participants teaching different standards were to gather balanced information on whether or not teaching a particular standard has an impact on how teachers implement inclusive education. The reason for using ‘purposive sampling’ (Burgess, 1984) was driven by the availability and willingness of the researched to participate in the study.

Some participants had training in special education, others had awareness in special education and some had no training in special education. The reason for this variation was to find out whether or not training at all in special education has any impact on the way teachers implement inclusive education. Furthermore, impromptu interviews were extended to two officials from the ministry of education to triangulate the data. The following table provides demographic information on the schools and participants used for this study.

Name of School	Name of Teacher	Observation	Interviews	Document Analysis
School A (Semi-urban area) 01/02/10 to 05/02/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher A (Dip-SPED) (Std 7) Head-teacher A (PL) STLD (PTC)(Std3) 	1 (Setswana)	1 1 1	Lesson Plans School Policy Mission and Vision statements IEP Plans and schedule Syllabi (lower and upper)
School B (urban area) 8/02/10 to 12/02/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher A (PTC & Awareness-SPED) (Std 3) Teacher B (PTC) (Std 6) STLD (PTC) (Std 5) 	1 (Setswana) 1 (CAPA)	1 1 1	Lesson Plans Mission and Vision Statements Syllabi (upper and lower)
School C (rural area) 15/02/10 to 19/02/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher A (PTC)(Std 2) Teacher B (PL)(Std 4) STLD (PTC) (Std 2) Head-teacher C (B.ED) 	1 (English) 1(mathematics)	1 1 1 1	Lesson Plans IEP plans and schedule Mission and vision statements
School D (rural area) 22/02/10 to 26/02/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher A (PTC) (Std 3) Teacher B (PTC) (Std 6) 	1 (English) 1(Social studies)	1 1	IEP plans School Policy documents Syllabi (lower and upper)
School E (semi-urban) 1/03/10 to 05/03/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> STLD (PTC)(Std3) Head-teacher E (PL) 		1 1	Syllabi (lower and upper)
School F (urban area) 8/03//10 to 12/03/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> STLD (PTC & Awareness in SPED) (Std 4) 		1	Remedial Education Policy IEP schedule
Ministry of Education Official (Special education Division) 19/03/10			1	
Ministry of Education Official (Curriculum and Development) 22/03/10			1	

Table 6: Demographic information

Key:

HoD Head of Department

STLD Senior Teacher-Learning Difficulties

Awareness-SPED In-school course of 1-2 weeks led by STLD or regional education officers

IEP Individualised Educational Plan

CAPA Creative and Performance Arts

Qualifications:

PL Primary Lower

Dip-PE Diploma-Primary Education

B.ED Bachelors Degree in Education

PTC Primary Teacher's Certificate

Dip-SPED Diploma-Special Education

4.5.2 Procedures prior to data collection

A series of steps were followed to collect data for this study. Prior to data collection I obtained a certificate of research approval from the University of Exeter (appendix 1). I then proceeded by completing the Ministry of Education (Research Unit) forms online which is a requirement when seeking permission to do research in Botswana schools. Upon arrival in Botswana, I made a follow-up with the same ministry where I submitted a formal letter (appendix 2) and a letter from my supervisors (appendix 3). After receiving the research permit (appendix 4) I sought and obtained other permits from the Regional Offices for urban, semi-urban and rural areas. Telephone appointments were then made with head-teachers of all six schools to be involved in the study. At the schools, I produced all research permits which clearly outlined the purpose of my study and further explained the study to both the head-teachers and teachers, assuring them it was not an evaluative but an explorative process. Before the actual observation and interviews, I had the opportunity to conference with the teachers and each teacher was asked to provide a schedule for class visits which was agreed upon by both parties.

4.5.3 Data collection methods

The following codes were given to the methods used in this study:

Data Method	Code	Source
Observations	OBS	Observation guides Field notes
Semi-structured & interviews	INT	Field notes, tape recorded interviews.
Document Analysis	DA	School policies, mission and vision statements, syllabi (upper and lower), teachers' lesson notes, learners' written work

Table 7: Codes for data collection methods

Multiple data collection methods were employed to obtain information intended to answer the questions of this study. The main methods were observations and interviews while document analysis was used as a supplementary data collection method. These methods allowed me to obtain a good indication of teachers' understanding of what they were doing in their classroom as the data collected related specifically to the 'real life', day-to-day experiences of the teachers (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Data were collected over a period of two and a half months with one week in each school and weekends used for preliminary data analysis. The seventh and eighth week were used for data verification i.e. for any missing information and any further clarification on some issues.

4.5.3.1 Direct classroom observations (OBS)

Observation was selected as a tool for collecting data because it involves getting close to people and seeing what they do in their day to day activities. For this particular study, observations could help provide focus and structure for subsequent interviews. I was optimistic that observations could lead to deeper understandings of what I wanted to explore than interviews alone, because as Patton (1990) positions it, observation provides knowledge of the context in which events occur, and may enable the researcher to see things that participants themselves are not aware of, or that they are unwilling to discuss.

According to Gold (cited by Burgess, 1984), when using observation as a tool in research, there are different roles that can be adopted by participant observers: 1) the complete participant- this conceals the observer dimension of the role with the result that covert observation is involved; 2) the participant as observer- this role involves situations where the researcher participates as well as observes by developing relationships with informants, the participant as observer is not tied down, he or she is free to move around as research interests beckon; 3) the observer as participant- this role is used to refer to situations where contact with informants is brief, formal and openly classified as observation however the nature of the role is less satisfactory as the brevity of the relationship results in problems of bias arising from the researcher's brief contacts; and 4) the complete observer- role is identified with eavesdropping and reconnaissance in which the researcher is removed from sustained interaction with the informant. This role does bring with it the problem of ethnocentrism as the researcher may reject the informant's views without ever getting to know them.

For this particular study, the role I played as a researcher was that of the participant as observer. I decided to opt for this role because it enabled me to interact with participants, the activities in the classrooms and with the learners. For example, during an observation of a Setswana lesson in School B, when learners were doing a writing activity, I stood and walked around and talked to learners as well as to the teacher as they continued with the activity. The goal of my participation at this point was to see what both the teacher and learners were doing rather than assume their action while seated at the back of the classroom. Additionally as argued by Morrison (1993) observations enable the researcher to gather information on the interactional settings, that is, the interactions that are taking place formal, informal, verbal or non verbal. Since this study was interested in the teaching process, the interaction between the teacher and learners and between learners themselves was a very important aspect in this study. Interaction outside the classroom during tea break was also important as it afforded me a chance to hold conversations which were not necessarily related to the observations that took place. This helped in creating rapport between me and teachers and once this rapport was created, teachers seemed to be at ease with me and my presence.

The kind of observations available to the researcher lie on a continuum from 1) highly structured - knowing what you are looking for, 2) semi-structured - having an agenda of issues but one will gather data to illuminate these issues in a far less pre-determined or systematic manner and 3) unstructured - far less clear what you are looking for and will therefore have to go into a situation and observe what is taking place before deciding on its significance to the research (Patton, 1990). For this study I decided to use semi-structured observations, employing an observation guide (appendix 5) which was particularly used to record the quality of the occurrence of the phenomena under study. Recording the quality of the occurrence of the phenomena helped in bringing out and knowing details about each issue as qualitative observation is a subjective process of gathering data or information. To gather this information, an observation guide was used and it covered issues of a) access and participation (how learners who have LD accessed and participated in the lesson), b) instructional strategies (what type of instructional/pedagogical strategies the teacher used during teaching and learning process, c) interaction (between teacher and learners and between learners themselves) and d) learners as individuals/inter-dependence (how learners behaved as individuals during the learning and teaching process) (Creswell, 1998). The semi-structured observation guide for the purpose of this research concentrated upon

gaining information with regards to the procedures of teaching and learning. The format was intended to provide a consistent approach and to enable the focus of the work to be clearly defined. I described the activities as they occurred during observational sessions and used field notes to reflect on the process, the activities as well as drawing a visual sketch of the setting (appendix 6). The observations revealed a number of significant details which may provide readers with some clues as to what was actually happening in the classrooms. The setting was of interest to me because the seating arrangement and general classroom layout contributes to the process of teaching in learning. Lofland and Lofland (1995) refer to this as 'logging data' where the process involves recording information through various forms such as observational field notes, mapping, census taking, photographing, sound recording and collecting and organising documents. In addition to field notes Lofland and Lofland explain that researchers may use photographs, videotapes, and audio tapes as means of accurately capturing a setting. As an addition to observations, I took three photographs which were mainly used to emphasise a point. Flick et al (2004) explain that the photograph gathers extraordinary information. The three photos which appear in chapter 5 were used to record observation in a visual way and in this case to show the difference in class sizes between urban and rural areas and also to illustrate how the some teachers confined their teaching to the chalkboard.

In the six schools where the research was carried out, observations depended on the availability and consent of teachers as well as on the time table schedule, therefore the number of observations varied from school to school. I could not observe less than 40 minutes as this was the scheduled time for lessons in schools, arriving late or leaving early would have disrupted the teacher as well as learners.

Observations were as follows:

- School A = 1 observation (40 minutes)
- School B = 2 observations (40 minutes each)
- School C = 2 observations (40 minutes each)
- School D = 2 observations (40 minutes each)
- School E = no observations (teacher volunteered for interview only)
- School F = no observations (teacher volunteered for interview only) (table. 8)

The choice of being participant as observer enabled me to explore and understand what was happening in the classrooms. Once I entered classrooms, learners

would stand up to greet me (a norm which is practised in Botswana classrooms). After exchanging greetings with them, I would request them to sit down and then the teacher introduced me. In all the schools, prior arrangements were made before the observations; therefore, teachers and learners were not caught off guard because they were not expecting me. In schools A, B and D I sat at the back of the classroom where the teachers' desks were situated, but in school C, the teachers' desks were placed in front of the learners, and because I felt this would interfere with the teaching process as learners may have focused their attention towards me being in front of them, I asked the class teachers to give me a chair to sit at the back.

In School B, each teacher was observed twice teaching two different subjects whereas in the other five schools teachers were observed once teaching only one lesson. The reason for this was that, when observed twice, teachers altered their teaching following the interview from the first lesson. Because this study was not intended to be evaluative, the format for conducting direct observations was changed as the changing of teachers' behaviour between first and second lesson argued that the teachers were acting in a self evaluative way which affected the outcome of the observation. For that reason only the first lesson was included in the data. All observations were conducted by myself (the researcher) and field notes as well as the schedule were maintained for use during data analysis.

Given the situation in Botswana primary schools of teacher/pupil ratio being 1:35 or 40 and teachers teaching learners with different learning abilities within one class, only two learners in each class with LD were observed to find out how they interacted with the lesson, with the teacher and with other learners during the teaching/learning process. Though the lessons involved all learners, the choice of two learners with LD was appropriate as observation of all learners would not have been well-suited for this study since the main focus was not necessarily on learners but on teachers

4.5.3.2 *Observational data*

Observational data are used for the purpose of description of settings, activities, people, and the meanings of what is observed from the perspective of the participants. After each observation, I immediately expanded my notes into rich descriptions of what I observed by hand before typing them. As supported by Chiseri- Strater & Sustein (1997) and Silverman (2000) notes should be expanded as soon as possible before your memory of the details fades. After conducting all the observations, data from

observational notes and field notes from all schools were collated (appendix 7). I then proceeded to the analysis stage and during this process, the following questions were taken into consideration (Finken, 2005): What did I see going on in the schools where I did observations? What did I see from the notes I had? What did the teachers do? How exactly did they do this? Through this thinking I started the process of analysis looking for indications of categories in events and behaviour. Having identified categories from observation notes, I then proceeded to match them with categories from interviews to work from one data base. The process of data analysis will be fully explained later in this chapter. In Chapter 5, description and direct observational quotations will be used to allow readers to understand fully the research setting and how the actions of teachers are represented in the description.

4.5.3.3 *Interviews*

Conducting interviews mainly with teachers and head-teachers was the next step in collecting data for this study. I used interviews to try to understand the issue under study from the participants' point of view and to uncover the meaning of their experiences. Kvale (1996) explains that interviews allow people to convey to others situations from their own perspective and in their own words, while Burgess (1984:106) points out 'interviews can be used to compliment participant observation and they may be used to gain access to situations such as classrooms where teachers may not wish the researcher to be present'. Although the interviews were based on observations conducted in the classrooms (for some teachers), I also had some core concepts to ask about which addressed the research questions (inclusive education, curriculum, curriculum adaptations and learners who have LD) by using an aide memoire. Bogdan & Biklen (2003) indicate that even when an interview guide is employed, qualitative interviews offer the interview considerable latitude to pursue a range of topics and offer the subject a chance to shape the content of the interview. I realised that controlling the content of the interview in a rigid manner may limit participants in telling their story in their own words; therefore, probes were used to encourage participants to answer questions in depth. Furthermore, Bogman and Biklen add that good interviews are those in which the subjects are at ease and talk freely about their points of view and they also provide data that is filled with words that reveal their perspective. To support the above authors, for this particular study, participants used words such as 'slow learners' and 'low achievers' to refer to learners who have LD; because this is the language that

participants were familiar with, I did not try to correct the terminology but asked further questions to gain clarity on exactly who these learners were.

Using semi-structured interviews was also helpful in that it helped me to explore the topic broadly. To aid clarity, depth and validity in interviews that I conducted, I used different techniques of questioning as proposed by Kvale (1996), some of which were:

- Searching for opinions (What do you think of that?)
- Asking for clarity (What do you mean by...? Can you say a little more about...? Can you give some examples?)
- Seeking for comparisons (How does that relate to...?)
- Asking for further information (What about...? Does that apply to...?)
- Summarising occasionally and asking for corroboration (So...? What you are saying is...?)

Interviews were conducted in English and Setswana was used where there was communication breakdown or where participants wanted more clarity on the questions. Bell (1993) affirms that a major advantage of the interview is its adaptability, the interviewer can probe deeply into the respondents' opinions and feelings and can always make a follow up to obtain more information and clarity. I had what Burgess (1984) refers to as 'aide memoire' which I used to ensure that similar concepts and topics were covered in all interviews. This aide memoire had the following key words: Inclusive education, curriculum, curriculum adaptations and learning difficulties. The duration of interviews varied from school to school ranging from 15 to 45 minutes. The following tables illustrates the duration of interviews in each school.

School	Interviewee	Duration
School A	Teacher A Head-teacher A STLD	20 minutes 45 minutes 45 minutes
School B	Teacher A Teacher B STLD	20 minutes 20 minutes 40 minutes
School C	Teacher A Teacher B STLD Head-teacher C	25 minutes 20 minutes 45 minutes 45 minutes
School D	Teacher A Teacher B	25 minutes 15 minutes
School E	STLD Head-teacher	45 minutes 45 minutes
School F	STLD	45 minutes

Table 8: Duration of interviews

There was a difference in the duration of interviews between teachers who were observed and those who were not observed. As a researcher, I had to abide by the rules and regulations of schools and I could only interview teachers I had observed at break time or after school. Conducting interviews within a 15-25 minutes period for some teachers was ideal because I did not want to take away all of their time during a 30 minutes break. Interviews for the STLDs and head-teachers were longer (45 minutes) and were conducted in their offices while for teachers they were conducted at a place convenient for them within the school. After each interview, participants and I listened to the tapes to verify points as well as ensuring accuracy and clarity (this happened outside the 15-25 minutes of interview schedule). Having interviewed head-teachers and teachers, I extended the interview to two officials from the MoESD (Curriculum Department and Special Education Department) to triangulate data. Each of these interviews lasted for 1 hour and took place in their MoESD offices. All interviews were transcribed from the audio tapes before the analysis stage (appendix 7).

4.5.3.4 Document analysis

Documentary evidence was used in this research to supplement information obtained by other methods. McEwan & McEwan (2003:82) explain that ‘document analysis can fill in some of the missing data pieces or it can raise a host of new questions regarding the accuracy of observations and interpretations’. In the same vein

Bogdan and Biklen (2003:124) explain that researchers have become particularly interested in the documents themselves to see how documents are interpreted by real people instead of an imaginary audience. Having observed in the classrooms and interviewed participants, I reviewed documents which were related to the topic under study. These documents included teachers' lesson notes, children's exercise books for lessons observed and administrative documents (school policies, schools' mission and vision statements, IEP schedule, syllabi (lower, middle and upper), and Remedial Education Policies). Documents were useful in providing a behind the scenes look at some aspects which I might have omitted during observations and interviews and in providing a policy context. For this particular study, documents were used as supplementary data alongside my main methods to triangulate data from observations and interviews. As Marshall and Rossman (2006:107) state, 'researchers supplement participant observation and interviewing with gathering and analyzing documents produced in the course of everyday events or constructed specifically for the research at hand'. While Patton (1990) on the same vein explains documents are a basic source of information about program decisions and background, or activities and processes. For this particular research, documentary data analysis was based on the following:

- At school level – documents were analysed to look for statements and positions around inclusion (appendix 11)
- At classroom level – teachers' lesson notes were analysed with regard to curriculum adaptations (appendix 10)

Apart from that, direct statements from some documents have been used in chapter 5 for purposes of supplementing data.

4.5.3.5 *Data management and analysis*

Merriam (1998:192) explains that data analysis is 'a process of making sense out of raw data'. Maykut & Morehouse (1994:121) further explain that the 'process of qualitative data analysis takes many forms, but it is fundamentally a non-mathematical analytic procedure that involves examining the meaning of people's words and actions'. After collecting data from the first school, I immediately began my analysis by reading observational notes and documents and listening to interview tapes. This was a way of finding out what alterations to make or what to add before going into other schools. Having collected all the data from all schools, it was organised and interpreted guided by levels of coding (Creswell, 2005; Henning et al, 2004): 1) open coding- the data were divided into segments then scrutinised for commonalities that could reflect

categories or themes; 2) axial coding- the codes (categories and concepts) were related to each other, via a combination of inductive and deductive thinking, into coding families; and 3) selective coding- core (or main) categories were selected and then systematically related to other categories. At the same time, this involved the validation of these relationships, and then filling in any categories that perhaps required further refining and/or developing and leading to themes.

Level 1: I transcribed the audio-recorded interviews manually and I filed them in a notebook leaving space for coding, memos and notes. Field notes were revised and documents reviewed. Each page of transcriptions and field notes were coded in the upper right-hand corner for easy identification of various sources. I then re-read transcripts several times in order to get a sense of the whole data before breaking it into parts. The next stage was to write memos in the margins of the text which were key phrases, ideas and concepts occurring to me. Through this process, I started sorting the data according to unique information for each school, ‘developing tentative ideas about categories and relationships’ (Maxwell, 1996:78). This was an initial process which helped me to explore the database (Creswell, 2005). I read and re-read the data in order to develop categories and themes, and as Miles & Huberman (1994) explain, such coding allowed me to fracture the data thereby reaching higher levels of abstraction by seeing the data in different groupings. Following is a table showing examples of raw data from interviews with level 1 coding:

Example of raw data from interviews divided into segments:	Level 1 Codes
Q: What do you do as a school as a way of including all the learners?	Remedial work(RW) Groups of ability(GA)
A: We do remedial work, put them in groups of ability, and then make what we call activities for them (practicing inclusive education) and we want them to participate but I am not satisfied with the way teachers include students, the large number of the class sometimes prevents the teachers from catering for these students. Even the content of the syllabus because they are always chasing after objectives.	Practising inclusive education(PIE) participation Large class sizes (LCS) Content (CNT) Objectives (OBJ)

Table 9: Raw data from interviews with level 1 coding

SAMPLE: OBSERVATION AND FIELD NOTES

Raw data	Level 1 Codes
<p>There are 35 learners in the classroom. 18 boys And 17 girls and 1 teacher (woman). The classroom is in the middle of two other class- rooms and is not carpeted unless at the corner where there is a carpet at the reading corner. There are charts learners work, books on the wall for different subject and learners' work is also pasted on the wall for different subjects. At the reading corner there are different books and learners go to the reading corner only if they have finished their assigned activities.</p> <p>Learners were seated in groups of four tables and the grouping was based on mixed ability and in each group there were mixture of boys and girls.</p> <p>The lesson started with the teacher asking learners what they did the previous day in Setswana Through raising their hands the teacher randomly called their names to give answers.</p> <p>The teacher then discussed the topic for the new lesson and asked learners to open their text books so that they follow as she reads the story. Learners were randomly chosen to read the remaining part of the story. Then at the end, learners were asked to individually answer questions which were under the story they read. Two boys stood up to give out exercise books to their classmates. They started writing and the teacher went around to see what learners were doing at the same time marking what they have already done. Some learners took about 15 minutes to finish while others did not finish until the 40 minutes of the lesson lapsed.</p>	<p>reading corner (RC) charts (CH)</p> <p>mixed ability grouping(MAG)</p> <p>question and answer (QA)</p> <p>writing (W) teacher-learner interaction (TLI) Fast and slow(FS)</p>

Table 10: Raw data from observations and field notes with level 1 coding

Level 2: The second step was to apply these codes and relationships and to compare the commonalities across all schools. This was the beginning of emergence of coding families and themes common to all schools. Thereafter, I collated the data (from observations, interviews and document analysis) into one data set so that I could easily manage it from one point. Having done this enabled me to establish the relationship between codes and helped me to group them into coding families/categories. The interrelations between all established categories resulted in codes falling under a category label relevant to them (table 11). At the end of this process 12 categories (themes) emerged (table 12)

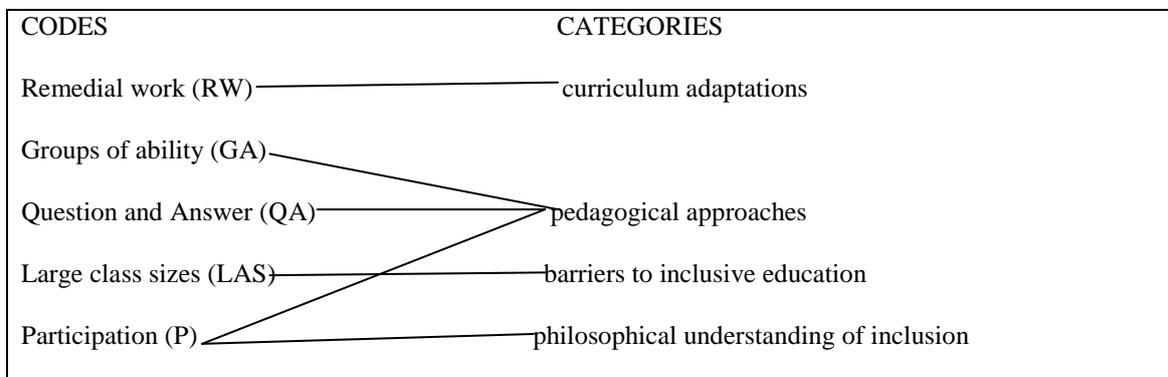


Table 11:Codes and categories

Note: Where some sections of data fitted into two or more categories, I cross-indexed (Taylor-Powell, 2003) that is, reading and re-reading the data to ensure that the data were correctly categorised.

Step 2:

<p>A) Curriculum adaptations remedial work, step by step teaching, differentiation by task, time & quality, special time, Remedial teaching corrections</p>	<p>G) Support Parental support, teachers' support, mentoring, collaboration- school & community, workshops, school committees, sharing</p>
<p>B) Pedagogical Approaches & Inclusion groups of ability –groupings, group work, abilities, mixed ability teaching, discussions, different activities, assistive activities, peer teaching, mentoring, teach each other, sharing, participation, oral instruction, class-work, question & answer, inquiry method, small group teaching, outside classroom teaching, recall of information, telling, helping learners to read</p>	<p>H) Difference & Sameness (us & them) Categories/ types of disability, LD, MR, PD, identification, reading problems, sight problems, slow learners, worse students, handicapped, disabilities, slow reading, own pace</p>
<p>C) Benefits of inclusion Freedom, self-esteem, interaction, identity, sameness, happiness, liking, relationships, friendships, comfortable</p>	<p>I) Feelings about inclusion Hesitant, unwilling, not eager, hiccups, uncomfortable, satisfaction</p>
<p>D) Curriculum concept Syllabus, content, helping learners to read, lesson plan, objectives, finishing objectives, specific, similar tasks, lower tasks, teaching from known to unknown, concept, understand, comprehend, remembering, recalling, good lesson, achievement, exam oriented</p>	<p>J) Key areas of barriers on implementing inclusive education Time constraints, time consuming, strenuous, extra work, large class sizes, difficult, not easy, hard, difficult, overworked, lack of competence, challenges, number of subjects, more knowledge, training, prevention, chasing objectives</p>
<p>E) Translation of curriculum Guided curriculum, deliver, tested, assessment, evaluate, expansion, curriculum materials, screening, observations</p>	<p>K) Philosophical understanding of inclusion and inclusive education Acceptance, no discrimination, good, safe learning environment, inclusive teaching, exclusion, access, participation, membership, benefit</p>
<p>F) Linguistic power & instruction Culture, language, mother-tongue</p>	<p>L) Policy & practice Government policies, government requirement, government schools, private schools, policy document, parental choice, special class, Non – governmental Organisations</p>

Table 12: Categories

Level 3: Having decided to merge those categories with a close relationship, six themes remained with some sub- themes (table 13).

Themes	Sub-themes
Curriculum	a)Translation of curriculum b)Curriculum concept c)Curriculum adaptation
Pedagogy	a)Pedagogical approaches b)Linguistic Power and instruction
Inclusive Education	a)Philosophical understanding of inclusion and inclusive education b)Feelings about inclusive education c)Key areas of barriers for implementing inclusive education d)Benefits of inclusive education
Difference and Sameness (us and them)	
Policy and practice	
Support	

Table 13: Themes and sub-themes

Lastly I revisited all the steps to cross check for any information that I might have missed. The data are presented in chapter 5.

4.6 *Trustworthiness*

A number of elements have been suggested by qualitative researchers to ensure trustworthiness and credibility of the findings. According to Lincoln and Guba, (1985), trustworthiness consists of credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability. For purposes of relevancy, credibility and transferability will be discussed in this study. These authors further believe that the issue of trustworthiness can enhance confidence in a particular study. To ensure credibility of the findings in this current study, several steps were taken into consideration. During the two and a half months of data collection, I developed and maintained a good working relationship with participants of the study. The purpose of my study was clearly explained as an observation on the teaching process not an evaluative process and this helped as it made them comfortable. Where they were some uncertainties, I assured them that the information would only be used for purposes of this research and that their names and identity would be anonymous hence the use of alphabetic letters for both schools and participants.

Additionally, after observations and interviews, I sat with teachers (participants and non-participants) during tea time where we discussed general issues to create rapport and to make them feel comfortable around me.

Erlandson et.al (1993:31) suggest that ‘perhaps the best way to elicit the various and divergent constructions of reality that exist within the context of the study is to collect information from different points of view’. To ensure the credibility of the findings of this study, triangulation was made through using several methods of collecting data. Maxwell (2005) points out triangulation allows you to gain a broader and more secure understanding of the issues you are investigating and reduces the risks of systematic biases. Methods of observations, interviews and document analysis were used to triangulate the data. Observing teachers during the teaching and learning process and making follow-ups through interviews and document analysis helped in obtaining different opinions and understandings of the topic under study (Erlandson et.al, 1993; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Establishing credibility of the study can also be done through member checking. Erlandson et al (1993) explain member checking provides for credibility by allowing members of stake-holding groups to test categories, interpretations and conclusions. These authors continue to explain that member checking can be both formal and informal. For this particular study, member checking was carried out informally by allowing participants at the end of interviews to immediately correct errors of fact or challenge interpretations. This allowed me to have a better understanding of the data rather than implying what participants meant and it helped in interpreting the ideas accurately. Additionally, a re-coding technique was used where data were checked several times and cross-checked to enhance possibility of new understandings. This was also carried out through discussions with my supervisors.

Issues of transferability were also taken into consideration in this study as Lincoln and Guba (1985) argue that in a naturalistic study the obligation for demonstrating transferability belongs to those who would apply it to the receiving context. While Merriam (1998:211) argues that, ‘transferability becomes possible if rich descriptions of data are produced’. Merriam explains that such descriptions allow readers to determine how closely their situations match the research situation, and hence, whether findings can be transferred. For this particular study, I provided detailed descriptions of the context of the study which hopefully brings the reader vicariously into the context being described (Erlandson et al, 1993).

4.7 Ethical considerations

Conducting any kind of research requires addressing aspects of ethics, and these ethical issues according to Punch (1998) may arise at each stage of the research process in both qualitative and quantitative approaches and must be taken into account. I was conscious of ethical issues before and during the conduct of this research as well as during data analysis. This happened because I believe that educational research should take place within a broad ethical framework to ensure that research has been conducted in a morally acceptable way.

This study employed an interpretative approach which suggests a socially constructed and subjectively based reality; research ethics are particularly very important when using this approach since there is usually interaction between the researcher and participants. Given the nature of the study involved human participants, issues of ethics were strongly taken into consideration as supported by Esterberg (2002:44) who points out the fact that ‘codes of ethics provide standards for behaviour’. Winter (1996) lists a number of principles that research must pay close attention to, including: making sure that the relevant persons, committees and authorities have been consulted, obtaining permission before making observations or examining documents; allowing all participants to influence the work; and respecting the wishes of those who do not wish to participate I followed all the required guidelines and requirements both from the University of Exeter and the government of Botswana.

4.7.1 Informed consent

It was ethical that head-teachers talk to teachers during my absence to ask them if they were willing to participate in this study. My presence may have somehow influenced the decisions that these teachers would have made. When I did meet with the teachers, I allowed these potential participants of the study to feel free to ask questions or to ask for any clarity on issues they did not understand. It was at this point that I explained to them that they should not feel pressurized to take part in the study as supported by Marvasti (2004:135) ‘Participation in a research should be voluntary; you should not psychologically or physically force your subjects to take part in your research’. Participants were informed that they had the right to withdraw their participation at any given time if they wish to do so. Those who agreed to participate in the study were asked for their consent (Creswell, 1998a). I provided all the participants with information about the project addressing all the issues mentioned (appendix 8) and participants gave their consent by signing a form (appendix 9). This consent was thus

given with adequate understanding of the role they would play in the research and therefore the consent was valid (Best & Khan, 2003).

It was ethical to inform head-teachers of my intentions to take photographs where needed. These photos were to be used only for purposes of this study to emphasise a point. As a result, teachers were informed of this development which they positively accepted. Regarding school documents, head-teachers and teachers were informed that any copies that would be made will only be used for this research and may not be passed on to be used by other researchers without their consent. I also gave them my contact details so that should there be any unforeseen circumstances, they should be able to contact me.

4.7.2 Confidentiality and anonymity

Codes of ethics insist on safeguards to protect people's identities and those of the research locations (Denzin & Lincoln 2000: 139). In the current study, anonymity was adhered to by using alphabetic letters to hide the identity of schools and participants. The following alphabetic identities were assigned: School A, B, C, D, E, F. Teacher A,B,C,D,E,F,G,H,I and Head-teacher School A, B, C, D, E, F. I also kept the data confidential and have not shared specifics so schools/people cannot be identified. Pictures taken in schools have been used positively in this study to emphasise a point and can only be recognized by those directly affected. Lastly, I promised participants to produce a brief summary of the thesis and if time allows I will hold some workshops at the six schools where I did the research to share information on issues of curriculum, curriculum adaptations and learners who have learning difficulties. In terms of my own ethical stance, I was concerned with directing this research from my own experience as a teacher trainer. I attempted to avoid this by adhering to all constructive comments I got from those who had the opportunity to read the data analysis including my supervisors and my colleagues.

4.8 *Delimitations and limitations*

Delimitations are restrictions/bounds that researchers impose prior to the inception of the study to narrow the scope of a study while limitations are those characteristics of design or methodology that set parameters on the application or interpretation of the results of the study (Mitchell et al 1986). The current study was delimited to six schools in Botswana while the total number of primary schools is 803.

The number of schools selected is small and might affect the generalisability of the findings of this study. I remain conscious of the limitations of my research in terms of time, scope and breadth.

In terms of time, I carried out the research in six different primary schools which were geographically apart. The period of research was two and a half months and the distance between these schools was 2 to 4 hours from the research base. Since the study involved interviews, it required visiting the schools more than the scheduled time to clarify some issues and two months proved not sufficient to do that. School term in Botswana began the second week of January 2010 and I started the research the third week of January and usually schools take a bit longer to settle in the new year with new learners arriving and with parents coming into schools to either request for places or for transfers to other schools. Teachers usually take time to settle in their classrooms due to busy schedules; as a result, participants did not offer the time they could have offered had it not been the beginning of the year. Some teachers did not want to participate alleging they are unfamiliar with learners since most of them had new learners.

In terms of place, the study took place in schools from the Southern district part of the country whereas there are six other districts. But because of the scope of the research, I had to confine myself to one district for easy access from the research base, as a result findings cannot be generalised to other districts in other parts of Botswana. The geographic area in which the research was conducted did not provide much cultural diversity as compared to conducting research in different parts of the country.

Acknowledging the limitations of the research minimizes the risk associated with an attempt to generalize the findings obtained from the study. Additionally it helps in locating the findings in context and makes the findings more realistic. Patton (1990) cautions generalization is not a goal for qualitative research but the lessons learned from the current study can be transferred to similar contexts (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Therefore, the limitations discussed above suggest some caution when interpreting the findings of the current study. Additionally, the sample of the study excluded other stakeholders like learners, parents and policy makers. Any future research might wish to include the voice of all concerned about inclusion. Despite the limitations of the study imposed by the research context and the purpose of the study and the limitations of data collection instruments, the study has made valid contributions to knowledge concerning inclusion, curriculum, curriculum adaptations and learners who have LD.

4.9 *The researcher (personal reflexivity)*

The idea of being aware of my own values, ideas, experiences and pre-judgements as researcher as explained by Hammersley & Atkinson (1995:228), is known as reflexivity. Reflexivity urges researchers to ‘explore the ways in which a researcher’s involvement with a particular study influences, acts upon and informs such research’. When discussing the role of a researcher in a study, Berg (2009) argues that the researcher is expected to study the world without having to impose his/her views or taking positions on social and political matters. On the other hand, Esterberg (2002:12) advises that ‘we need to develop an understanding of how our positions shape the kinds of theories we create and the kinds of explanations we offer. Instead of assuming that objectivity is possible, then, we need to be reflexive’. Denzil & Lincoln (1998) explain that the observer is part and parcel of the setting, context and culture he /she is trying to understand and represent. I believe I was an insider in this research because I am a Botswana citizen and a product of Botswana’s education system; I had an idea on how Botswana’s school system operates. As an insider who knew what was happening in schools, I could not assume and impose my ideas and beliefs on the participants. Instead, I listened to what my participants told me since they are the ones who face day to day school experiences. At the same time, I was an outsider in that I do not directly belong to the community and the schools where I carried out my research. From the outsider’s point of view, I listened to participant’s stories about their experiences and made analysis and interpretations with support from other researchers through interacting with different literature.

As a teacher by profession and a teacher trainer, who has taught in different levels of education in Botswana, including primary school settings as well as training teachers who eventually teach in these primary schools, it is because of this background that I decided to carry out my research in primary schools with primary teachers with the hope that the results of this study will reveal what actually happens in our schools as far as implementing inclusive education is concerned. Having taught in primary schools, having trained teachers and having assessed teacher trainees during teaching practice, I observed incidents where some learners continue to lag behind their peers because they could not equally access the curriculum. This research hoped to identify some gaps between policy and practice. My interaction with participants through classroom observations and interviews helped me to uncover

deeper issues; not only of what was happening in the classrooms but also how teachers' understandings of the phenomena bring out cultural issues which when positioned within the context of Botswana can assist in implementing inclusive education. In this regard, my experiences, therefore, played a very positive role in this study, and my position as a teacher trainer made it much easier for me to easily access schools and talk to teachers. In fact, just the fact that I used to be a primary school teacher and now being a teacher trainer at the university was enough to inspire my participants to want to talk to me even more and ask for advice on how they could also advance. Lastly the fact that during interviews I was able to explain some concepts in Setswana (language that both myself and participants spoke) also minimised communication barriers and encouraged participants to express themselves freely in their mother tongue without any intimidation of using a foreign language.

On a negative note my position as a teacher trainer also impacted on the research because some teachers were unwilling to participate claiming I could uncover the difference between what they did in the classrooms and what I had taught them during training. Some opted to be interviewed rather than being observed.

4.10 *Epistemological reflexivity*

Epistemological reflexivity encourages us to reflect upon the assumptions (about the world, about knowledge) that we have made in the course of the research and it helps us to think about the implications of such assumptions for the research and its findings (Willig, 2001). While Marshal (1990) points out that epistemological reflexivity is about examining the implications of the research questions and the methods used on the outcome of the research. This research transformed the understanding of inclusive education from the academic benefits in classrooms to wider social and cultural dimensions of inclusive education which this research barely considered at the outset. Arguably, inclusive education is not about what is literally and physically happening within the classrooms, but how teachers' understandings shape their pedagogical strategies and how the social and cultural dimensions of a given society are incorporated within the school. In the course of this research, I realised that my research questions were designed to address what was happening in the classroom and in the school as implementation of inclusive education. This

limited getting information on what inclusive education is outside the classroom and the school.

4.11 *Summary*

This chapter outlined how an interpretative research paradigm with an exploratory and descriptive focus was selected and implemented for this study. A qualitative approach was used since it offered me the opportunity to gain first hand information of the nature and process of what exactly teachers do in their classrooms as a way of implementing inclusive education and their understanding of what they did. The use of classroom observations, interviews and document analysis enabled me to be directly in contact with the participants. The direct contact helped me and the teachers as it afforded both parties the opportunity to be comfortable around each other. Ethical issues were observed and exercised in line with both national and international standards.

CHAPTER FIVE

FINDINGS, INTERPRETATIONS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 *Introduction*

The goal of data analysis is to yield significant and valid answers to the research questions. Bassey (1999) views the process of data analysis as ‘an intellectual struggle’ with raw the data collected, while Miles & Huberman (1994) point out that when carrying out analysis it means ‘breaking up raw data into smaller parts’, Creswell (2005:190) supports that ‘data analysis is an ongoing process involving continual reflection about data, asking analytical questions and writing memos throughout the study’. The present study involved an ongoing data analysis that began from the first day of the data collection process. Data were processed by transcribing the interviews verbatim, typing up the rough field notes and organising observation guides to collate the information to be used during the analysis. Additionally, data from documents were used. Data were then analysed in terms of research questions and emerging themes, through coding the data and clustering codes as described in chapter 4.

This chapter presents the findings from the data analysis and includes direct quotations from participants, observation and document analysis data. After analysing each theme, interpretation and discussion will follow in this chapter. Interpretation is required to bring order and understanding and Patton (2002:503-504) explains ‘interpretation represents your personal and theoretical understanding of the phenomenon under study and it provides sufficient description to allow the reader to understand the basis for an interpretation, and sufficient interpretation to allow the reader to understand the description’. The interpretation and discussion of the findings starts by summarising and reviewing the findings of the study obtained from data analysis and giving responses to the research questions.

In qualitative research, findings do not result from statistical procedures, correlations, and similar mathematical calculations; instead, they come from an interpretation of non-numerical or largely text-based data (Hsieh et al 2005). Since this is a qualitative piece of research, with a total number of 17 participants, the number of participant responses will not generally be important during analysis; what will be most valued will be the participants’ voices. Qualitative data consist of words and observations, not numbers (Taylor-Powell, 2003). Where numerical data have relevance to my study, however, they have been included.

As explained in chapter four, there were steps undertaken to analyse the data following Creswell (2005) & Henning et al's (2004) steps of data analysis. Participants' responses have been collated across schools. Where there are specific differences between teachers (for example, qualification level, standard taught, role) or schools (for example, urban, rural) these are elaborated upon. The study was guided by the following research questions:

- 1) What is the nature of inclusive education in the classroom (from teacher's perspectives in Botswana)?
- 2) How does inclusive education relate to the concept of curriculum adaptations?
- 3) What do teachers do in practice to distinguish children who have LD from others through their teaching?
- 4) How do teachers understand issues of curriculum and/or curricula?
- 5) How do teachers' actions and understanding fit with the national requirements (standards and curriculum)?

The analysis yielded 12 categories (see chapter 4) which provided insights into the aspects the research questions addressed. These were later refined into 6 themes and sub-themes under which all the data could be grouped. The final sets of themes were not totally predetermined as Macmillan and Schumacher (2001:468) position it, 'they were carved out of the data according to category meanings'. These major themes are:

1. Inclusive education a) Philosophical understanding of inclusion and inclusive education b) Feelings about Inclusive Education c) Key areas of barriers for implementing inclusive education d) Benefits of inclusive education
2. Curriculum a) Curriculum concept b) translation of curriculum c) curriculum adaptations
3. Pedagogy a) Pedagogical Approaches b) Linguistic power and instruction
4. Policy practice
5. Difference and Sameness and
6. Support.

The following table presents the six themes, subthemes coding families and the research questions.

Theme	Sub-theme	Coding family	Research question
1) Inclusive education	<p>a)Philosophical understanding of inclusion and inclusive education</p> <p>b)Feelings about inclusive education</p> <p>c)Key areas of barriers for inclusive education</p> <p>d)Benefits of inclusive education</p>	<p>Acceptance, no discrimination, good, safe learning environment, exclusion, access, participation, membership</p> <p>Hesitant, willingness, not eager, hiccups, uncomfortable, satisfaction</p> <p>Time constraints, time consuming, extra work, large class sizes, difficult, overworked, lack of competence, challenges, number of subjects, more knowledge, training, prevention, exam oriented curriculum</p> <p>Freedom, self-esteem, interaction, identity, happiness, liking, friendships, relationships</p>	1. What is the nature of inclusive education in the classroom? (from teachers' perspectives in Botswana)
2) Curriculum	<p>a)translation of curriculum</p> <p>b) curriculum concept</p> <p>c) curriculum adaptations</p>	<p>Syllabus, content, lesson plan, objectives, finishing objectives, specific, similar tasks, lower tasks, teaching from known to unknown, concept, understand, comprehend, remembering, recalling, good lesson, achievement</p> <p>Guided curriculum, deliver, tested, assessment, evaluate, exam oriented, expansion, curriculum materials, screening, observations, implementation, formation</p> <p>Remedial work, step by step teaching, differentiation, special time, remedial teaching, corrections</p>	<p>4. How do teachers understand issues of curriculum and or curricula?</p> <p>2. How does inclusive education relate to the concept of curriculum adaptations?</p>
3) Pedagogy	<p>a) Pedagogical approaches</p> <p>b)Linguistic power and instruction</p>	<p>Groups of ability, groupings, group work, abilities, mixed ability teaching, discussions, remembering, recalling, different activities, assistive activities, peer teaching, mentoring, teach each other, sharing, participation, oral instruction, class-work, question and answer, inquiry method, small group teaching, re-call of information, telling, helping learners to read</p> <p>Culture, language, mother-tongue.</p>	3. What do teachers do in practice to distinguish children who have LD from others through their teaching?
4) Policy and Practice		Government policy, government requirement, government schools, private schools, policy document, parental choice, special class, non-governmental organizations	5.How do teachers' actions and understanding fit with the national requirements (standards and curriculum)

Theme	Sub-theme	Coding family	Research question
5) Difference and Sameness		Categories/types of disabilities, learning difficulties, mental retardation, physical disabilities, identification, reading problems, sight problems, slow learners, worse students, handicapped, disabilities, slow reading, own pace	3. What do teachers do in practice to distinguish children who have LD from others through their teaching?
6) Support		Parental support, teachers' support, mentoring, collaboration, community, workshops, school committees	

Table 14: Themes, sub-themes and coding families

While each theme will be discussed separately, it should be noted that there are strong interrelations between themes and how they relate to the research questions of this study. For example, how teachers understood inclusive education or curriculum impacted on how they made curriculum adaptations for learners who have LD. Furthermore, their understanding of the concepts under study was shaped by their personal, contextual and political factors. Having explained that, it is worth mentioning that these themes provided a framework that was useful to structure the discussion of the emergent themes. Findings will be presented, interpreted and discussed.

5.2 *Theme 1: Inclusive education*

Research Question 1: What is the nature of inclusive education in the classroom (from teacher's perspectives in Botswana?)

Sub-themes:

- a) Philosophical understanding of inclusive education
- b) Feelings about inclusive education
- c) Key areas of barriers for inclusive education
- d) Benefits of inclusive education

5.2.1 **Philosophical understanding of inclusive education**

The current study investigated participants' understanding of the concept of inclusion and inclusive education. Such an understanding was important for it positioned the responses of participants to be analysed and interpreted. Findings of the study indicated that participants held different conceptions about inclusion and inclusive education. The majority of teachers believed in the philosophy of inclusion, supported

learners' right to be educated in inclusive settings, believed in the benefits of inclusion for learners with and without LD (especially the academic and social benefits), had positive emotional responses towards learners who have LD and mentioned positive intentions towards accommodating these learners in their classrooms. When asked what inclusive education in their classrooms or in their school was all about their responses, for example, were:

'Inclusive education mma, mo skolong sa rona ke gore re amogela bana botlhe hela, [madam, in our school means accepting all learners] regardless of their disabilities, be it physical, mental, whatever' (Head-teacher School A).

'I understand that pupils with different abilities doing the same thing or put in the same class. I understand that pupils with different abilities share and learn from one another, so when they are streamed, it's like they will just be moving at their pace it is not going to be relying on the fast learners but if it is a mixed ability, tomorrow this one comes up with this, the next day another comes up with that' (Teacher B School D).

Additionally, according to the respondents, when children are placed in the same class, positive academic and social outcomes will occur. This was evident in their use of words like 'learners being in the same classes, 'sharing and learning from one another' and 'accepting all learners'. Similarly, the concept of inclusive education was familiar to the participants of the study instanced by prevalent phrases and words such as 'all children', 'equality', 'no child left behind', 'acceptance' and 'no exclusion'.

'To me it is a good thing [Inclusive Education] because none of them will feel like they have been excluded from others and can learn from others and they have been groomed to do so. So when we give them group work we can get something from the slow learners in the same group as those that excel'. (Teacher A School A).

'It is practical and good, like I have mentioned earlier on, it enables them to have self esteem and be comfortable with themselves. And they are able to appreciate that they are being treated like other learners'. (STLD School F).

The participants stressed the positive effects of inclusion for learners who have LD in their classes. Their responses seemed to be informed by the rights based model of educating children [every learner has the right to education] and viewed inclusive education as an end to the exclusion of these learners. They remained adamant that inclusive education would result in good peer interaction. The advantages of peer interaction were discussed within the notions of social acceptance, boosting of self -

esteem and gaining access. Commenting on the issue of peer interaction and acceptance, views of participants can be represented by the following extract *'I think he is free to talk to them like the very first day he came to school he could not talk to them, after school he went home with others, so I think that is going to help him very much'* (Teacher B School B). Characteristically, they viewed this socialization as an important educational aspect. And to this, one teacher said *'I think that [interacting] is going to help him [learner who has LD] because he is going to feel part and parcel of the situation [learning environment] ...even during the lesson when they do the activity, as a teacher I encourage them to talk to him, discuss with him if he doesn't understand'* (Teacher A School B). When it comes to advantages of acceptance participants said, for example, *'it [acceptance] enables them to have self-esteem and be comfortable with themselves'* (STLD School F). The issues of interaction and acceptance were discussed beyond learner to learner, it also included teacher to learner interaction. When commenting on this issue participants said *'interaction is very important because the pupils get to know the teacher, they are able to see that the teacher is attentive to all of them not to some certain individuals in class because if you are doing that [attentive to some individuals only] you are killing the spirit of those who are not very much talented'* (Teacher A School B).

Although developing personal relationships with learners was of importance to teachers, they also acknowledged the value of relationships in connection with teaching and learning. *'It's how you interact with the kids, if you are free with them, they also become free to ask questions'* (Teacher A School A).

The other component that surfaced relating to the understanding of inclusive education was that of participation; some participants mentioned that inclusive education facilitates participation and membership in classes. *'We practise inclusive education because we want them [learners who have LD] to participate and feel they are members of the class'* (Head-Teacher School A). Furthermore, this participation uncovered the concept of belonging, and participants' understanding of 'belonging' meant *'Those who are fast should share with them; otherwise they will feel excluded or feel they do not belong to this class if it's like that, [meaning if there is no participation of learners who have LD in class] slow learners will not feel free and not participate in class'* (Teacher B School D). It was clear from teachers' responses that they regarded sharing as a fair chance for all to benefit in inclusive classrooms.

Data clearly revealed that generally there were positive notes on the understanding of inclusion and inclusive education and its implementation by teachers and their comments or concerns at this point represented positive conditions for achieving inclusion. *'I don't want any child to be discriminated because of something that they are not able to change themselves or their parents are unable to change'* (Head-Teacher School C). This however revealed that some participants realised that the difficulty that a child has should not deny him/her the opportunity to be in inclusive settings as neither the child nor the parent is to be blamed for the difficulty that the learner has.

What appeared in most of the documents analysed did not seem to inform the practice in classrooms, arguably, documents did not corroborate information from interviews. The major missing portion of these documents was that they did not fit within the attributes of the Botswana government policy statements stipulated in the RNPE on inclusive education. These documents did not explain how they will shape the implementation of the practice of inclusive education in classrooms. For example vision and mission statements of most schools were silent when it comes to inclusive education *'we at school B we strive to produce a well rounded student and we will work with stakeholders to promote quality education'* (School B). Another policy statement stated *'to provide pupils with educational programs in a safe and supportive learning environment'* (School F). However, teachers acknowledged inclusive education because they suggested it encourages acceptance of all learners.

Having reported the voices of participants, their views on how they conceptualise inclusive education concur with those of other authors who believe that inclusion centres on a philosophy of acceptance and tolerance which Reardon (1994) refers to as the core of social responsibility. Also this finding is in accordance with Mittler's (2000) explanation that tolerance in education ensures that a framework is developed within which all children are afforded equal opportunities at education and are respected, irrespective of their gender, ethnic origin, ability, or language. Educators believe that the shift towards inclusive education comes about because inclusion centres on this philosophy of acceptance and tolerance, valuing all learners and affording them equal opportunities. Thomas & Loxley (2001) further conceptualises inclusion as a philosophy that centres on collective belonging, respect and equality. Similarly, many authors (for example Lindsay, 2003; Lynch & Baker, 2005) see the shift towards inclusion as a further re-conceptualisation that centres on respect and equality. Respect

and equality are not new ideologies to teachers; as Batswana, their responses can be explained by the effect of the social context which places an obligation on every individual in Botswana to respect the other individual. Teachers' responses can be located within a socio-cultural discourse as demonstrated by their positive responses during interviews when asked about including learners who have LD. As Hopkins (2004) points out this notion of traditional mores, practices and relationships are important features of the lives of the Batswana. This reflects the Tswana concept of 'botho', a concept which according to Hopkins places an obligation on individuals to acknowledge the essential humanness of others.

The finding around participation concurs with Allan (1999) who explains that inclusion should increase learners' participation within the cultures and the curricula of schools and decrease exclusionary pressures. This then implies that inclusion affords learners the opportunity to share ideas and recognise each other's individual differences. Furthermore, participants viewed inclusion as a way of accepting learners who have LD into their classrooms and or classes. These findings are consistent with evidence that suggests that for inclusive education to be successful there must be appropriate attitudes, accommodations and adaptations (King-Sears, 1997).

Furthermore, participants' responses seemed to be in line with the view of Nind, Sheehy & Simmons (2003) that it is possible to look forward to the emergence of a more homogeneous response to inclusive education where individual children's rights to inclusive education are at the centre stage from the start of their educational career. This coincides with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child which declares that all children have the fundamental rights to an education, and to experience full involvement within society (Frankel, 2004; UNESCO, 1994). Participants viewed this participation as a means to socialisation which they believed is an important educational aspect that would lead to promoting access to the curriculum for learners who have LD. This is supported by Loreman et al (2005) who pointed out that inclusive settings encourage high levels of social interaction, social competence and communication skills of children with disabilities.

There is a wealth of research that has investigated the benefits of peer collaboration within the classroom in terms of cognitive gains, and which has attempted to explore the underlying mechanisms through which such gains occur (MacDonald, Meill & Morgan. 2000; Morgan, Hargraves & Joiner, 2000). It is clear that peer collaboration, meaning children working together to complete a single, unified task

(Fawcett & Garton, 2005) to achieve a common goal (Slavin, 1999) can be a successful way of organising learning. These authors have specified different reasons why peer collaboration may be a useful way of promoting cognitive gains within specific subject domains, for example, Zabel & Zabel (1996:145) points out ‘peer tutoring does not only bring academic benefits but also promotes social interaction and fosters a climate of kindness’. Constructivist models support the assumption that gains occur as two or more peers engage in an exploratory journey through the task or activity. Through a shared engagement, each peer develops knowledge and/or skill to a greater extent than would be possible were they working alone, or in a whole-class setting (Rogoff, 1987). The benefits of what learners can accomplish when assisted by children who are more advanced can help them master concepts and ideas that they cannot understand on their own. This is in line with Vygotsky’s Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) which emphasises that learning is fundamentally a socially mediated activity.

Some participants of the study also believed that to successfully include these learners, they needed to teach them separately during a specific time. For example, *‘they have remedial teaching after school whereby the teacher just group them (learners who have LD) and help them’* (Teacher A School D). The in-depth view represented by this finding was that teachers’ understanding of inclusion fell between two ideologies i.e. inclusion and mainstreaming. This calls for questioning the understanding between these two ideologies by these teachers. While Botswana has taken a radical paradigm shift from mainstream to inclusive education, it was interesting to note that participants’ understanding was more inclined towards the mainstream ideology which is about getting learners to ‘fit into’ a particular kind of system. Philosophical differences between mainstream and inclusive education have been stipulated by authors such as Fisher, Roach & Frey (2000) and Skrtic et.al (1996) when they assert that the ideologies of mainstreaming affirm that children with special needs are capable of meeting standards of regular classrooms. The view of being capable here implies that children with special educational needs must work their way into these classrooms Fisher et al (2002) see this approach as suggesting that the problem lies with the child rather than with the educational environment or classroom. In this conceptualization the focus of causation is within the child (Frederickson & Cline, 2002) but it should be recognised that some difficulties in learning may be caused or exacerbated by the school’s learning environment or adult/child relationships (DfES 2001a:20).

The inclusion ideology maintains a philosophy of accommodating learners with special educational needs. Under this philosophy, learners are not required to meet the standards of the classroom, rather the classroom meets the individual needs of all learners (Adjodia- Andrews, 2007). Sebba & Sachdev (1997:9) argue that ‘inclusive education describes the process by which a school attempts to respond to all pupils as individuals by considering and restructuring its curricular organisation and provision and allocating resources to enhance equality of opportunity’. Hick et al (2009) emphasise that teachers’ understanding of inclusion should shape their pedagogical strategies which can eventually promote the implementation of inclusive education. Arguably, teachers’ understanding of inclusive education in this study showed in their willingness to have learners who have LD in their classrooms. To them, inclusive education seemed to be what they understood and how they interpreted it which was not necessarily in line with what the RNPE as a policy guideline suggests. These findings raise questions on the critical link between policy and practice of inclusive education in Botswana.

5.2.2 Feelings about inclusive education

Participants had mixed feelings (positive and negative) about inclusive education. The two quotes following illustrates, *‘well they have hiccups here and there, like in some instances when the teacher was uncomfortable and I just told her to keep teaching’* (Head-teacher A).

‘Ah!! What can we do, we are overworked and nobody realises that’ (Teacher B School C).

Though they supported the concept of inclusion and also expressed a willingness to include learners with LD within the regular classrooms, participants also portrayed what Sikes et al (2007) call the ‘Yes, buts of inclusion’. They pointed out: ‘yes’ inclusive education is possible ‘but’ we do not have the skills and knowledge; ‘yes’, inclusive education is possible ‘but’ our classes are too large; ‘yes, but’ we have exams and curricula objectives to follow; ‘yes, but we need to use teacher-centred methods. The following extract is illustrative: *‘Inclusive education is good, mathata ke gore (the problem is) we teach many students and we hardly have time to help them ka bongwe ka bongwe (individually)’* (Teacher B School D).

‘I try, but the problem is teaching 45 learners ga se matshamekwane (is not a joke)’ (Teacher B School B).

Though the majority of teachers supported inclusion and were optimistic and thought that it was a good idea, they were those who expressed feelings of despondency because they felt their efforts were not being recognised. Reluctance to embrace it in practice stemmed from a number of problems that teachers indicated hampered the implementation of inclusive education (these will be discussed later in this chapter).

As teachers are regarded highly as the key to change in education, I argue that their feelings of frustration and inadequacy are potential barriers to inclusive education. According to Collins Cobuild Advanced Dictionary (2004:576), 'feeling is a way of thinking and reacting to things'. One way to account for people's actions is to say that they are generated by beliefs which they hold (Manson, 2004). During observations and interviews, the information gathered provided me with the kinds of feelings teachers had as they [feelings] relate to inclusion and inclusive education. To ground my interpretation on the types of feelings participants of the study expressed, I provide some examples of positive and negative feelings they expressed. They used words such as 'good' and 'practical', 'uncomfortable', 'hesitant', 'hiccups', 'not willing' and 'overworked'. For example, *'Well, they have hiccups here and there when it comes to teaching'* (Head-teacher A). *'To me it (inclusive education) is a good thing because none of them will feel like they have been excluded from others'* (Teacher A School A). These kinds of feelings could be explicitly explained by using the theory of Argyris and Schön -Theories of action: theory in use and espoused theory. According to Argyris (1993) 'when someone is asked how he would behave under certain circumstances, the answer he/she usually gives is his espoused theory of action for that situation'. This is the theory of action to which they give allegiance, and which, upon request, they communicate to others. However, the theory that actually governs their actions is theory-in-use. This distinction allowed me to ask questions about the extent to which teachers' actions fit within what they expressed about inclusive education and how it fits within the national requirements about inclusive education.

Considerable evidence revealed that teachers' negative feelings were inclined to a number of factors including the standard [year group] they were teaching. *'here (referring to Standard 7 classes) we are concentrating on preparing them for examination at the end of the year, maybe in lower standards because teachers there still have time they can manage to help learners step by step until they understand'* (Teacher A School A). The grade level taught and its influence on teachers' attitudes towards inclusion has been the focus of several studies (Hannah, 1998; Rogers, 1987).

Findings in this study revealed that teachers teaching upper classes [Standard 6&7] believed that inclusive education can be feasible at lower standards because at upper standards they do not have time as they have to cover all the objectives of the curriculum before examination time. This finding validates what Salvia and Munson (1986) concluded in their study when they found out that as children's age increased, teacher attitude become less positive towards full inclusion and because teachers of older children tend to be more concerned with subject matter and less about individual children differences. When it comes to the region (area) where they were teaching, findings of this study revealed that teachers in urban and semi-urban areas were overwhelmed by class sizes (a notion which had a bearing on how they included learners with LD) *'If only government could help us, we are struggling, 45 children and only one teacher, nnyaa bathong le ha gotwe motho ke tichara (oh, no, if that is what it is to be a teacher, this is too much)'* (STLD School F). An implication from this finding is that teachers' concern was lack of support from the relevant authorities. In this regard, this implication supports the argument of Hanks (2004), as quoted by Hornby et al, (1997) that teachers cannot be expected to meet such children's needs if they get no support with their own needs. This calls for questioning if the policy makers are in touch with the realities of what is happening in the classrooms.

Those in rural areas said they did not have any problems with class sizes: *'I have 17 children in my class, I manage to help those who need help if they do not understand'*. (Teacher B School C).

The picture below captures a classroom scenario where teachers had small class sizes.



Figure 4: Small class sizes in a rural area (with permission from the head-teacher and Teacher A)

Furthermore, participants of the study were apprehensive that inclusive education is time consuming and strenuous '*Teachers are a little bit hesitant, they are not so willing /eager but it is really time consuming and it is really strenuous*' (STLD School E). Myles and Simpson (1989) found that teachers perceived the need for one hour or more of daily planning time for inclusion. According to these authors this implies that teachers felt that implementing inclusive education would involve a considerable workload on their part. Going beyond this debate, it is perceived that teachers felt that implementation of inclusive education was a burden rather than incorporating it as a process within their day to day encounter with diverse learners.

However, some teachers' feelings towards inclusion were positive as they felt that inclusive education is 'practical' and 'good' '*It [inclusive education] is practical and good*' (STLD School F). Teachers who had positive feelings were those who had undertaken an awareness course in special education or those who had training in special education. The implication of this finding is that training in special education in this study influenced teachers' positive feelings, for example, '*They (teachers) give me an assignment to come up with an activity which can assist them because I have the experience*' [Bachelors Degree in Education] (Head-teacher C). Training in special education is in line with Idol's (2006) research which indicated staff development as a critical component in providing motivation to teachers to sustain intended change.

5.2.3 Key areas of barriers to implementing inclusive education

When discussing barriers to implementing inclusive education, participants pointed out specific factors which they perceived as potential barriers to implementing inclusive education in Botswana schools. While teachers reported positive factors in the implementation of inclusive education in a theoretical sense in the six schools that I visited, there were some defining aspects to which teachers attributed their reluctance to actually implementing inclusive education in their classrooms and schools. Teachers revealed that these challenges made implementation of inclusive education difficult and therefore this left them in a state of uncertainty. '*Sometimes teachers do not really know what to do, I do not blame them*' (STLD School B). A range of barriers for implementing inclusive education were highlighted. The most emphasised were examination oriented curriculum, class sizes and lack of knowledge and skills (training in special education).

5.2.3.1 Curriculum

The general mood among teachers was one of dissatisfaction when describing the nature of curriculum and meeting the learning needs of learners with LD. There was evidence in the data that the majority of teachers believed that the curriculum was examination oriented and as a result their teaching was focused on chasing the objectives in order to cover all of them before examination time. *'The problem is that its either we are training these kids for exam and we have only 9 months to prepare them for an exam'* (STLD School F).

The related problem of teachers 'rushing through the syllabus' to finishing objectives because of the examination pressure was evident in the responses of teachers. The wide held view amongst teachers was that meeting the needs of learners who have LD was not possible given the circumstances surrounding the nature of the curriculum.

'It is easier [implementing inclusive education] in the lower level than in the upper because in the upper teachers are always chasing after finishing objectives and most of the time they have only 9 months, maybe that is why they do not use the low activities like in lower classes' (Teacher A School A).

5.2.3.2 Standards

Generally, teachers felt that the implementation of inclusive education was feasible in lower classes [STD 1-5] because in upper classes [STD 6-7] teachers have to teach under the examination pressure. However, some teachers indicated that for them to include these learners or to implement inclusive education there is need for government to decrease the burden that class teachers have. *'if it was like in English medium schools [private schools] whereby a class has an assistant teacher, I think that way it would be better'* (STLD School A). This was based on the belief that such an arrangement could assist in easing the pressure that teachers have in successfully including learners who have LD.

5.2.3.3 Class size

The majority of teachers attributed their reluctance to implementing inclusive education to the overcrowded classrooms. They revealed that having to contend with large class sizes especially those in urban and semi-urban areas is a barrier to the implementation of inclusive education. *'I don't know what I can say because, as teachers we teach, like I am teaching, 34 kids and if they are 34 like they are, 17 of them is half of the class and they are slow, I have to help them... and mind you as a*

teacher in a primary school, we teach 9 subjects' (Teacher B School B). Teachers viewed large classes as a challenge in inclusive education and drew direct inferences in terms of time constraints and the inability to provide assistance to learners who have LD in these large classrooms. Characteristically, large class size was evident in the schools I visited especially those in the urban and semi-urban areas. Teacher-pupil ratio stood at 35-40 learners per teacher (see table 15) compared to class sizes of 13-17 learners per teacher in rural areas. Teacher-learner ratio and heavy teaching load [one teacher teaching 9 subjects] compounded in terms of catering for the learning needs of learners who have LD.



Figure 5: Large class sizes (with permission from the head-teacher and Teacher B)

'The number of pupils should be reduced' (Teacher A School B). It was a general feeling amongst teachers that such a move would enable them to effectively cater for these learners. Additionally, teachers were concerned that they were already under stress because of the workload and having to help individual learners will worsen the situation. *'It needs you to sit down and work with them and if you look at the workload of classes that we have, it's really strenuous'* (STLD School E). Moving further, the debate over class size has been going on for years, with teachers fearing that the more learners in a class, the poorer the education, 'although there is no credible evidence that across-the-board reductions in class size boost pupil achievement' (Finn & Petrilli, 1998: 2). Findings from this study regarding class sizes and how it affected teachers' way of teaching in different areas revealed that large class sizes had a bearing on how they responded to the learning needs of learners who have LD. Teachers drew direct inferences in terms of learner-teacher ratio, heavy teaching loads and the inability to provide differentiated teaching to learners in large classrooms. Consequently, they interpreted having these learners in their classrooms as an additional burden. However,

other studies show that the size of a class does not have much effect on education quality (Blatchford et al, 1989: 2003). Blatchford quoted Ofsted's (1995a) report which stated that 'it was the quality of teaching that was more important than class size'. Much of the research and debate on class size has been about relationships between class sizes and academic outcomes. Relationships between class size and teaching were examined as part of a large scale longitudinal English study of pupils aged 4-7 years (Blatchford, 2003a; Blatchford, Bassett, Goldstein and Martin, 2003; Blatchford, Martin, Moriarty, Edmonds and Goldstein, 2002). The impact of reducing very large classes as suggested by the findings of this study is that it would assist in giving individual attention to learners especially to those who have LD. Mitchell (2008) agrees with these findings and points out that failure to reduce very large classes would suggest that these make for difficulties in teaching and learning.

Given that class sizes varied from school to school and from area to area, (table 15) findings of this study further revealed that most teachers especially those in urban and semi-urban areas attributed their reluctance to implementing inclusive education to the overcrowded classrooms. This finding is in line with the explanation given by Education Statistics Report- Botswana (1997) the smaller class size is desirable because it facilitates for better access of pupils to the teacher, and provides an opportunity for better achievement of learning objectives. The above explanation differs with thoughts brought forth by Blatchford et al (1998) who contend researchers need to pay more attention to providing a more reliable and valid measure of class size itself. They continue - a main reason for caution is that any commitment to smaller classes involves more teachers, and this has considerable resource implications. Konstantopoulos (2008), in his study conducted in Tennessee (USA) on commonly held assumptions about class size and academic achievement found that the children who already were high achievers were the primary beneficiaries of the extra attention smaller classes afforded. The STAR research in Tennessee has provided evidence that small classes do have benefits for young children in schools (Blatchford et al, 1998).

While teachers viewed large classes as a challenge in inclusive education, they seemed not to recognise the broad challenges standing in the way of reducing class sizes neither did they anticipate other factors that would come with the reduction of class sizes. Achilles et al (1995) caution that some schools can cut class sizes in the early grades by merely reallocating resources. In many cases, extra teachers would have to be hired if class sizes were cut, and Biddle & Berliner (2002) further argue that the

alarming shortage of qualified teachers to serve the growing public school populations may be difficult to find those extra teachers let alone the funds to pay their salaries. Furthermore, they argued that many schools would also have to find or create extra rooms to house the additional classes created by small-class programmes, and this would require either modifying school buildings or acquiring temporary classroom structures. The following table shows class sizes for all the six schools used in this study:

Schools	Class sizes
A (semi-urban)	35
B (urban)	38
C (rural)	12
D (rural)	8
E (semi-urban)	40
F (urban)	40

Table 15: Class sizes in rural, semi-urban and urban areas for all the six schools of schools

5.2.3.4 *Support and assistance*

To ensure effective implementation of the inclusion of learners who have LD, participants of the study recommended that there is need to hire teacher/instructional aides to enhance interaction with learners on a one to one basis. These recommendations are supported by Scruggs & Mastropieri's (1996) earlier studies which place emphasis on the role of instructional aides in effective implementation of inclusive education. For this particular study, participants' responses concerning teaching assistants seemed to mean that they believed effective support to learners can only happen if they have the support themselves. Support was very crucial in this study as participants felt this would enable them to effectively help learners who have LD in inclusive settings. However, based on the largest ever study of the impact of support staff in schools in England and Wales, Blatchford et al (2010) argue that while teaching assistants reduce teachers' stress levels and improve classroom discipline they do not boost pupils' progress. Blatchford et al (2009b) posit that contrary to the notion that support staff provides 'additional' support, they actually provide an alternative form of support.

5.2.3.5 Teacher centred methods

Given the nature of the curriculum coupled with pressure to cover the whole curriculum content, teachers indicated that they have no choice but to employ teacher centred methods. For example, ‘ This observation concurs with the views of Wehymeyer and Agran (2006) who warn that this type of curriculum approach has serious drawbacks because the instructional practices used do not promote access to the general curriculum for students with disabilities. When analysing the finding of the nature of curriculum teachers described, it can be located within operating with a curriculum which is prescriptive in what they have to teach. This view does not agree with the views of Saracho and Spodek (1994) who argue that educators need to separate the curriculum content of education (what we teach) from the process of education (how we teach). Taking this approach [what we teach] may limit children’s choices and opinions in learning, as well as teachers’ teaching autonomy in curriculum development (Varga, 1997). Jipson (1991) argues that one set of curriculum guidelines cannot effectively summarize the needs of all children. Supporting this view, one school of curriculum theory argues that ‘examination oriented curriculum demote teachers from scholars and intellectuals to technicians in service to the state Teachers have been forced to abdicate this authority by the bureaucratic protocols that hold them ‘accountable’ but which in fact, render them unable to teach’ (Pinar, 2004: 4). They are unable to teach because according to Tabulawa (1998) what the teacher knows and thinks has been disregarded; he refers to this as a ‘technicist approach’. In other words teachers have been reduced to be nothing but implementers and in most cases it is even hard for them to implement given the conditions they work under.

5.2.3.6 Teacher voice

The study revealed that teachers felt they do not have a voice in the curriculum development Maruatona (1994) confirms this by pointing out that the Curriculum Development Division in the Ministry of Education [Botswana] is responsible for developing curricular and teaching strategies with little or no input from the practising teacher. The implication is that teachers felt a separation between themselves and the curriculum. They felt they did not ‘own’ the curriculum, it belonged to someone else, in this case ‘the policy maker’. Tabulawa (1998) therefore cautions that the role of the teacher in this regard is to adopt and implement what was developed by the bureaucrats. Failure to have a voice in curriculum development seemed to have reduced teachers to

become over-reliant on a prescribed curriculum. The paradox of such over-reliance is that the teacher is allowing someone else to decide how and what he/she should teach.

5.2.3.7 Knowledge and skills

Findings indicated that most teachers who took part in this study alleged that they felt ill-equipped to teach in inclusive settings. In particular, they reported that they lacked competence (to work within an inclusive setting), knowledge (to be able to identify learners who have LD), necessary skills (make curriculum adaptations for learners who have LD) and training to adequately serve these learners. Most of the teachers mentioned that they have not received any formal training to specifically address the needs of learners in an inclusive classroom. Similar findings were also expressed by teachers in a study conducted by Pottas (2005) in South Africa in which he reported that teachers lack adequate knowledge, skills and training for effective implementation of inclusive education. Similar views were also expressed by teacher trainees in the study conducted by Mukhopadhyay et al (2011) in Botswana in which they explored the level of teacher trainees' preparedness for inclusive education. This finding is supported by the argument of many authors like Dove (1986) who argues that training in specific skills must be supported by a general education which enables teachers to apply and adapt their knowledge and skills in all the varied conditions of teaching and learning which they will meet. Glat and Oliveira (2007) support this by cautioning that for school inclusion to be real, the regular class teacher has to be alerted and trained (both psychologically and intellectually) to change his or her way of teaching and adapting what he or she is going to teach in order to meet the needs of all children. At the centre of implementing inclusive education in schools is the need for the availability of trained teachers in inclusive education to sustain the intended pedagogic change in inclusive classrooms. Jackson et al (2000:138) explains that teachers must have skills in communication, collaboration and cooperative learning strategies and they should have confidence to use those skills. In their study Mukhopadhyay et al (2011) found that teacher trainees were concerned about the limited knowledge on various aspects of meeting the learning needs of students with disabilities. Their participants indicated that they are 'half baked' (not yet ready to function in inclusive settings). Agbenyega (2007) in his study to examine teachers' concerns and attitudes to inclusive education in Ghana found that teachers perceived their professional knowledge and skills as inadequate to effectively teach students with disabilities in regular schools.

5.2.3.8 Training

Without the necessary training in special education, teachers felt less confident in their ability to effectively teach and include learners with varying abilities. One of the problems identified by participants of the study was lack of knowledge (of how to teach learners who have LD in inclusive settings), requisite skills (in making curriculum adaptations) and competence on the part of teachers to drive the implementation of inclusion of these learners in the six schools visited. *'If it was somebody with more knowledge [knowledge in dealing with learners who have LD] I think they would have done better, I wanted to explain but didn't know really what to say and how'* (Teacher A School D). While another said: *'We need more training to be able to identify these learners'* (Teacher B School B). *'Urge government....to give us some training so that there is more delivery'* (STLD school B). The majority of the respondents of the study did not have training in special education (see table in chapter 4) except three teachers who had a Diploma in Special Education, awareness course in special/inclusive education and Degree in Education. It was interesting to observe that while there were STLDs in schools visited, none of them had a qualification in special education and they revealed *'I have not been trained on special education, I haven't got any formal training'* (STLD School E). STLDs who were interviewed reported that they did attend an induction workshop after they were promoted to the post of STLD. When probed further into their responses specifically on the objectives and the content of the induction workshop that they had attended, it emerged that the content of the workshop did not equip them with skills they perceived they required to be a teacher consultant in inclusive settings. This was also confirmed by data from document analysis of school development plans which did not reflect any inclusive education implementation workshops in their schools. It was evident from the data that participants in this study emphasised their (own perceived) lack of skills and competence in working in inclusive settings. Asked about what could be done to ensure that teachers are equipped with knowledge and skills to effectively implement inclusive education, one common response was *'Full training for teachers'* (Teacher A School D). They noted that as part of the problem of their not having the knowledge and skills for teaching learners who have LD within inclusive settings, this left them with feelings of despair *'...when you don't have the skills,[pause] like of teaching the slow learners... tota [basically] we are just fumbling...but we try to include them'* (Teacher B School D).

These findings add on to existing literature (Glat & Oliveira, 2007) that acknowledges the importance of training on the part of teachers as 'key actors' in the

implementation of inclusive education. UNESCO (2003) underscores this by cautioning that if inclusive education is to be sustainable, training must be planned, systematic and long term, while Darling-Hammond & Skyes (2003) remind us that reform is rendered effective only if teachers have the knowledge, skill and commitment to the reform. The opinions from teachers raise the issue of the impact formal and informal training has on teachers regarding implementing inclusive education. These opinions tally with the observation from O'Brian & Ryba (2005) who pointed out that without a coherent plan for teacher training in the educational needs of children with special needs, attempts to include learners would be difficult and that teacher training helps in the formation of positive attitudes towards inclusion. Training as the above authors have pointed out equips teachers with knowledge, skills and competence and can affect attitudes. Some studies have argued that the attitude of a teacher is a more important predictor of successful inclusion than the teacher's training (Englebrecht & Forlin, 1998; Swart, Englebrecht, Eloff & Pettipher, 2001). Downing (2007) takes it further by pointing out that as much as additional training is one of the key priorities required for inclusive education, the attitude of the teacher remains the pivotal centre upon which inclusive education revolves. On the same token, another observation about the importance of teachers' attitude over and above their training was made by Scholz et al (2002) and Wiczenski (1995) by alleging that attitudes not only set the tone for the relationship between teachers and students with disabilities but they also influence the attitudes of non-disabled students. Carrington (1999:264), however, criticises the effectiveness of staff development programmes and argues that they have not been successful in bringing about attitude and belief change, hence if teachers could be supported and guided in trying new strategies and see positive outcomes, then a tremendous attitude change could be seen. Having discussed that, the implication sourced from the findings here is to rethink teacher training. Official statements of goals and aims for teacher training from international bodies like UNESCO (International Conference of Education, 2000) indicate that the roles and functions expected of the teacher today are to prepare the future teacher not only for his instructional role but also for the variety of roles and functions demanded from him by the society and the development of education. Teachers are usually the key element in the implementation process because they are the people who will implement, adapt or reject the innovation and therefore, their training needs to be ongoing and developmental not of a one-off nature (Carless, 1997). This view is supported by the recommendations from the Meyer Report by Meyer (2001) which acknowledges the need for additional support, training and

expertise for general education teachers to equip them with the necessary knowledge they need to take on their role as inclusive educators. Describing the issue of skills, participants in the study carried out by Mukhopadhyay et al (2009) in Botswana, also indicated that they lack skills required for inclusive classroom settings, they alleged that they did not have in-depth knowledge about other areas apart from the ones they majored in during training. When it comes to training which teachers advocated for in this study, Bayliss (1998) explains that teachers should be trained how to acquire the 'generic' teaching skills that allow them to modify their practice in ways that meet the needs of all learners within 'inclusive' frameworks.

However, many researchers have expressed concerns about the inadequacies of the teacher training programmes in many countries [especially in Africa] (Obeng, 2007; Chireshe, 2011; Pottas, 2005). Their main concern is the fact that these programmes have continued with a categorical teacher training model. As Kisanji (1993) explains this model emphasises 'specialist teachers' and 'specialist placement' and clearly does not favour inclusive practices in Botswana. Mukhopadhyay et al (2009) confirm this by pointing out that the University of Botswana offers specialization in four areas: Mental retardation, learning disabilities, visual and hearing impairments. They continue to explain that the current programme at the University of Botswana was inclined towards preparing specialised teachers with limited emphasis on inclusive education. Slee (2001) argues that educating teachers in these codes formalises exclusionary special education discourses as the official knowledge of difference which teachers eventually bring into the teaching and learning process.

In the case of Botswana, the Revised National Policy on Education –RNPE (1994) stressed the need to have a new kind of teachers who could teach pupils with a wide range of abilities. The question that follows is: 'is their preparation adequately equipping them to cope with classrooms containing a wide diversity of learners? In his study exploring the teacher-training model used in Botswana, Tafa (2001:22) concluded that 'the dominant model of teacher training is behaviourist and he advised that there is need for the Ministry of Education to unpack the 1977 learner- centred Education Policy which has remained largely ignored, and develop a harmonized and synchronized philosophy of democratic participative education system informed by a constructivist view of curriculum knowledge'. Still in Botswana Brandon et al (2000) investigated the effect of teaching practice on students' perception of the usefulness of the training that they received. The authors concluded that perceptions do not vary as a result of

engagement in the classroom and that programmes are perceived as being only moderately useful in students to become teachers. In his study, Dart (2006:26) used the reflections of graduates to explore their views on SEN programme at Molepolole College of Education in Botswana. They rated the course highly, particularly with regard to the exploration of their own attitudes towards pupils with disabilities and learning difficulties. However, they also highlighted the fact that generally they do not feel empowered to be able to offer support to pupils in classrooms who need support with their learning. This is concluded by Prophet (1995:139) when asking the question ‘Is it the case that they (graduates) are not receiving enough exposure to methodologies such as ‘group work’ and student centred teaching that are called for in the current curriculum thinking or is it rather that the culture of the school is so powerful and sticky that innovative practices the student teachers are introduced to in pre-service training are quickly discarded in the face of reality of the classroom?’

I challenge that having educators who do not feel they have the knowledge and skills necessary to effectively teach diverse learners in inclusive classrooms may create an inevitable barrier to the implementation of inclusive education. Teacher education should be informed by the realities of what is happening in Botswana classrooms; innovations that work elsewhere will not necessarily work in all situations, so there is a need to contextualise teacher training. This can only happen if government, policy makers and teacher trainers can be freed from the mindset of believing that ‘everything good’ is from western cultures.

5.2.4 Benefits of inclusive education

All interviewed teachers and head-teachers were of the opinion that inclusive education is beneficial in many aspects. In discussing the benefits of inclusive education, responses from participants of the study can be clustered in two, and these are; academic and social benefits.

The following are excerpts from what participants said: *‘In my own perspective, it means including pupils that we refer to as low achievers in the same class as those that are perceived to be excelling in class so that they can benefit from them’* (Teacher A School A).

‘I mix them because I want them to get help, maybe the others can explain to them where they have not grasped correctly. I want them to learn from each other and teach each other’ (Teacher B School D).

These responses revealed that teachers believed including learners who have and who do not have LD can facilitate academic gains for these learners.

The views of participants in connection with social benefits of inclusion were articulated more on learners who have LD benefiting from those do not have LD. The following extracts explain the views of participants:

'It enables them [learners who have LD] to have self-esteem and be comfortable with themselves and they are able to appreciate that they are being treated like other learners' (STLD School A).

'I encourage them to talk to him [meaning learner who have LD] after school so he feels he is part and parcel of the whole class' (Teacher A School A). Additionally, some teachers reflected on another dimension of the social benefit of inclusion as combating discrimination. *'I don't want any child to be discriminated ... so I really wish teachers can treat these learners equally'* (Head-teacher School C). *'To me it is good because none of them will feel like they have been excluded from others'* (Teacher A School A). Teachers viewed this benefit as an opportunity for these learners to be accepted in inclusive settings and that this can improve their self-image and self-esteem.

Inclusive education broadly represents accommodating the unique learning needs of all learners regardless of their abilities. Although with controversies existing, debates surrounding this ideology have pointed out that inclusion in practice represents the ideals of social justice and equality for all students and have argued that inclusive settings must emphasise the building of a community in which everyone belongs and is accepted by his/her peers while his/her educational needs are being met (Fredrickson & Cline, 2009). Research has demonstrated both positive and negative impacts concerning issues of inclusive education. For example, Pereshu (2000) in Zimbabwe believed that inclusion of children with SEN children had long term benefits. He explained that children with SEN would develop social skills from being included and in turn influence the attitudes of those without disabilities who would form and shape society's future. Typically, inclusive education can provide a more stimulating environment and this environment often leads to enriched growing and learning for the learner with SEN (Rationale for and Benefits of Inclusion, 2010). On the other hand Irmsher (1995) explains that many teachers and parents of children with special needs are concerned that inclusive education will lower academic standards within regular classrooms. Findings of the current study revealed that most participants believed inclusive education is an opportunity for learners who have LD to learn from their peers and vice-

versa. This view is supported by Hick et al (2009:81) by pointing out that ‘inclusionary education implies that all students will participate in the academic life of the classroom’. Under academic gains two implications were sourced from the findings of my study: peer- tutoring and cooperative learning. Zabel and Zabel (1996:146) reveal that ‘positive interaction skills and a greater sense of responsibility can come out of this and finally the tutoring arrangement can help foster a climate of kindness within the peer culture of the school’ Mitchell (2000: 52) explains ‘peer tutoring is a powerful tool for increasing the overall effectiveness of teaching in inclusive classrooms’.

Participants perceived that positive academic outcomes occur when the ‘low achievers’ are mixed with the ‘high achievers’ to learn from each other. Hick et al (2009: 92) refer to this as ‘cooperative learning, that is, when students work together to achieve common goals’. These authors explain that once the essence of cooperative learning is there then it is a ‘we’ as opposed to a ‘me’ mentality. The ‘we’ mentality can facilitate a sense of participation which eventually according to Hall & Strickett (2002) will lead to students in inclusive classrooms constructing a relatively confident and hopeful sense of themselves as legitimate participants in such settings.

One point worth mentioning is that even though participants were positive about the academic benefits of inclusive education, findings from observations revealed that, in practice, opportunities to share ideas with others and to work in mixed ability groupings seemed to be minimal (appendix 10). This is contradictory to Hines (2001:3) who suggests that ‘academic benefits for general education students include having small-group, individualized instruction, and assisting in the development of academic adaptations for all students who need them’. For learners to benefit from an inclusive arrangement, Hines suggests that inclusion should go beyond placement of these learners in classrooms. Mittler (2000) suggests that creating an environment where all pupils can enjoy access and success in the curriculum and become full and valued members of the school community is worthwhile rather than just placing learners with LD in classrooms. Going beyond that, Mitchell (2008) explains that placing these learners in classrooms means putting in place a whole suite of provisions, including adapted curriculum and adapted teaching methods. Failure to be proactive in considering the needs of learners Ballard (1999:94) explains ‘could be construed as a passive form of exclusion’.

Findings of this study revealed that most participants believed that when learners who have LD are taught in inclusive settings, they develop positive self-esteem, feel

comfortable with themselves and feel they are part and parcel of the whole class. Langhout et al (2004) agree by pointing out that students flourish in environments that provide them with choice, the ability to take on leadership roles and where they have a sense of autonomy. If learners are provided with such opportunities then they develop a sense of belonging which eventually leads to feelings of being a member in a learning environment. O'Brien and O'Brien (1992:25) suggest 'membership involves people with and without disabilities sharing everyday experiences at school thereby increasing their knowledge that 'we are all members of each other'. Once they feel they belong, Nisbet (1992:18) observed, 'they benefit from opportunities to build significant relationships, and those who are not members are 'at risk for loneliness, isolation and powerlessness'.

5.2.5 Theme 1: Summary

In summary, participants' understandings of inclusion and inclusive education were causing them to operate within disparate discourses around inclusive education. They believed that if learners who have LD were included with learners who do not have LD, then learners who have LD were experiencing true inclusive education according to how it is defined by the RNPE (1994). What emanated from the findings was that teachers' understanding of inclusion may be referred to as inclusion by default or exclusion within a regular school setting where learners are expected to fit into a particular kind of educational environment. This then takes us back to look at the how policy has influenced practice because participants were adamant that indeed they are including these learners. Furthermore, their understanding influenced the way they interpreted and delivered the curriculum; most of the teachers explained that they did not adapt the curriculum explaining that time did not allow them to do so as they operated under the examination oriented curriculum. For this reason, positive intentional commitment to make curriculum adaptations for these learners seemed to be minimal on the side of the teachers. Their understanding of inclusive education also influenced the way they viewed and labelled learners who have LD, since learners were expected to fit into a set system; failure to fit in seemed to result in leaving these learners with little or no chance to access the curriculum.

5.3 Theme 2: Curriculum

Research questions 4 & 2: How do teachers understand issues of curriculum and/or curricula?

How does inclusive education relate to the concept of curriculum adaptations?

The theme will be discussed through the following sub-themes:

- a. Translation of curriculum
- b. Curriculum concept
- c. Curriculum adaptations

The theme helps to respond to the following research questions: 2) How does inclusive education relate to the concept of curriculum adaptations? 4) How do teachers understand issues of curriculum and or curricula?

Participants' understanding regarding issues of curriculum/curricula can be interpreted and located within the contested nature of curriculum. Their responses were varied and diverse and such variations reflected the challenges and problematic nature of defining curriculum which is evident within the literature (see chapter three). The three interpretations of curriculum as process, practice and product (Smith, 1996: Grundy, 1987: Graves, 2008) discussed in chapter three provided useful conceptual tools for analysis here. Tanner and Tanner's (1980) framework of 'conflicting conceptions of curriculum' referred to in chapter three was also helpful in analysing participants' understandings of curriculum.

5.3.1 Translation of curriculum

This sub-theme covers how participants of the study viewed and interpreted curriculum. Data revealed that most teachers viewed curriculum as a guide and their task as educators was to deliver that which it prescribed. The following extracts are illustrative: *'Curriculum is a guide that is used to guide teachers'* (Head-teacher A). *'The curriculum stipulates that you have to teach 1, 2, 3 and I followed it'* (Teacher A school A). *'It is a policy document which guides our day to day activities more especially in a classroom situation'* (Teacher A School B). Teachers' responses about what curriculum is revealed that there was a general feeling that curriculum is a government edict since it [curriculum] prescribes what to teach while their duty as educators is nothing but to deliver it as it is. This was based on their understanding that the content of the curriculum should be presented as it is without them interfering with the prescribed topics or objectives. The following extract is illustrative *'I just take the curriculum as it is, I teach the subjects as they are in the curriculum'* (STLD School E).

When asked to make recommendations, teachers and head-teachers who participated in this study indicated that they were concerned that they are not involved

in the curriculum development and their views can be summed up as follows: *'since we are expected to teach this curriculum, we want to be involved during its formation not just to be involved in implementing it'* (Teacher A School B). Additionally, regarding other curricula issues, teachers indicated that even if they wanted to include some other things in their plans they could not do so *'because we are following the Ministry's guideline of lesson planning which is limiting and there is no room to expand'* (Teacher A School A).

On the contrary, some teachers had a different view on how they interpreted curriculum. *'I believe it's a guide in which teachers can bring in new things'* (Teacher A school D).

'I followed the curriculum and added something to help students understand' (Teacher A School A). Such views of interpreting the curriculum corroborated with my observations of how these teachers augmented the curriculum during its delivery in classrooms. For example:

In School D during social studies lesson, Teacher B brought in pictures of animals for learners to see. Learners were asked to come to the front to identify animals as the teacher was calling the names of those animals. At the end of the lesson, learners were asked to name animals they have at home and tell the difference from the ones found in national parks and game reserves.

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Participants of this study were concerned about the nature of the curriculum, it must be noted that the curriculum used in Botswana is centralised and all curricular decisions are made by the Ministry of Education for the whole school system with little or no input from teachers. Curriculum centralisation may be seen to secure a minimum standard of provision. However, this may be at the expense of meeting the individual needs of learners. Additionally, it may stifle responsiveness, creativity and innovation (Moon et al, 1999). Regarding the nature of the curriculum in Botswana, teachers' responses included: *'I have 9 months to prepare these pupils for examinations'*, *'time is limited'*, *'I have to finish the syllabus'* and *'rushing through the syllabus to finish objectives'*. As these quotes demonstrate, participants saw the 'curriculum as product'

because they described it as oriented towards examinations, for this reason forcing them to base their teaching on set objectives. If the curriculum is defined in terms of declared aims and pre-specified objectives, the purpose of education becomes very instrumental in that the curriculum is planned to produce a particular outcome (curriculum as outcome/product). Those who do not fit within the intended outcomes are left out and this can lead to the creation of groups within the learning environment, hence the groups that participants of the study referred to as 'slow learners', 'worse students' and 'talented students'. The preoccupation with excellent examination results works counter to the philosophy and practice of inclusion which Tilstone et al (1998) and Cole (1999) describe as bringing together the full range of students, not devaluing or discriminating against them. When teachers are focusing on teaching for examinations, this means they concentrate on learners who can cope with the speed at which lessons are taught and this leaves out learners who might need extra time or extra help in order to access the prescribed examination related curriculum.

An examination-oriented system can bring unneeded stress with improper implementation on the side of teachers. Stenhouse (1978:96) points out that 'the tension between educating and examining is, of course, at the centre of most teaching programmes since grades are attainable without understanding and this penalises the limited student in terms of opportunity'. In Botswana, the maximization of pass rates is a major criterion of teacher effectiveness and most parents prefer their children to be taught by a teacher who produces high pass rates at the end of the year [researcher's experience]. It must be noted that the aims of the Botswana education policy are based on who achieves at the end, thus attaching education to academic achievement and perhaps thus defeating the idea of 'Education for all' which Botswana recognises as a fundamental obligation to the society and the people of Botswana (RNPE, 1994). The implication following these findings suggests that there should be a paradigm shift from being concerned with academic achievement to being concerned with the whole development of the learner. Buckland (1982) argues the notion of curriculum as a process means that a curriculum cannot be picked up and examined, but must rather be viewed in historical perspective in its socio-political context. The findings of the current study however, revealed that teachers seemed to understand and describe the curriculum as one which recognised examinations as an important element. Mpofu (2000) explains that, African education systems tend to emphasise competition rather than cooperation among learners while Dyson et al (2000) report that some schools resist inclusive education because they believe it will lower academic standards in their schools. Mowes

and Englebrecht (2004) in their study on the views of Namibian teachers on inclusive education and curriculum, established that inclusive education can only succeed if the current curriculum is changed. Interestingly, academic standards were not only a concern to teachers but head-teachers were also concerned with the image and position of their schools as depicted in the following extract '*last year we had extreme [meaning intelligent] learners especially those who were writing standard 7 examinations. We had 21 As' and we were number 1. See this trophy*' [head-teacher stood up to show me the trophy] (Head-Teacher A).

To participants, curriculum was also translated as a 'guide' and to them a guide meant following the curriculum without any input from their side. The understanding of curriculum from this perspective meant they viewed 'curriculum as reproduction' or 'curriculum as politics' meaning curriculum is controlled by government and teachers have no input. Richards (1978:60-61) refers to curriculum as politics because 'what objectives schools have, how and what they teach, what content they opt to use are intensely political matters'. Apple (1990:14) points out 'curriculum decisions in terms of what is taught and the way in which is to be taught are not neutral decisions but are in fact inherently ideological and political issues'. The effect of teaching that which is prescribed by the curriculum suggests that teachers become limited in their creativity in terms of what they could add to the curriculum (even though two teachers added something to the curriculum). From this implication, it could be concluded that there were binaries between 'the given curriculum' versus 'creativity of teachers'. In countries like England for example, as referred to by Dobbins (2009) recent government literature asserts an expectation of greater creativity in teaching to respond to the needs of a twenty-first century workforce, and more generally to enhance and enrich the school curriculum for all (Department for Education and Skills (DfES) 2003b, 2004). Further the DfES (2003a) advocates for a rich varied and exciting curriculum to be achieved through greater creative and innovative teaching (Dobbins, 2009). The participants' responses in my study were more concerned with 'what they teach' more than with 'how they teach it'. For example, '*the problem is that we have to cover the objectives set within 9 months before they write the examination*'. (Teacher A School D) and this is not in line with what theorists (e.g. Vaughn, Hugher, Moody & Elbaum, 2001) explain that in conceptualising the curriculum it is important to understand the curriculum as the nerve centre of the instructional process. The interconnection between ideology and curriculum and between ideology and educational argumentation has

important implications for the curriculum and policy in general (Apple, 1990:14). I agree with the argument brought forth by Apple because if teachers are to concentrate only on that which is prescribed as it was in most cases in this study, then meeting the needs of individual learners becomes problematic resulting in having a contradiction between curriculum and the proposed inclusive ideology by the government of Botswana. There are also tensions in government policy as findings revealed that government insists on good examination results. If learners' needs are to be met, then the curriculum needs to be flexible enough for teachers to embrace other avenues which Apple (1990) refers to as the tactic teaching to students of norms, values and dispositions that goes on simply by their living in and coping with the institutional expectations and routines. This means that learners do not only learn through the traditional, formal and structured modes but can also learn through other means in and outside school.

5.3.2 Curriculum concept

There is evidence in the data that the majority of teachers positioned the concept of curriculum within notions of time which translates into pressure and heavy teaching loads. For example, *'I try to do it [helping learners who have LD] but because I have like I am teaching 34 kids, 17 of them is half of the class and they are very slow. And mind you as a teacher in a primary school, we teach 9 subjects'* (Teacher STLD School F). Interestingly, to these teachers curriculum as a concept meant finishing the set objectives within a set period of time. Teachers indicated that because of this they did not have adequate time to cater for learners with LD. Some examples are provided in the following extracts: *'we only have nine months to prepare them for an exam, much time is in the lower standards but it becomes close to impossible especially in standard 7'* (STLD School F). *I have to help them, but if I help them in the lesson it is going to take time for me to go on with my timetable'* (Teacher B School B). *'I try to do it [meaning helping learners with LD] but mind you, as a teacher in a primary school we teach 9 subjects'* (STLD School A).

'It is only that there is no time, we have to finish the syllabus' (Teacher B School C).

Based on such responses of conceptualising curriculum within the confines of time, teachers pointed out that the real tension for them is meeting the governments' testing requirements of the curriculum. They also indicated that they have pressure to cover the curriculum, which compels them to be more concerned with covering the

curriculum breadth than understanding its depth. The following is illustrative: *'I teach the subjects in the curriculum as they are because they [subjects] are being tested so if I divert from what the curriculum is saying, the kids will not know what they are supposed to write at the end of the year'* (STLD School E).

Thus the concept of curriculum meant following the set objectives in view of finishing those objectives within the Botswana governments' stipulated time. Still on the objectives, teachers indicated *'our planning is objective focused, that is why we cannot bring in new things and if we do, and they [meaning new things] are very few'* (Teacher A school C). This was evident in the way teachers organised their teaching during classroom observations. I observed that teachers were more focused on finishing the lesson to proceed to the next without taking into consideration learners who were struggling with finishing the assigned tasks of the previous lesson. For example:

In School C Teacher B was teaching a mathematics lesson and the topic was 'Addition'. During activities, learners were asked to answer six questions from their text books. By the end of the 40 minutes allocated for the lesson, some learners did not finish answering all the questions. However, the teacher asked them to put away the books and be ready for the next lesson.

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Further responses revealed that, because of the demands of finishing set objectives within a stipulated period of time, teachers were concerned about overworking: *'we are overworked and nobody realises that'* (Teacher B School B). Viewing curriculum in this manner can be referred to 'curriculum as content'. Although viewing the curriculum as content is more aligned to the notion of syllabus, most participants revealed that the curriculum represented a set of knowledge to be transmitted to learners. This finding can be interpreted in two ways: the first interpretation could be that teachers preferred to remain faithful to the suggested objectives with the belief that curriculum developers possess valid knowledge and expertise which is reflected in the objectives and topics in the curriculum; another

interpretation could be that teachers' allegiance was based on the notion of their own interpretative abilities, it maybe that teachers are not able to elicit additional objectives beyond that which are explicitly mentioned by the developers of the curriculum (Ben-Peretz, 1990).

However, viewing the curriculum as content seemed to impact on understandings of knowledge and teaching approaches. Knowledge seemed to be reflected as only what the teacher delivered and learners' experience and prior knowledge and the socially constructed nature of knowledge were not taken into consideration during the teaching and learning process. The type of methods used by most teachers clearly showed that learning was dependent more on the teacher and was a one way process. For example, in their lesson plans under teaching methods, most teachers used lecture and question and answer methods. I want to argue here that the problem of content based approaches did not allow teachers to include other avenues of gaining knowledge for most learners nor did they allow learners to construct their own knowledge. As Apple (1990:45) argues, 'the problem of what is taught in schools has to be considered as what legitimate knowledge is considered to be, and that the overt and covert knowledge found within schools must not be accepted as given but scrutinised'. The argument by Apple brings to the surface the political and ideological questions in relation to the selected content of curriculum why it has to serve other learners and leave others outside. The imbalances of a curriculum which separates learners into groups of 'who can' or 'who cannot' seemed to have resulted and contributed to the manner in which teachers in this study allocated tasks, a few in recognition of those who have LD, some without any recognition. This conceptualisation of curriculum by teachers was silent on the aspect of human interaction in the classroom and observation findings revealed that there was minimal interaction between the learners and teachers and between learners themselves. Smith (1996) aptly argues, curriculum belongs to the dominion of human interaction between teacher and learners. If this interaction does not exist, there may be a high possibility of leaving some learners behind and creating an exclusive environment for most learners.

There were a few participants who expressed their understanding of curriculum in terms of what they do to augment the prescribed curriculum. Findings from observations and interviews revealed that these teachers varied the activities/tasks given to learners; they also used varied methods during teaching and the main focus of the lesson was on learners as compared to focusing on the content of the curriculum

(observation 4, p.149). This can be explained as viewing curriculum as ‘practice’ (Grundy, 1987). As Stenhouse (1975: 4-5) explains, ‘a curriculum should be grounded in practice and just like a recipe which can be varied according to taste, so can a curriculum’. The practical interest which Grundy refers to means the interaction between the teacher, the learner and the curriculum. To support this, Coleman et al (2003:5) provide the view of ‘curriculum as a ‘social activity’ implying that while the teacher, the learner and the curriculum interact, a social bond is developed’. Such an approach to curriculum according to Glat (2007:5), brings ‘the excluded group within the ‘system’, giving the curriculum a quality that is enjoyed by all and valuing the peculiarities and individuality of each person’. If the peculiarities and individuality of each person are valued then approaches to curriculum delivery change from focusing on a certain group of learners to embracing every learner and valuing their individuality. This may help teachers to look beyond differences in a negative way as evidenced by the findings that they labelled these learners as ‘worse students’ or ‘slow learners’. Florian (2008) explains inclusive education is distinguished by an acceptance of differences between students as ordinary aspects of human development. In this case, difference would be a means to encourage teachers to find effective ways of making curriculum accessible to all learners rather than difference to mean ‘not suitable’.

The role of teachers in curriculum development emerged as a very strong issue in the findings. As already illustrated, teachers felt they wanted to be more than implementers of the curriculum. MacDonald et al (1991) argue teachers are on the whole poor implementers of other people’s ideas. Cole et al (1993) suggest that the significance of the part played by teachers operating as more than mere implementers of official knowledge is noted in the effectiveness of school programmes. Teachers have the most significant influence because of their direct impact on learners. If successful curriculum implementation is to take place, it is necessary to bring about a feeling of ownership amongst teachers because they are the ones involved in putting ideas into classroom practice. The data showed clearly that teachers felt powerless in not having a voice in curriculum development. The argument arising from this finding is that the notion of power resides in those involved in making decisions about the curriculum (Clough, 2000) while teachers, who are the key players, are the recipients of other peoples’ ideas.

5.3.3 Curriculum adaptations

This sub-theme reports outcomes regarding curriculum adaptations for learners who have LD as perceived by participants of the study. Data retrieved from teachers' preparation notes revealed how teachers planned their lessons and it also revealed how they approached their lessons in terms of whether there were curriculum adaptations or not. The following excerpt comes from my observation notes.

During a Setswana lesson (Standard 7), (Teacher A School A) after reading some sentences from a book [teacher reading and allowing some learners to read some parts through voluntary system], the teacher asked all learners to translate sentences from English to Setswana. Each learner was to write 5 sentences. When others were answering the fourth question, two learners who have LD were still struggling with answering the first question. [They did not even write a word on their exercise books since they did not know what they were supposed to do as a result, they appeared lost].

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Commenting on the issue of why learners were doing the same activities the teacher said '*They were doing the same activity because that was the activity to be done by the whole class for the day and I don't see any reason why I should give another one a different activity*' (Teacher A School A).

The data further suggested that teachers were adamant that as a way of adapting the curriculum, they can make use of remedial work and differentiation only if practised outside the allocated lesson time. Data indicated that teachers believed that helping learners within the 40 minutes of stipulated time for a lesson was inadequate, hence their decision to teach them at a separate time '*I help them separately during a special time after school by doing corrections with them*' (STLD School A). This was further confirmed by another participant when she said '*we have remedial classes and normally the teacher would have remedial teaching after school whereby they just group them and help them*' (Head-teacher A), while a further participant said '*I help them separately during a special time after school*' (STLD School B).

The other view which was common among teachers during post classroom observation interviews was that the concept of curriculum adaptations was centred around giving learners different amounts of tasks [differentiating by outcome] ‘*when you give out work when we have fast learners in your class we give them 10 questions and those who are slow we give them 3-5 because we know they are not going to finish in time*’ (Teacher A School B). Regarding changes to conceptual difficulty to meet the needs of learners, participants said ‘*we are not basically simplifying the content, it is the concept we are simplifying... so we give lesser work but we do not compromise quality*’ (Head-teacher School C). Additionally, as a way of adapting the curriculum some teachers said they believed that adapting the way instruction is delivered to the learners also helps and this was supported by the following extract: ‘*Teachers should teach children step by step or do corrections with them*’ (Head-teacher School B) [that is, following up what they did earlier on in class] while others believed that giving additional work to learners is another way of adapting the curriculum ‘*I always do this extra work for them so that...they will be able to remember hence lead to the answer*’ (Teacher B School D). Further, some teachers adapted the curriculum by differentiating by task and following is an excerpt from classroom observation where the teacher was teaching a Social Studies lesson (STD 6):

(Teacher B School D) This teacher was observed teaching a social studies lesson and the lesson was on identifying National Parks and Game Reserves in Botswana. During the lesson process, learners were given different activities to do. For example: The 1st group was drawing the map of Botswana, the 2nd group was asked to identify National parks and game reserves from the map while the 3rd group was asked to paste names of national parks and game reserves on an already drawn map [by the teacher].

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This kind of approach to curriculum adaptations seemed to provide learners with alternative paths to explore the curriculum content and the following extract from the teacher’s interview supports this: ‘*we give activities that are relevant to the children’s abilities*’ (Teacher B School D).

Another finding which could not be taken for granted was ‘what’ teachers were adapting and ‘how’ they were adapting the curriculum. During classroom observations most of the teachers gave learners similar tasks to do and only a few teachers gave learners who have LD differentiated tasks. For those teachers who were found making curriculum adaptations during the teaching and learning process by varying activities such as using pictures and labelling techniques, summarising the text, providing extended time, and pre-teaching important vocabulary, their methods were found to be taking cognisance of learners’ unique learning needs. Learners were able to participate and seemed to be part of the teaching/learning process. These teachers’ classroom practices appeared to coincide with what Janney and Snell (2000) highlight, suggesting that curriculum adaptation should focus on three factors namely: a) curricular- adapt what is taught b) instructional- adapt how it is taught and how learning is demonstrated and c) ecological- adapt the setting (what, where, when and with whom). Tomlinson (2002) suggests that curriculum adaptation means adapting the content, the process and the product and these depend on the readiness, the interest and learning profile of the learner.

Three types of curriculum adaptations arose from the observation data namely: differentiation by task, time and quantity of outcome. These types of adaptations are in line with three of the nine types of curriculum adaptations proposed by Janney and Snell (2000) (see chapter 3). Though some teachers adapted the curriculum, it was evident from the findings that their knowledge about curriculum adaptations was overpowered by circumstances that they suggested hindered their provision for individual learners. For example, large class sizes, lack of relevant knowledge and skills in special education. For those teachers who did not make any curriculum adaptations, findings of this study revealed that they argued that it was not necessary to provide different activities for the learners [meaning learners have to do the same activity regardless of their level of ability] because they write the same examination/tests at the end of the year. This finding does not support Hall’s (2009) finding when she cautions that not all students are the same and yet they are often faced with participating in a ‘one size fits all’ lesson despite their individual knowledge and skill. Perhaps it is not surprising that classrooms where a ‘one size fits all’ approach was used, left learners detached from classroom discourse (Ball, 2009). The Botswana National Report on the Development of Education ‘Inclusive Education (Draft Report): The Way of the Future’ (2008:33), states that ‘ The Curriculum Development Division has adopted a universal design of

learning (UDL) which offers differentiated activities that take on board learners of different abilities'. However, research (for example Armbruster, 2003) clearly indicates that learners with learning difficulties do not access the curriculum if teachers do not use instructional accommodations such as adapting alternative strategies, multisensory approaches and slow presentation of information. These instructional accommodations have been found to facilitate progress and participation, as well as the ability of learners who have LD to access the curriculum. However, there were teachers in the study who remained firm in their teaching using teaching approaches which involved learners who have LD and this seemed to offer them opportunities to participate in the teaching and learning process. They would present learners with problems to solve and explore and did not confine learning to the four walls of the classroom. The teaching approaches of these teachers had a slant to a Vygotskian perspective where learners make sense of their world, through experiencing things and reflecting on those experiences.

5.3.4 Theme 2: Summary

In summary, teachers' understanding of issues of curriculum and/or curricula revealed that they seemed to be more comfortable with the presence of learners who have LD in their classrooms than adapting the curriculum for them or including them in classroom discourse. The objective based structure of the curriculum, together with its allocated time to cover each aspect, was identified as the key restriction to teachers' ability to be flexible and adaptable with what and how they teach. This was also worsened by the sheer volume of the content to cover. There seemed to be the feeling of simply having to 'get through' the curriculum according to evidence from the responses.

Teachers' understandings of curriculum and curricula adaptations were located within models of mainstream/integration education as compared to inclusive education since most of them strongly believed that curriculum adaptations can only be possible outside the actual teaching time. This does not support the position that Carrington et al (2002) took when they explained, inclusive models of supporting students with learning difficulties rely on in- class support for students.

5.4 Theme 3: Pedagogy

Research question 3: What do teachers do in practice to distinguish learners who have LD from others through their teaching?

Sub-themes

- a) Pedagogical approaches
- b) Linguistic power and instruction

5.4.1 Pedagogical approaches

Regarding what teachers do to distinguish learners who have LD from others through their teaching, data from observation analysis (OBS) and from document analysis (DA) revealed that classroom discourse was mostly characterised by the following pedagogical approaches: discussions, question and answer and whole class teaching [where the teacher stands in front of the class and teaches while learners are listening]. Only two teachers (from schools A and B) were observed employing small group teaching and outside classroom teaching. Under the section of instructional strategies in teachers' preparation notes, methods dominating were question and answer and discussion [lecture method as the teacher did most of the talking] while teaching outdoors, and small group teaching methods were stated and used by only two teachers (appendix 11). When it comes to teaching aids or learning resources most teachers listed: pupils' textbooks, chalkboard illustrations and sentence strips in their preparation books. Data from classroom observations corroborated teachers' preparation notes.

5.4.1.1 Teaching styles

Following are two examples of how teachers from the same school approached their lessons and their reasons for using these approaches: The first one is an excerpt from Setswana (native language) lesson observed (Standard 3).

(Teacher A School B).

Teacher A: Balang mafoko aa latelang (Read the following words)

Whole class: gagamatsa (tighten), bofa (tie)

Teacher A: Ke eng le sa bale lotlhe? (Why is it that you are not all reading?) Tebogo bala (Tebogo read)

Tebogo: k...k... (Student cannot read the word)

Teacher A: Balang lefoko le lotlhe le thuse Tebogo (Class read this word to help Tebogo).

OBS: 9/02/10

The second excerpt is from a Creative and Performing Arts-(CAPA) lesson (Standard 6);

(Teacher B School B)

Teacher: In your small groups I want you to go to the library section and research about the objects you brought to class. [learners go to the library to research]

[Upon their return] Teacher: In your small groups I want you to discuss and share information on what you discovered. [learners sit and discuss]

Teacher: Now let's have groups reporting on what they found. [each group goes to the front and shares with the whole class]

Teacher: Each of you now draw the object you liked most

[Learners individually drew their choice of object]

OBS: 11/02/10.

OBS: 6

The above excerpts demonstrate two different ways of how teachers approached their lessons. The first teacher employed a whole class approach whereas the second teacher used small group and inquiry approaches. During the post lesson interview, when Teacher B was asked about the choice of approaches she employed during classroom teaching, she remarked: *'If you just lecture to these students they won't learn, some of them will not learn. They learn better in their small groups when they get to see things for themselves'*.

It could be concluded that the two teachers had different ideologies regarding pedagogical approaches. It seemed that Teacher B believed in learning by discovery while Teacher A believed in using a didactic approach. In contrast to other lessons observed teacher B School B was observed practising different pedagogical approaches. Asked why she used these approaches Teacher B School B said *'there is something that makes me do it [meaning using different pedagogical approaches] I want all the kids to understand what they are doing and nobody left behind'*.

Data further suggested that most teachers with large class sizes believed a whole class approach was the best method they can employ to teach all learners. *'Group work [meaning teaching all learners at once] is easy and you can teach at once'* (Teacher B School C).

Moreover, other factors that I observed which were associated with pedagogical approaches were the use of chalkboard, space limitation in the classrooms, interaction between learners and interaction between teacher and the learner. The use of chalkboard was dominant as a teaching aid and as well as a learning aid in most of the classes I visited. Another factor associated with pedagogy was the use of a chalkboard during teaching (see fig 6). Constructivism as a teaching philosophy consistent with the position taken in this study would suggest that constructivist classrooms involve a holistic approach based on collective learning where classrooms are student driven and deep learning takes place because there is the opportunity for doing things differently (Macfarlane et al 2007). For most teachers, teaching seemed to be based more on the transmission approach. During the lesson, there seemed to be fewer opportunities given which allowed learners to work at their own pace or work on activities that were at their ability. This finding contradicts Lewis and Norwich (2000) argument that learners with learning disabilities should be given more time to solve problems, more chances to practice their skills, more examples to learn from and more strategies to help them learn information and skills.

The following picture from a school in a rural area shows a classroom scenario where teaching was confined to the use of chalkboard which seemed to reduce teacher/learner interaction.



Figure 6: Teaching confined to blackboard, classroom scenario in a rural area (with permission from the head-teacher and Teacher B)

Furthermore, in most of the schools I visited, classrooms were set up with desks arranged in columns mostly with no space to allow easy access to the learners and this seemed to make it hard for the teacher to reach all learners especially in urban and semi-urban areas where there were about 35-40 learners in each classroom (see fig. 5). The

teacher's table would be either in-front or at the back of the classroom and all learners were to face the blackboard/chalkboard during instruction. Classroom arrangement seemed not to facilitate teacher-learner interaction, lack of space in between the desks made it difficult for the teacher to attend to individual learners, leaving him/her with the only option of talking to learners from behind and in most cases with no eye contact. I specifically observed the classroom physical layout firstly to familiarize myself with each classroom and secondly to get an idea of how the curriculum, including its multidimensional facets and inclusive principles were being accommodated in each. The classroom layout seemed to have a bearing during class activities as the teacher found it difficult to move around easily to reach each learner to facilitate teacher pupil interaction.

5.4.1.2 Teacher-centred approaches

Teachers in the six schools I visited seemed to be mostly preoccupied with transmitting knowledge while learners were regarded as passive recipients of knowledge (appendix 10 - under activities). The practices of teachers were found to be contrary to research that renders rote learning (learning by repetition) in favour of creating avenues and or opportunities for learners who have LD to construct knowledge (Phillips, 1995). An authoritarian pedagogical style is what, perhaps most saliently characterises schooling in Botswana (Tabulawa, 1997). As explained in chapter 3, traditional education functioned as a legitimisation of the Tswana social structure where the aged act as repositories of wisdom. Obiakor & Offor (2011) explain that adults were considered role models as they handed-down family traditions from one generation to another. Tabulawa argues that these role patterns are antithetical to a learner-centred pedagogy which education policy guidelines advocate for in Botswana. Tabulawa (1997) continues that, teachers see themselves as figures of authority and the child could only be expected to authenticate a pedagogical style in which the relationship between themselves and the teacher is clearly authoritarian.

The pervasiveness of the use of teacher-centred approaches in Botswana classrooms have been reported in previous studies. Cohen et al (2001), in their study in Botswana, observed that the most striking features of contemporary classrooms today were a formal style as characterised by strict, overt discipline, a high degree of social distance between teachers and students, a 'chalk and talk' type of lesson with little interaction between one student and the another, individual work with no talking and emphasis on book work. Tabulawa (1997) suggested this is, because of the

authoritarianism inherent in Tswana society where the elder is the one to speak while the child listens. I noted, however, that the Botswana Primary school syllabi (2005) indicates that, teaching and learning is expected to be learner-centred. Findings from observations in the schools I visited revealed that most lessons taught were mostly characterised by undemocratic lesson approaches (mostly teacher-centred) (see OBS: 5: p.153). Evidence from findings revealed that Botswana classrooms were undemocratic if we go by observations made by Lumadi and Awino that for democracy to prevail in Botswana classrooms, learners should be seen as contributing members of the class and their decisions be incorporated in the teaching and learning process. In support of this idea, in his paper entitled 'Democracy in Botswana', Masire (2006) observed that participating and inclusive democracy was practiced in Botswana, he gave an example of the Kgotla (traditional meeting assembly) as a system that has a participating arrangement, where everyone is allowed to give his or her opinion so that it can be discussed and the good of it taken advantage of. This shows that although government allows a process of democratic interplay that should provide a favourable environment towards democratisation of the Botswana classrooms (Lumadi & Awino, 2009), the real practice in classrooms does not support the government's view of democracy. Use of undemocratic lesson approaches is confirmed by Polelo (2005) in his study 'Inside undemocratic schools' in Botswana, he found that most teaching in classrooms was teacher-centred and was punctuated by recitation and rote learning. Tabulawa (2003) cautions that learner centeredness is a political and ideological scheme to transform human relations even though it is encapsulated in value free educational terms. What happened in the classrooms observed supports Tabulawa's argument because teachers' actions reflected the Tswana tradition of speaking being left to the elderly. As a result, expecting teachers to easily ignore this tradition may not be as easy as the governments' guidelines suggest. Therefore, learner centred approaches might not be compatible with such beliefs due to different personal and contextual factors. Furthermore Akyeamong (2001) in his paper 'Reconceptualising Teacher Education in the African Context' argued that progressive teaching methods such as 'child centred', reflective practice approaches stand little chance of gaining ground in classroom practice because school textbooks and curriculum documents are written mostly in a deterministic style that corresponds with and validates the prescriptive and authoritarian structure of teaching and learning.

Findings emanating from the study seem to confirm John Locke's theory where he postulated that 'the mind was a blank slate or tabula rasa, and that we are born without innate ideas, and knowledge is instead determined only by experience derived from sense perception' (Locke 1991:5). This was evidenced by teachers' presuppositions that they have to imprint ideas on learners rather than treating them as people with an innate ability to construct knowledge. Findings in earlier research (Mitchell, 2008; Ainscow et al, 1999) challenges educators to develop a wide repertoire of teaching strategies and move away from assuming that learners in every class are a homogeneous group, and above all encourage educators to listen to 'hidden voices' in order to make schools and classrooms more inclusive. Miles & Singal (2010) argue that inclusive education challenges didactic, teacher-centred teaching practices and so opens up opportunities for developing better pedagogy and greater competence. However, Tomlinson (2002) strongly warned, teachers ignoring these fundamental differences may result in waning students' motivation which ultimately results in some learners falling through the cracks in the process of learning. Glat et al (2009: 7) position this by pointing out that 'this is the point where inclusion is no longer a philosophy, an ideology or a policy, becoming instead a concrete action in real-life situations, involving individuals with specific difficulties and needs'.

On the contrary, Tabulawa (1998) argues that to expect teachers to shift from the known pedagogical paradigm (transmission-reception pedagogical style) which informs their world is not an easy thing. What Tabulawa suggests here, according to Lumadi & Awino (2009, is that people are usually resistant and afraid of change. The idea of change means moving from the comfort zone which teachers are used to; this then calls for understanding the socio-cultural and historical roots of education development in Botswana. In his ethnographic study of Botswana teachers' pedagogical classroom practices, Tabulawa (1997:266) noted that:

The historical and empirical evidence... indicates that the authoritarian pedagogical style that so much characterises classroom practice in Botswana has evolved over a long period of time and is now part of the immunological condition of the education system. Pedagogic innovations that are not pre-adapted to this condition would not be easily institutionalised.

It must be noted that counter to the argument brought forth by Tabulawa about teacher centred approaches in most Botswana schools, The Botswana Report of the

National Commission on Education (RNCE,1977) Education for Kagisano (i.e. Education for Social Harmony) recommended education that has concern for the following: democracy, development, self-reliance, unity and botho (respect for humanity). According to Lumadi and Awino (2009) the first principle (democracy) has relevance for reflections on pedagogy in Botswana classrooms. They further point out that under the sub-heading Education and Democracy in the RNCE the following sections seek to legitimate democracy in Botswana. In Section 2.09 democracy involves giving each person a voice in the running of affairs and the chance to participate directly or by representatives, in decisions affecting his/her life. In section 2.10 the implementation of democracy in education will have several implications as many decisions as possible must be left to those mostly affected by them; professional workers and the pupils themselves.

In terms of using socio-cultural contexts as a framework for understanding the dominant pedagogical styles in classrooms visited during this study, Tabulawa is arguing that pedagogical change is simply not a technical matter, and that is because pedagogical practices really reflect the evolution of certain social values, real change can only occur if they are born out of existing realities shaped by these values. Research has shown that resistance to pedagogical changes is indeed due to clash in social values, for example, O'Sullivan found that some Namibian teachers having been educated in the Bantu Education system which did not encourage them to ask questions, to criticise or to develop and express their own ideas were less enthusiastic about reflective teaching approaches (Akyeampong, 2001:6). In the context of the Botswana culture, elders are respected and the role of the young is to refrain from being pre-occupied with questions. The argument presented by these researchers is that such deeply rooted cultural assumptions have contributed to the resistance to educational change in many countries. Akyeampong positions it by pointing out that pedagogical styles are not value-free and as a result, encouraging a dialogic pedagogical stance in cultures that do not share the same epistemological and ontological assumptions about the social construction of knowledge is unlikely to produce meaningful transfer. Maher (2007) adds that teachers fear that a change in pedagogy from the choral method would lessen their control over students (Kwa-Zulu Natal, South Africa) [Choral method is when the teacher asks children to repeat what she/he says in unison]. Tabulawa (1997) argues the rote learning approach discourages the development of attributes such as spontaneity, self reliance creativity and learner autonomy.

Additionally, these findings do not affirm research in inclusive education which places emphasis on planning for multiple intelligences with a basic intention to connect with children's different intelligence strengths (Pritchard, 2005). It seemed that participants of the study took for granted that learners who have LD would naturally learn without considering their varied learning styles [as indicated by the type of methods of teaching they used which were more teacher centred- appendix 10]. Such a perception rested on their belief that when learners do the same activities, they are treated the same. The same treatment as perceived by some participants secures or promotes equality and as a result, they were more concerned in treating learners similarly than meeting their divergent needs through varied instructional provision.

5.4.2. Linguistic power and instruction

Language can create a problem in a learning environment especially when the medium of instruction is not the learners' mother tongue and this can impact on learners especially those who have LD. Commenting on this issue participants of the study said: *'Students understood the lesson because it is their mother tongue and all of them would understand the instruction and therefore understand what they were taught'* (Teacher A School A).

'If the material is taught in class especially in Setswana, it helps because we want pupils to learn our culture' (Teacher A school B).

Data here indicates that these teachers were in agreement that the learners' first language is a powerful tool in the teaching and learning process for it affords learners the opportunity to understand instruction. It should be noted that Setswana and English are both official languages in Botswana and the language of business is English which is spoken mostly in urban areas, whereas in the more rural areas many people do not speak English, particularly the older generations. English being the medium of instruction from primary school means it becomes the second/third language for some learners. Setswana as the language of all communication is displaced by mandatory use of English, and because of this some learners find it difficult to communicate in English which is their second or third language and further they find it difficult to understand instruction. Regarding this issue one participant said *'when I met them beginning of last year, I realised that the kids have problems of speaking that they cannot even communicate in English and they are in Std 6'* (STLD School B). The analysis showed that teachers were concerned that the medium of instruction was a disadvantage as learners found it difficult to express themselves in English whereas if it were Setswana,

they could as one teacher declared *'not only understand what is taught in class more especially in Setswana but also understand our culture'* (Teacher A School A).

Teachers were aware of the link between culture and education; they further brought to surface what culture can do or how it can contribute to the education of learners. In this case, they were adamant that culture can serve as a basis for co-operation amongst learners where they can learn from each other. To this effect one teacher alleged *'sometimes kids tend to do better when they explain to each other and I want them to learn from each other and teach each other'* (Teacher B School D). By taking part in a social group through the use of cultural symbols called language, teachers pointed out that this can help learners to be free during interactions with others. *'I encourage them to talk to him [meaning a learner who has LD] so that he can be able to be free'* (Teacher A- School A).

It was clear from the data that teachers were aware that the language used during teaching was crucial in maintaining values, ideas and understandings within a learning environment. Additionally they positioned this within the broader concept that for effective and appropriate learning to occur learners' cultural aspects including language should be taken into consideration. This finding concurs with the view of Donald et al (1997:122) that *'any process of teaching/learning which inhibits a fully interactive use of language prevents learners from developing their full potential'*. Baker (2006) explains that the home language is also regarded as an important tool for thinking and cognitive development.

Teachers I observed seemed to operate under the tension between using Setswana (national language) and English (official) language. The tension was due to the fact that, except for Setswana as a subject, all subjects are taught in English and most teachers believed that the use of English as a medium of instruction poses problems as learners found it difficult to express themselves. An explanation to this finding could be that, given the controversy about the use of English as a medium of instruction which dates back to the colonial era, traditional education in Botswana was conducted in indigenous languages before formal education was introduced (Parsons, 1984). This explanation concurs with that of Lin (1990) where retention of a foreign language as a medium led to communication difficulties for learners in Hong Kong. In South Africa Du Toit & Forlin (2009) found in their study that children in the ten schools they surveyed struggle with the language of instruction at their school. They also explained that those children experience severe language barriers because English

maybe a third or even a fourth language for them to learn. Prophet and Dow (1994) carried out a study on

‘The role played by language in the formation of scientific concepts in Botswana classrooms’, two groups were taught the same lesson (science) in Setswana and English respectively. The results showed that the students taught in Setswana performed much better scoring 20% higher than their English taught counterparts and it was also found that the Setswana taught group showed a much better understanding of the science concepts. Considering that language and education go hand in hand, the language in which the education is gained is a very important factor given the diverse learners teachers have to deal with. It is a common view that language and education have a strong correlation in terms of fundamental human rights, liberty, self-esteem, societal values and cultural identity of the individual (Adeyemi, 2008). The use of the child’s first language in education has been theoretically and empirically confirmed to be beneficial; if education denies learners to use their language during learning according to Saville-Troike (1988) it denies them use of their background knowledge.

Arguably the class environment should encourage communication and participation and this can only happen if learners are comfortable with the language used. According to Stenhouse (1978: 8) ‘we are unable to talk to one another when we lack common experience’. In this study, common experience refers to Setswana but because of having to use English as a medium of instruction, many teachers referred to it as a barrier to understanding instruction. At present the Botswana government policy states that English should be used as a medium of instruction from primary level (Ministry of Education, 1994). Going beyond the classroom the implication from this finding is that language can create a barrier between learners and their parents or care givers [especially in a situation like Botswana where most parents speak only the vernacular and they do not speak English]. I also argue that this can create a situation whereby parents and children develop in opposite directions, with less common ground in terms of culture, language and life experiences. Landsberg, Kruger and Nel (2005:37) argue ‘this can encourage the non involvement of parents/caregivers and worsen the fact that they cannot assist their children with their school work’.

The debate over the language of education and the increase of the use of English as the medium of instruction is therefore in opposition and has picked up momentum from academics, politicians, educators and the general populace in Botswana because for example 80% of the population speak and communicate in Setswana whereas of

38.42% of the population (1.7million) speak English (Nyati-Ramahobo, 1997; Tswana Language, 2009; Crystal, 2005). Lastly Tabulawa (2008) argues there is a challenge to multi-lingual and multicultural societies all over the world and he continues to explain that the question of which languages to utilize in education for a relevant and meaningful provision of literacy to its citizens becomes a dilemma. This dilemma comes as a result of according only two languages (as in the case of Botswana, English and Setswana) to be the only languages permitted in the school system (Mooko, 2008) whereas at present there are 26 languages being spoken in Botswana (Nkate, 2005). That being the case, the question that arises from this dilemma is whether the prevailing system satisfies the needs of all learners given the language issue of using English as a medium of instruction which is not a home language for some learners.

5.4.3 Theme 3- Summary

How the class environment is organized and managed may influence the teaching and learning process. Regarding what teachers do to distinguish learners who have LD from others through their teaching, it was evident from the findings that activities to establish and enforce learning for all learners depended upon the type of teaching styles adopted by teachers. Considering that language and education go hand in hand, the language in which education is gained was a very important factor to teachers in this study, they believed that for effective and appropriate learning to occur learners' cultural aspects including language should be taken into consideration. Thus, the use of English as a medium of instruction was a barrier to learning as it denied learners to fully engage and interact freely during the teaching and learning process.

5.5 Theme 4- Policy and practice

Research Question: How do teachers' actions and understandings fit with the national requirements (standards and curriculum)?

Based on their views about government policies, teachers were aware that much is expected of them particularly in light of the fact that they are responsible for delivering the curriculum. This was reflected in the following extract: *'include teachers in curriculum formation rather than implementation stage'* (Teacher A School B). Additionally, they reported that since they lack a voice in the education processes regarding the development of the curriculum, they follow what is prescribed. *'I teach the subjects in the curriculum as they are because they [subjects] are being tested so if I divert from what the curriculum is saying, the kids will not know what they are*

supposed to write at the end of the year' (STLD School E). It could be concluded that from teachers' views, issues of power arose. The implication here was that teachers felt powerless when it comes to what policy documents impose on them. Their responses regarding curriculum as a policy showed that there was some sort of disassociation from this policy as it is exemplified by the following extract: *'I believe I understand it as a policy document'* (Teacher A School B).

In terms of policy and practice, findings revealed that teachers seemed not to be conversant with policy documents (National Development Plan 9, 2003/04, 2008/09; RNPE, 1994) that spell out the practice of inclusive education. They only referred to the curriculum as the policy guide which they used in their day to day teaching activities. *'RNPE mma [madam] yes we have it somewhere in the office, but we concentrate on the curriculum because we use it on a daily basis'*. The intentions of the government articulated in educational policies aspiring to provide education to all through an inclusive arrangement in Botswana seemed not readily translated into practice by participants of the study. For teachers to understand and change classroom practice, policy makers should acknowledge existing realities, classroom cultures and implementation requirements (Chisholm & Leyendecker, 2007). Elmore (2001:16) supports this when pointing out *'teachers need to be motivated to change practice, adapt and apply appropriate pedagogies, and have the capacity to do it'*. If teachers' classroom practices do not speak to policy texts guiding the inclusion of learners who have LD in Botswana, then the gap between policy and practice may remain a daunting factor in the implementation of inclusive education.

When commenting on the content of curriculum as a policy, participants revealed that they felt left out in the curriculum formulation and had to deal with curriculum content for which they were not given the opportunity to participate in developing. Two implications emerge from this finding, the first one is about the process of communication between curriculum developers and curriculum implementers and to this, House (1977, cited by Ball 1993) agrees that frequently teachers are regarded as essential in implementation but are passive recipients of policies. I argue that lack of communication between policy developers and policy implementers might lead to diverse interpretation of the content which might not necessarily be what the policy developers intended. Additionally, I am of the view that it is necessary to generate a feeling of ownership among teachers to play a part in the curriculum policy, but given a situation (like Botswana) where decisions are highly centralised this might

lead to what Morris (1998) refers to as very limited teacher participation. As teachers are the ones to put innovatory ideas into classroom practice, they ought to play a significant role in the curriculum development process (Carless, 1997).

While the policy guidelines and recommendations in Botswana have been stipulated (Division of Special Education Task Force, 2001:1), the implementation of inclusive education in schools visited was based on haphazard information as teachers were not familiar with other policy documents apart from the curriculum document. Also, findings from observations revealed that school documents such as school policies, mission and vision statements were silent regarding inclusive education. As Porter (1995) explains in an inclusive school, an inclusive philosophy will be evident in school documents such as the school prospectus. Going by the findings of this study, it was clear that there was indeed a gap between policy at a national level and practice.

Additionally, as mentioned earlier, there are policy guidelines which are used but there is no inclusive education policy in Botswana as yet and the absence of an inclusive educational policy could be hindering the implementation of inclusive education. Even-though having an inclusive educational policy will not necessarily guarantee the success of inclusion; I argue that it could provide a vision for the policy maker and the teachers to act upon. Given the situation in Botswana, there is need for a policy which will support all aspects of the development of inclusive education (Eleweke et al, 2002) and also take into account cultural, economic and political aspects of Botswana and the Batswana. Emulating western design and substance which do not reflect local culture and needs has to be a thing of the past. Botswana, in particular needs a different approach to design education, challenging the current system that tends to be detached from the needs of some Botswana's social groups (Moalosi et al, 2007). Inclusion in Botswana will mean more learning opportunities given to all different learners found in our schools; by taking into consideration the language and social aspects of these learners, involving the communities where schools are found and coming up with a more reflective and professional model of teacher training. As observed in other African countries, lack of policy on inclusion is another important barrier to inclusion (Kochung, 2011). Kochung further explains that those policies only exist on paper and in the majority of these countries they are hardly translated into practice.

5.5.1 Theme 4 –Summary

Policy may be written stated or enacted, but for it to be implemented all stakeholders must take part to see to it that what is written in theory is what is practiced on the ground. Findings from this study revealed that teachers seemed to be struggling alone in schools to implement inclusive education. Since policy does not exist without practice, teachers in this study revealed that they needed to own the policy by taking part in its formation not only for them to be implementers. This conception of policy as a struggle between policy makers and policy implementers in Botswana provides a useful lens for analysing implementation implications in relation to inclusive education.

5.6 Theme 5-Difference and sameness

Research Question 3: What do teachers do in practice to distinguish children who have LD from others through their teaching?

The language used in The RNPE and some other policy documents in Botswana to refer to learners who lag behind their typically developing counterparts is that of learners who have (LD). One interesting feature to note from data is the language that teachers used to refer to learners who have learning difficulties. During the interviews there was a wide-ranging trend among participants to refer to these learners using words such as ‘slow learners’, ‘low achievers’, and ‘worse students’ while their counterparts who do not have LD were referred to as ‘high achievers’ and ‘talented students’. During a post lesson observation interview one teacher was adamant that all learners understood the lesson. When asked to substantiate his statement he said: *‘In terms of oral instructions they understood, the only problem is those with reading problems for example, the slow learners or low achievers’* (Teacher A School A). The other teacher explained who these learners are by saying; *‘These are the kids I want to work with so that at the end of the year I can see that this one has a problem, she is handicapped, she is a slow learner’* (STLD School B).

Another participant explained that in their school they accept all learners regardless of their disabilities. When asked to further explain who these learners were she said *‘like nkare [I can say] speech, some are mentally retarded, ba bangwe ba na le [some have] sight problems, physically they are fine most of them’* (Head-Teacher School A). Furthermore, some teachers associated inability to respond to certain tasks to some type of disability and this view is represented in the following extract:

'Normally it depends on the type of disability that they have, if they have mental disability they are not able to copy what is written on the board, sometimes not able to subtract and add mathematics equations, sometimes even unable to read' (Head-Teacher School C).

In addition, teachers referred failure to understand the lesson or to achieve set objectives by the learner to mean the problem lay within the learner. The following exemplifies the view: *'those that have difficulties when it comes to presentation of the lesson, they have problems when it comes to achieving the objective of the lesson'* (Teacher A School A). When the other teacher was asked to explain why a group of learners were doing something different from what the whole class was doing he said *'It is a group of slow learners, if you have noticed, those words were the ones we were doing from the passage we read. I tell them to underline those words'*. [Meaning they are doing a different activity because they cannot do what others are doing, instead of writing, they only underline the words] (Teacher A School B).

The focus on difference by teachers seemed grounded in a 'them and us' paradigm, it was evident from the data that teachers had adopted a dividing practice that separated learners into groups of 'good' and 'bad' or 'slow' and 'high achievers/talented' These differences gave rise to teachers working on assumptions and stereo-types, for example *'the slow learners are those who sometimes we think cannot achieve the objectives, cannot write and cannot answer questions'* (Teacher A School D). This separation also meant that for these learners to be appropriately catered for they have to be taught separately outside the teaching hours and the following extract explains this; *'they have remedial teaching after school whereby they just group them and help them'* (Head-teacher School C) while the another participant said *'If I help them in the lesson, it is going to take time for me to go on with my timetable. That is why I help them separately during a special time after school'* (STLD- School B).

Findings of the study regarding learners who have LD revealed how participants conceptualised these children; they perceived them to be different from other learners in terms of learning ability. Teachers' understandings of these learners in this study were embedded in the concept of 'them and us'. There is evidence in literature that teachers treat learners who have LD differently from other learners. For example, Slate and Saudargas (1987 cited by Frederickson et al, 2009) found that teachers were more likely to leave pupils with learning difficulties alone when they engaged in academic work than when they were engaged in other activities. Booth and Ainscow (1998) view

inclusion as meaning that schools respond to the diverse needs of all students who are seen, then, as part of 'us'. This they maintain contradicts the inclination on the part of the practitioners and policy makers to see a group of disabled learners as students with differences who become subliminally labelled as 'them'. Montgomery (1989: 3) explains, 'people with learning difficulties have been the group who has suffered the greatest indignities over a millennium from cruel, derogatory labels'. From the findings of this study, a perception of difference seemed to be influenced by how teachers labelled these learners. Labelling from this perspective came with stigmatisation and from this I argue that issues of stigma can be a result of cultural influence. Hopkins (2004:90) cautions 'despite the commitment to botho (respect for humanity) in the past, parents and communities (in Botswana) perceived 'handicapped' children as a punishment and those afflicted were and are hidden from public view'. This was due to the fact that families were afraid of the stigma attached to having a child with a disability. Whyte and Ingstad (1997) however argue this is a common myth; when present day old people [in Botswana] were asked about it they claimed that it was not the case. Whatever the case, I maintain that being different does not warrant being stigmatized. One participant at a Special Education seminar in 2002 (Botswana) encapsulated this:

I would like to start with a word of caution, that as we discuss the problems experienced by implementers of Special Education we should avoid the temptation of turning the students into problems, they too are human beings created in the image of God like you and me. At times, we talk about them as if they are a burden to society. Let us separate the people from the problems they experience' (Kauraisa, 2002:1)

The findings revealed that teachers seemed to concentrate more on the problems that learners had; they did not separate these learners from the problems they presented as advised by Kauraisa. Neither did they look at other factors that could be contributing to the problems that learners have and consider changing those factors. Marcfarlane et al (2001) suggest perhaps it is the ecological environment that needs to change. To argue issues of difference further, in his critical analysis on dilemmas of difference, inclusion and disability, Norwich (2002) argued the basic dilemma of difference is whether to recognize or not to recognise differences, as either way the negative implications or risks are associated with stigma, devaluation, rejection or denial of relevant

opportunities. In the case of this study, findings revealed that teachers labelled these learners as low achievers, slow learners who cannot read or write and this labelling, according to Norwich, can encourage teachers not to do anything to support these learners as they will just make conclusions which may not necessarily help these learners in any way. On the other hand, not having labels as explained by Norwich, denies the problem that the child has and this can lead to misreading the child's problem. For example, in this study teachers attributed having difficulty in learning to the learners' low ability levels. Low ability level may not have been the problem these learners had; other factors such as classroom environment, teaching methods may have contributed to their difficulty in learning.

Findings revealed that participants seemed to use labels/categories as a dividing rule between two groups in a given situation. These categories seemed to have become representational boundaries that determined how teachers treated those who were 'talented' and those who were 'slow learners'. In this study differences accounted for being treated differently when it came to the teaching and learning process, mostly leaving learners who have LD out during this process. The dilemma in this study was that learners who were perceived to be 'different' seemed to be denied relevant opportunities as compared to those who were considered to be 'talented' if we go by the findings of this study. Teachers seemed to look at these learners with a particular focus on their difficulty and not on their global personality and development process' (Glat, 2003:11). To this, Bayliss (1998) argues, how children are understood within an institutional discourse will determine how they are treated. However, Cigman (2007) warns whilst an emphasis on sameness risks neglecting the vital interests of a minority and in effect discriminates against them, an emphasis on difference may mean defending the vital interests of a minority at the expense of others who receive less than their due and less than, in many cases, they need. She continues to caution that it brings us to the central theoretical tension known as the 'dilemma of difference'.

Issues of differences and equality in the Botswana context can be looked at using Ingstad (1997) explanation of the disability discourse. 'Disability' has become a unifying category [in Botswana] most often using the Tswana word for physical impairment (*digole*) to cover all types of disability. A basic point to note is that meanings of these terms have since expanded to become insults for example, terms such as 'idiot', 'moron' and 'imbecile' were once neutral with no negative connotations, they were used to refer to delayed mental development (Otlogetswe, 2009). A suitable

example in Setswana is the replacement of *segole* (a disabled person) and plural *digole* (disabled people) with *motho yoo nang le bogole* – (singular) and *batho ba ba bang le bogole-* (plural) (person and people with disabilities). Setswana noun classes relate to conceptual categories, thus kinship terms tend to belong to one noun class, inanimate objects to another and abstract concepts to another, (Cole, 1992). ‘Se’ and ‘di’ as prefixes fall under inanimate objects. The change to prefixes ‘mo’ and ‘ba’ class, include terms for people with the view of recognising their personhood before their disability. Otlogetswe (2009) argues that terminological developments are interesting and can appear as products of an extraordinary caring society, while at another level they appear as infantile products of rapid modernisation. Otlogetswe continues to explain that these words which used to be neutral with no connotation have been replaced by ‘politically’ correct labels such as ‘mentally challenged’, ‘people with intellectual disability’, ‘children with learning difficulties’ or ‘special needs children’.

Though there were issues of difference in classrooms visited, teachers accepted all the learners and their reflections about issues of acceptance as part of the Setswana culture influenced and informed their actions. This is in line with Ingstad and Whyte’s (1995: 182) observation that in ‘Setswana culture all children are welcome and that it has been the Tswana (way of life of the Batswana) tradition to accept and care for disabled family members’. Participants’ conceptualisation of difference was more influenced by their cultural experiences especially the notion of acceptance. Ingstad and Whyte (1995:182) warn that personhood should be viewed as being not simply human but human in a way that is valued [valuing the person as to what they can do, not how they are]. The personhood of person in the Tswana culture could be reflected back to yester years when, according to Whyte and Ingstad, ‘the contribution someone can make in the house-hold and community is more important for how he/she is evaluated as a person than the actual physical appearance’. According to the findings, the notion of acceptance seemed not to be attached to the notion of value. Valuing learners as Ingstad and Whyte explain would have meant teachers allowing learners who have LD to be contributing members of class.

Additionally, participants of the study revealed that they teach the slow learners separately at a spare time (after school during study time as one explained it). This finding implies that to teachers, difference meant separation. Montgomery (1990:43) argues that ‘pupils being put in the ‘bottom sets’, the ‘remedial class’, the ‘nurture group’ may suffer the denigratory comments of teachers and peers on their abilities

together with the stigma of separate development'. This could bring forth the possibilities of discrimination which may arise due to this separate arrangement. Such practices may lead to exclusion because as long as there are learners who are not being accommodated within the existing system, then Botswana as a country has to redefine inclusive schooling looking beyond the difference of ability. Sefa-Dei (2005:284) points out 'schooling can be 'exclusive' by not responding adequately to difference among the student population'. Including these learners physically in classrooms is one thing and it is yet another thing to include them in classroom and school activities.

The focus on difference or on sameness needs a shift from recognising the difference to recognising the needs. Once the focus is on recognising the needs, then issues of placing these learners will shift to as Mittler (2000:11) describes inclusion 'not simply placing students with disabilities in schools; it is rather about changing schools so that they are responsive to the differing needs of all children'. Ainscow (1997) rightfully situates it when pointing out that it is time we ask 'what is wrong with the school rather than what is wrong with the child. Once the blame is placed on the school rather than on the child, he argues, then schools can reconstruct themselves so that the child can fit not vice-versa.

5.6.1 Theme 5 – Summary

This theme and its accompanying literature aimed at giving the reader a broader understanding of the ways in which teachers in this study accommodated the difference and sameness available within their classrooms through their teaching. The notion of 'botho'(respect for humanity) as part of the Setswana culture seemed to influence and inform their actions in dealing with these learners. During the teaching and learning process, sameness was promoted through the use of a centralised curriculum where teachers felt that there was no need to give learners different activities as they would be writing the same examination at the end of the year. Difference was promoted through lack of more individualised activities which may enable learners to work at their own pace and at their level of ability. The enduring tension between sameness and difference in most classrooms visited seemed to be influenced by factors such as examination oriented curriculum, class sizes and lack of relevant knowledge and skills which teachers alluded to as barriers to implementing inclusive education.

5.7 *Theme 6-Support*

One of the themes that emerged from the data was support to teachers in the implementation of inclusive education. Evidence from data showed that there was support within schools and it included School Intervention Teams (SIT) (school based resource service for assisting and advising teachers who have learners with SEN in their classes), administrators' support, in-service training workshops and circles of support. Reflecting on the availability of support within schools, participants of the study revealed the following: *'As the school, we raise funds to buy equipment...to assist teachers'*. (Head-Teacher A). To show support within schools, another participant said *'Sometimes they give me work to photocopy for them, [teachers] they give me assignment to come up with an activity which can assist them. I do that and I have come up with some reading activities that I have given out'* (Head- teacher C).

One other interesting finding to put on record was the type of support which was available in schools *'we do hold workshops like circles of support...workshops on the curriculum and government policies to remind them [teachers] what to do ...we are also helping them because we have SIT [School Intervention Teams] in which we have monthly meetings, we talk, we discuss, we look at what each problem the student has...'* (Head-Teacher A). It is important to note that while administrative support was available most head-teachers did not have awareness on issues of inclusive education but because they were positive about the inclusion philosophy, they did all they could to support teachers. The following statement is illustrative *'Sometimes I help them by making some activities which they can use for pupils with problems. Or I ask them during the meetings if they have anything they need help with regarding these children'* (Head-teacher E).

One other point not to be overlooked was the issue of support in terms of personnel such as teacher aides or teaching assistants. Teachers felt that having such support could help them in successfully implementing inclusive education *'...if it was like in English mediums whereby a class has an assistant teacher, I think that way it could be better ...'*.(STLD School A). Teachers believed that having teaching assistants would help to support access to learning for these learners and provide general support to the teacher in the management of these learners and the classroom.

When reflecting on the role parents play to support the school the following view is illustrative *'I had not had a problem with any of the parents of the pupils with*

disabilities' (Head-Teacher A). Contrary to that, however, some participants felt that parents were not being supportive *'we also involve the parents to help us with the kids, but here [at their school] the parents are not that eager because we find that the kids live with their grand-parents so the young mothers have gone out to look for jobs'* (Teacher A School E). Additionally, data revealed that schools did not work in isolation, they collaborated with other agencies and the community at large *'...if a pupil is missing school to go the cattle post [farms] we go there and get the child... no child is allowed to just stay in the cattle post to do nothing...'* (Head-Teacher A). *'Normally the senior teacher will compile a list of all children that we suspect like having challenges, then we send a list to the Central Resource Centre (CRC) [government department where learners suspected to have special needs are assessed] or Cheshire [Non-governmental organization dealing with the welfare and teaching of learners with special educational needs], then they invite the children to the centre or they come here'* (Head-Teacher School C).

However, some teachers felt that they did not get any support from the Ministry which has been mandated to ensure that the implementation of inclusive education in schools takes place. *'No, no one has [work-shopped us] except our head-teacher, even bone ba [those from] Ministry gaba nke batla [they never come] but they expect us to do miracles'* (STLD School F). To further authenticate this, an officer at Curriculum Development and Evaluation (CDE) [a department charged with the responsibility to support curriculum modification and adaptation] was interviewed. He informed me that there was no officer with expertise in inclusive education at CDE and therefore they source out technical support from Ministry of Education and Skills Development (MoESD) under the Division of Special Education [department charged with the responsibility to support the implementation of inclusive education]. Another officer from MoESD was also interviewed and her responses were similar to those of the CDE officer. She pointed out that MoESD works in partnership with other stakeholders to support the implementation of inclusive education in Botswana by holding workshops in schools. She also pointed out that there was a draft policy (Inclusive Education) which still has to go through the stages of adoption after which implementation workshops would be intensified. When the views of the two officers were cross checked with those of teachers, it emerged from the data that none of the teachers had attended any implementation workshop on inclusive education organised by the Ministry except within school or regional workshops *'sometimes we are invited by our regional officer*

for workshops, and she workshops us and gives us some skills to share with other teachers' (STLD School F).

If schools are to give every learner the opportunity to become successful, an effective support system should be made available for teachers. From the findings, types of support discussed centred on three forms of support: support at school level, support at parental level and support at community level.

Teachers need the opportunity to develop a clear understanding of the innovation, and they need to be given time to become convinced of its value and of its potential to make a difference in terms of pupil learning. 'The quality of the working relationships of teachers is strongly related to implementation of any innovation or change of practice,' (Fullan, 1991:132). Participants of the study revealed that support within school was available and they particularly mentioned support from School Intervention Teams (SIT), Learning Difficulties committees and other committees in their schools.

Kisanji (1999) explains that SIT teams were set within schools in Botswana to work with teachers who express concern about individual children, and the teams were given the responsibility to find ways in which the needs of those children can be met within their classroom or school. Members of these teams include; head-teachers, regular education teachers, special education teachers, parents, STLD and school psychologist (if any). The support from such teams according to Engelbrecht (1999:157) could 'encourage the development of collaborative relationships among the educators so that expertise may be shared which is crucial to the success in meeting the diverse needs of all learners in inclusive education settings'.

Collaborative relationships can bring changes to the schools as teachers can work together to identify and address learners needs. Cavanagh (2004) and MacFarlane et al (2007) observed that it is not the supportive teachers that we lack, but rather supportive schools that nurture and support those teachers. Pijl and Meyer (1999:7) maintain 'inclusive education can only be successful if educators have sufficient support and resources to teach all learners' and other studies emphasise that the success of inclusive education is strongly influenced by the 'buy-in' of those teachers who would have to implement it (Cole, 2005; Bourke et al, 2004). Teacher buy in is more likely when they feel supported in their endeavours if they are to make an effort and change the practice. Additionally, findings further revealed that teachers received support from head-teachers. They were committed to supporting teachers and their philosophical

understanding on this was that they did not want any learner to be discriminated against. School leaders play an important role in promoting and sustaining change in schools. Without their efforts, schools cannot change or improve to become places where all students are welcome (Salisbury, et al, 2005). This kind of support was carried out, for example; through in school workshops. Skrtic et al (1996) see this as collaboration because the invention of new ideas requires reflective problem solving through discourse. Engelbrecht et al (2006) explain that, for schools to move towards a more inclusive and democratic system, visionary and dedicated school leaders with a strong adherence to inclusive and democratic values and principles are necessary.

While teachers accepted having learners who have LD in their classes, they called for more support in terms of resources and personnel. Specifically they revealed that having teaching assistants would enable them to give support to learners who have LD during the teaching and learning process. The issue of resources and personnel support has been supported by many authors including Cook (2004) and Westwood & Graham (2003).

One of the most important factors to consider is the relationship of the parent to the educational provider. Findings of this study revealed that some teachers were satisfied with the support they received from parents regarding their children and this implies that if parents are aware of what their children are doing at school a philosophy of partnership can be established between parents and teachers, Elicker & Former-Wood (1995) support this idea when they found out in their Australian study that parents' awareness of what children were learning supported further discussions at home and that children asked scientific questions more frequently at home. Further, when children perceive positive parent/teacher relationships, they tend to also have more productive relationships with teachers and achieve intended learning outcomes. When there is this kind of relationship, I argue that parents may develop a strong motivation to support their children's learning and to this Mitchell (2008) points out that teacher/parent partnership is important as parents are the sources of information of the education teachers provide and they might be more willing to share ideas within the context of a partnership relationship.

Participation is currently one of the key words of social development, some writers associate the notion of participation with influence (Davis, 1981; Chell, 1985; Munn, 1998), while others contend that participation means empowerment (Mayo & Craig, 1995; Nelson & Wright, 1995) or consider it to mean democracy (Cunha & Pena,

1997). Despite these divergences, there seems to be a common assumption that participation is 'a good thing' (Cleaver, 1999). Inclusive education can be regarded as an expression of democratic principles and to examine the education system of Botswana within the notion of democratisation is appropriate as democracy is one of the four pillars of Botswana's national principles. The question to ask is how this democratic view has been taken advantage of to influence inclusive education in Botswana.

On a different note, findings revealed that some participants of the study expressed that parents were not eager to take part in the education of their children. Brown & Duku (2008) caution that many parents, especially in African schools, often defer decisions to teachers because of the teachers' class/ position/identity, rather than being upfront and vocal. Some research revealed that when parents are actively involved in their children's education, they do better in school (Baker & Soden, 1998). Nana-Adu Pipim and Adjei (2009) in their study based in Botswana schools found that some parents are not forthcoming when it comes to discussing school issues and concluded that this has affected students' performance. Additionally, they found that 70% of parents complained that their participation is limited by the fact that they are illiterate, have low educational and economic status and for those reasons cannot make any sound contribution. It must be noted that matters of participation are cultural and contextual. For example, the recent focus in the UK and USA is on parental participation in the form of choice of schools and involvement in school governance, while in some developing countries the debate centres on community participation in school construction, financing and management (Sukuzi, 2002). In Botswana, for example, 'issues of participation can be traced back to the 1970s when individuals contributed towards the building of a national university through different means such as livestock, cash and crops' (Moswela, 2007:152). The participation was ideal for community living and this is supported by Offor (2011) as he points out with traditional education, everyone was involved and everyone was responsible for each other confirming the African proverb that *it takes a village to raise a child*.

On the contrary, in their national study of 2,317 inner-city elementary and middle school students (in USA), Dauber and Epstein (1993) argued, the best predictor of parent involvement was what the school did to promote it. School attitudes and actions were more important than the parents' income, educational level, race, or previous school-volunteering experience in predicting whether the parent would be

involved in the school. What Dauber and Epstein are challenging is that schools should create opportunities for parents to get involved in the education of their children.

Regarding support at community level, findings revealed that schools were not working in isolation but were working in partnership with the community and other non-governmental agencies. This concurs with what Kisanji (1999) noted, community participation connotes joint ownership, responsibility, decision-making and accountability in the development of schools. In Botswana for example, local communities have some history of involvement in the provision of education, 'when formal education was first introduced in the nineteenth century, mud and grass-thatched structures (primary schools) were built by communities' (Moswela, 2007: 153). This concept of partnership was, as described by Hanson (2003) and Owens (2004) consistent with the widely held realisation that schools were open systems which could benefit from their communities in as much as communities could benefit from them.

Since participants appreciated that schools cannot exist in isolation, this appreciation seemed to fulfil the ancient African Proverb from Igbo and Yoruba regions of Nigeria which says 'It takes a village to raise a child' meaning that raising a child is a communal effort. Many African cultures (Botswana included) share this school of thought and the proverb is echoed in the Setswana language 'Kgetsi ya tsie e kgonwa ke go tshwaraganelwa' and 'Se tshwarwa ke ntsa pedi ga se thata' collectively meaning 'Joint efforts or collaborative labour eases complications'. From the findings, it was evident that participants appreciated. For example, *'the senior teacher learning difficulties would compile a list of all the children that we suspect, like having challenges; then we send the list to CRC'* [Central Resource Centre- an assessment centre in Botswana]. The benefits of collaborating with stakeholders and for this particular study it emerged that the main focus was for the benefit of the learner who has LD. This is in line with Hornby et al's (1997) point that trying to support children with needs in school is likely to require the support of several agencies and professionals. This kind of inter-agency collaboration can make flexible use of available resources (Normington 1996) in order to sustain inclusive practices for learners who have LD. Burstein et al (2004) place emphasis on the key role of a support mechanism. If teachers do not have the support they advocate for in this study, it may suppress their efforts to assist learners who have LD.

5.7.1 Theme 6 – Summary

To create inclusive schools, teachers in this study called for an ongoing collaboration within schools and with other stakeholders as they perceived that schools cannot operate in isolation. If teachers feel supported in their endeavours, they may make an effort and change the practice. Collaborative relationships may bring changes to the schools as teachers work together to identify and address learners needs.

5.8 Chapter 5 - Summary

This chapter focused on data presentation and analysis as well as interpretation and discussion of each theme. Themes discussed were: Theme 1: Inclusive Education sub-themes a) Philosophical understanding of inclusion and inclusive education b) Feelings about inclusive education c) Key areas of barriers for implementing inclusive education. d) Benefits of inclusive education Theme 2: Curriculum Sub-themes a) Translation of curriculum b) Curriculum concept c) curriculum adaptations Theme 3: Pedagogy sub-themes a) Pedagogical Approaches b) Linguistic Power and instruction Theme 4: Policy and Practice and Theme 5: Difference and Sameness and 6) Support.

The findings indicate that participants seemed to understand the concept of inclusion and inclusive education and their understanding of this concept was embedded in their cultural, personal and contextual factors. Their understanding seemed to be inclined more towards the concept of integration than inclusion as learners were expected to fit into the system. To them accepting these learners was more crucial, a discourse embedded in their traditional values and principles of ‘botho’. Regardless of such understandings, participants were aware of the benefits of inclusive education and at the same time revealed that there were some barriers to implementing inclusive education. These barriers were discussed within issues of examination oriented curriculum, lack of skills and knowledge and large class sizes. Teachers pointed out that these barriers inhibited them to effectively implement inclusive education.

When it comes to issues of curriculum, participants revealed that the curriculum is a guide which they use on their day to day teaching activities and that, since it is a policy document, the development of which they did not take part in, they just follow it as it is without interfering with the set objectives. For curriculum adaptations, most of them indicated that they give the same tasks to learners regardless of their ability. To those who made curriculum adaptations they adapted the curriculum by task, time and quantity.

Participants viewed learners who have LD and those who do not have LD differently by placing them in groups of 'who can' and 'who cannot'. Those who were unable to do activities were labelled as 'slow learners' or 'worse learners' and to those who were able to do assigned tasks were labelled as 'talented learners'. This labelling influenced their pedagogical approaches which seemed to benefit some learners and left others struggling to complete assigned tasks. Viewing learners in this manner suggested that the problem was within the learner and this 'within-child model' perpetuated the notion of the child having to fit into the system and did not really help in finding out how the schools may change to respond to the needs of learners.

Participants were aware that the curriculum they use is a policy document but they seemed not conversant with other policy documents guiding the implementation of inclusive education in Botswana. Their practices seemed not representative of what the policy documents were suggesting inclusive education is to be. To them having learners who have LD in their schools and classrooms was how they conceptualized and understood inclusive education and this seemed to fit well within what teachers understood more than what the national requirements required.

CHAPTER 6

THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

6.1 *Introduction*

The analysis in chapter five identified the participants' responses to issues of curriculum, curriculum adaptations and learners who have LD. Further, chapter five offered the interpretation of participants' understandings of these issues and has endeavoured to identify the influence this has had on their classroom practices by postulating a number of themes relevant to this discussion of teachers' understandings of curriculum, curriculum adaptations and learners who have LD in view of implementing inclusive education in Botswana. In chapter six, I intend to articulate three theoretical propositions from the data: cultural understandings of inclusion, curriculum and curriculum adaptations. I would not claim this to be in itself a body of theory regarding teachers' and head-teachers' understanding of the implementation of inclusive education, but I would claim that this study though conducted from a small scale participant population has theoretical implications and may enhance the understanding of how inclusive education can be culturally and contextually understood.

6.2 *Theoretical implications*

The theoretical implications of the current study may challenge theoretical assumptions about inclusion, curriculum and curriculum adaptations.

6.2.1 Cultural understandings of inclusion

Conceptions of inclusion and its practices differ across societies because they are each influenced by the unique socio-political and cultural histories of those societies. These differences in socio-cultural contexts are important for a cross cultural understanding of inclusion. In Botswana, the government introduced inclusive policy guidelines which outline the governments' desire to increase access to education and training for learners with special educational needs. These guidelines are based on the global policy frameworks of Education for All (EFA) EFA Assessment- Botswana (2000). The principles of inclusive education require all schools to be open to all children and seek to respond to diversity. However, access without quality leaves the education system vulnerable as this would negatively affect access and achievement as

well as fail to meet the goals of equity and justice. The increased gap between the high-income and low-income countries calls for a global institutional reform, changing global capitalism (Sen, 2002) and restructuring a fairer global economy for countries which are poor. Though Botswana has been declared a middle-income country (Clover, 2003), similar challenges to those faced by most low-income countries are still evident, for example, poverty, school drop-outs and contextual factors. In a low-income country, inclusive education implies the equal right of all children to the educational package, whatever that package may be (DFID, 2000b).

Despite international commitments to provide every child with educational opportunities (DFID, 2000a), children with SEN continue to be marginalised. Bines (2001) observed that much literature on inclusive schooling focuses on income-rich countries and, as a result, it has limited relevance to the African context. The education of learners with SEN started in Botswana through non-governmental organizations and churches. Initially, the concept of educating these children was a segregated arrangement where they were placed in special schools depending on the type of disability they had. For example, these schools catered for children with ‘visual impairment’, those with ‘hearing impairment’ and those with ‘mental handicap’. Parents with children falling into any of these categories had no option but to take their children to these schools, and most of these children had to travel miles away from their homes in order to access education. This meant they stayed separated with their families at a very young age and only saw and interacted with their families during school holidays. The arrangement of staying far from the family meant the child lost out in engaging in family life as he/she spent most of his/her time in school. This contributed immensely to the alienation of children from their cultures as they developed outside the family’s values and norms.

Tswana culture believes in bringing up children as a unit to avoid one from missing out on such values and norms. When government finally took over the education and training of learners with SEN, the approach was more on special classes and integration units in ordinary schools (see chapter two). Most of the teaching of all subjects was undertaken in the units or special classes and integration only happened during play-times, co-curricular activities and assemblies. This type of arrangement is still seen in Botswana and mostly children found under this arrangement are those with ‘visual impairment’, ‘hearing impairment’ and ‘mental handicap’. This arrangement has contributed to how inclusive education is viewed in Botswana today. The concept of

inclusion as a means of educating learners with SEN followed as the last initiative in Botswana; so far it has had little impact as the idea of separating these learners was already presented as a way of educating them. Even in inclusive arrangements, these learners are still excluded from classroom activities as teachers believe that this is the way to go about it.

The interpretation of the results of the present study challenges the different assumptions about inclusion which are presented by different authors from a western perspective to a more culturally and contextually based understanding of inclusion. The educational reform proposed by many western researchers may be helpful to the Botswana context in some areas but the moral and ideological dimensions have to reflect the culture of the Batswana. For example, Batswana believe in the collective before the individual; this could have been used as a major link between the school and the community when inclusive education was first introduced into the school system. Contributions from beliefs, practices and attitudes in the local culture could have been used to build on the inclusive ideology rather than bringing in beliefs and practices from outside which are not necessarily relevant to the lives of Batswana. Traditional beliefs have to be understood (Momm and Konig 1989) before any kind of innovation can be implemented. Moreover, this view of inclusion is consistent with the view that inclusive school should represent the ethos of community involvement (Bayliss, 1998).

Participants' understanding of inclusion was mainly focused on the concept of 'botho' where all individuals are accepted. It might be interesting here to refer to the cultural association of the term inclusive education in the Botswana context to meaning acceptance even though the person who is being accepted does not necessarily benefit from that acceptance. When located within a wider context, this concept can equal the socio-ethical discourse which emphasises that children with SEN should experience the same quality classroom programme as typically developing children, become members of the classroom community through participation in class activities and develop positive social relationships with class members and teachers (Odom & Diamond, 1998). Within the Tswana context, the socio-ethical discourse emphasis seem to be on developing positive social relations as indicated in the data where participants felt that having learners who have LD helps because they feel accepted, they belong and they feel free. This approach to a social-ethical discourse fits well with the concept of 'botho' (respect for humanity).

Participants of this study believed inclusion allows peer interaction and to them this interaction was not particularly on academic gains but for social and emotional development. This is in line with the psychological educational discourse which supports the developmental benefits of inclusive education as supported by Bricker (1978:17) when pointing out ‘integrating handicapped and non-handicapped children may assist in the continued development of the child’s behavioural repertoire’. Bayliss (1995a) explains that inclusion could provide for children with SEN peer support which is essential not only in the learning process, but also for their social and emotional development within the school culture.

Even though teachers indicated similar barriers to inclusive education as those found in many studies of (resources, training, support and large class sizes), when it came to educating learners who have LD, to them it was more a matter of how inclusive education can fulfil the social and psychological aspect of learners. The social and psychological aspect played a very crucial role in the traditions of Botswana, as indicated in chapter two, during the era of initiation schools, young men and women were initiated into understanding their role in their families and in the society at large. The aim of education during this era was not to make a more knowledgeable person, but it was to transform the initiate, making him different from what he had been and separating him from his childhood existence (Mautle, 2001) If Botswana as a country has to adopt inclusive education as an initiative to educate all its citizens, Ware (2003:160) explains ‘we need to move beyond Inclusion as a ‘special education initiative’ and frame inclusion through a more ‘humane understanding of disability’. Given these cultural differences, inclusive education may no longer be a specific UNESCO model, but it has to become a concept that can be applied differently in different countries.

6.2.2. Cultural understandings of curriculum

Since the Jomtien Conference in 1990 which introduced Education for All (EFA) goals, the international education community now looks to ensure that education systems take into account and are enriched by the diversity of learners and society. In a world becoming more globalized, but also more unequal and divided, the academic and social integration of all learners gradually became a priority for governments and international organizations dealing with educational issues (Acedo et al, 2008). One major educational issue which this current study looked into was ‘curriculum’. Findings from this study revealed how the concept and process of curriculum were understood by

participants. Every society sets up schools in order to induct students into the culture and the ways of the society. The curriculum then becomes a reflection of what people think is valuable (McKernan, 2008). If curriculum is how McKernan views it, then it should reflect thoughts from people who understand the values and culture of a given society. The education system which was used in Botswana before the colonial era was one which was directed at the mind, the body and the spirit, inseparable parts of our human individual and community whole. The individual was part of the group and the individual was bonded through the education/socialisation process (Obenga, 1995). For example, Initiates that graduated together were grouped to form mephato (age regiments) who from time to time freely partook in important communal projects. Education Initiates were taught the importance of unity and co-operation with one another and with the rest of the community (Mosothwane, 2006). Similarly in Nigeria according to Obiakor (2011) during pre-colonial period everyone was involved with the 'haves' taking care of the 'have not's'. This approach to education did not expose the weaknesses of any member of a group because everything was collectively approached. Because of the value attached to building a cooperative community, traditional education produced strong and healthy patriotism in each member of the family and the weakness of others were not exposed.

With the introduction of western education in Botswana, the government determined curriculum encouraged more individualism than collectivism. Additionally, the curriculum is more examination oriented and targets only those who can cope with the pace that the system has set. This type of curriculum does not only put pressure on learners, but also, teachers are overwhelmed by the fact that they have to teach a certain amount of content within a specified period. The interest of the government of Botswana on the issue of a centralised curriculum is for teachers to fulfil its desires not the needs of learners. Therefore, a centralised curriculum has proved to be irrelevant given the urban/rural split where schools are found. In this study, schools in urban areas were better resourced as compared to those in rural areas. For example, in urban areas schools had photocopying machines, computers and libraries whereas schools in rural areas relied on their education officers [who in most cases had offices miles away from where schools are] should they want to make photo copies for materials to be used by teachers. This seemed to impact on teachers' delivery of lessons because in most cases, teaching materials were inadequate or not even available.

If schools were to be given the autonomy to develop their own curricula basing on the context from which they operate, learners could benefit more than they do from a centralised curriculum. Educationally relevant experiences could inform and influence learners' thoughts. Landson-Billings & Henry (1990) support this by pointing out that culturally relevant curriculum allows learners to use their home culture as a basis from which to interrogate 'school knowledge'. The school also become a site of social and political struggle where students can question not only what is passed to them but also the contradictions inherent in receiving an education not appropriately grounded in their lived experiences and cultural knowledge (Henry, 1992). A centralised curriculum also leads to several potentially problematic situations, for example, the academic content areas tend to be the core areas of concentration and other areas that might be just as (or more) important to students (especially those who have LD) are excluded – for example, social and friendship building skills (Agran & Alpher, 2000). The assumption that learners may be motivated to work hard if they know they have to write tests and examinations to progress to subsequent levels may be inaccurate for learners who may already be experiencing failure in school (Wehmeyer, 2001).

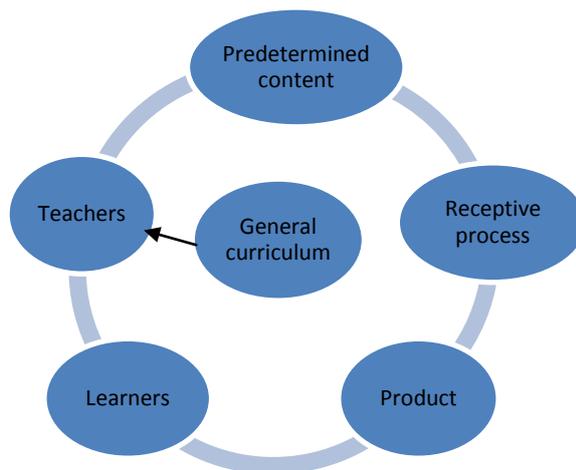
6.2.3. Contributions to theories on curriculum

This study has aimed at contributing to the fragmented field of curriculum, that is, curriculum in terms of 'what is' rather than 'what should be' and the contested nature of curriculum, specifically focusing on curriculum as 'process' (see chapter 3).

It is evident from the findings in chapter 5 that although teachers used 'the curriculum' in their day to day teaching activities, the meaning of curriculum was complex. In this study, teachers viewed and used curriculum as a product and their responses confined curriculum to a specified time and content because they indicated they had to teach prescribed content within a specified time. Methods of curriculum delivery tended to be a traditional curriculum delivery approach which involves uplifting what the curriculum suggests and transmitting it to learners. Here I argue for a paradigm shift from viewing the curriculum as a receptive process to viewing it as an interactive dynamic process and to viewing curriculum as much more than subject knowledge. Such an alternative approach to curriculum allows greater flexibility (open-ended standards) as to what, when, where and how learning will take place as well the role of teachers during classroom interaction. This approach could encourage interaction between the teacher, learners and the curriculum. As this interaction occurs, social relations may be developed and this gives the teaching and learning process a totally

different understanding in that learners may benefit from the process as much as they can benefit from the curriculum. I therefore propose a dynamic, constructive relationship between curriculum, teachers and learners hoping to help teachers to move away from teaching ‘the curriculum’ to ‘understanding and developing curricula’. This move is in line with the constructivist way of teaching which embraces treating the learner as the most important feature in the teaching and learning process. Therefore, a paradigm shift is proposed (fig.8).

From teaching ‘the curriculum’



To understanding an interactive inclusive curricula

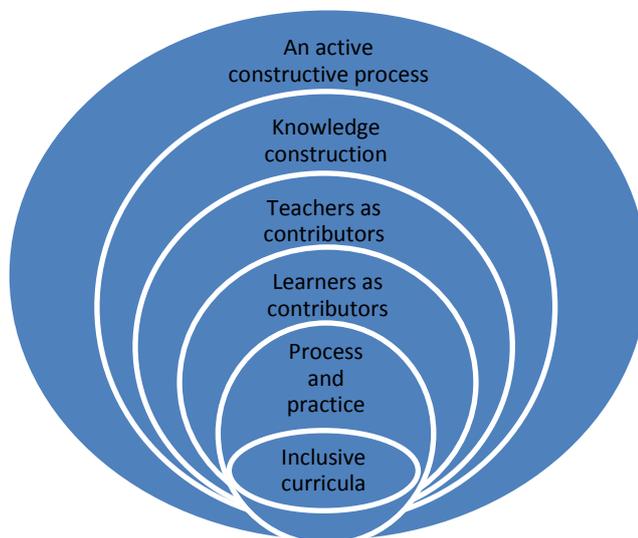


Figure 8: Shift from predetermined curriculum to inclusive curricula

As illustrated in figure 8 developing curricula requires schools to have an openness to change their old approaches where the curriculum has predetermined content knowledge which has been designed without consideration of the realities of the specific cultural and classroom context. The predetermined content knowledge is then

taken and passed to the learner and through tests and examinations where particular outcomes are expected. This approach becomes a receptive process because learners are told what to know rather than constructing their own knowledge. I am arguing that the current approach of teaching ‘the curriculum’ as suggested by the findings of this study seem to be inadequate in meeting the needs of learners who have LD. Therefore I suggest an alternative approach which focuses on the process and practice of inclusive curricula. Under this model, learning is constructed rather than transmitted and both teachers and learners are considered contributors in the construction of knowledge. Having all these components under this model makes the whole approach an active constructive process which may engage learners to build their confidence, self-esteem and self-motivation through this kind of interaction. An inclusive curriculum looks at what is feasible, workable and manageable given the uniqueness of individual learners within a given situation.

An inclusive curriculum is interactive and allows learners to contribute towards their own knowledge as well as recognising the different learning abilities of individual learners. Furthermore, an inclusive curriculum requires pedagogies that respond to the social construction of difference in the school and are conducive to enabling success for all learners. Developing an inclusive curriculum is a transformative and interactive process for the teacher and the learners. Flick (1999) explains it entails a paradigm shift in which basic assumptions are examined and changed.

6.2.4 Cultural understandings around curriculum adaptations

Providing a quality education for all learners in inclusive settings is the biggest ‘knot’ (Glat & Gomes de Oliveira, 2007) and challenge of inclusive education. Since most teachers have been trained to teach curricula that are subject specific, Stasz (1997) states that teachers need to increase their knowledge to create high quality integrated curricula that combine academic and vocational skills, to adopt teaching roles that support authentic learning. Physical placement in inclusive settings may not necessarily provide equality of access to education for all learners, Forlin (2010) suggests, unless accompanied by major adjustments to other areas of schooling. In Botswana, the Revised National Policy on Education (RNPE 1994), states that the Government is committed to the education of all children including disabled children and therefore will intensify efforts to increase access to education for disabled children. Having a policy that recognises the need for curriculum to address the needs of learners is important, but

it does not become relevant if the learners cannot access the curriculum in the first place. Findings of the current study revealed that some learners' needs did not appear to be met as they seemed to battle with achieving the objectives of the lessons. Given the government's desire to increase access to education for children with SEN in Botswana, such an approach of course raises much more challenging questions on how this access is to be achieved given the diversity of learners that exist in Botswana classrooms. Meeting needs requires a closer look at the type of curriculum models to be used in making curricula accessible to all learners (King-Sears, 2001). The shift in thinking should be from being concerned about the academic achievement to being concerned about the whole development of the learner. What transpired from the study findings is that instead of celebrating and accommodating the diversity of learners, the government seems to strive for uniformity in learners' attitudes and achievement hence the approach of a centralised curriculum and standardised examination expectations.

It is important to continue reflecting upon the uniqueness of the culture of education in Botswana in terms of what will work in as far as adaptation of the curriculum is concerned. According to King-Sears (2001) an adapted curriculum addresses the learning outcomes but provides adaptations so the student can participate in the programme. Following King-Sears' explanation and given the findings of this study, an adapted curriculum [as described/understood by teachers] seemed not to benefit learners who have LD in any way as in most cases activities which learners were given did not address learning outcomes of the prescribed curriculum. What most teachers seemed to be doing was to keep these learners busy without any meaningful learning. Given the 'globalisation' approach, which assumes that learners need to be equipped with advanced socio-economic skills (academic skills), then it is appropriate to question what happens to learners who cannot achieve these expectations. How relevant are these 'academic outcomes' given the fact that there are learners who are excluded from such assumptions? There has to be an understanding of different contexts if all learners are to benefit from the curriculum. For example, animal husbandry and agriculture form a large part of Botswana's economic life and way of life, as a result, it would perhaps be relevant that a modified curriculum would allow learners to follow a substantially different curriculum. Then this could allow schools to even engage people from the community to come and impart such skills to learners who cannot progress academically (inviting the community is a way of making schools more inclusive). Acquiring such skills may eventually enable these learners to use them for their own

income and contribute to the economy of the country. The modified curriculum could be suitable as learners would be assessed in reference to their individual capabilities instead of assessing them against the achievement of others. This view buy into how Obiakor & Ofor (2011) described the traditional education, that it was not solely academic and it included morality, patriotism, virtues and all other characteristics that were considered to be ideal for community living.

For inclusive education to be implemented in most African countries there might be a need to revisit traditional education which developed the whole person and encouraged vocational skills for self- sustenance. With increasingly diverse learners found in many of our schools today, a differentiated curriculum which can address their needs seems to be a necessity. Furthermore, living in a globalised world, countries may find it difficult to operate in isolation. Therefore, to avoid denying some pupils access to curricula/knowledge which are considered more important, there is need for an incorporation and use of information technology. Croft (2010) argues information and communication technology is increasingly accessible and Dart (2006:19) supports, some simple use of information technology could improve the teaching and learning processes.

6.3 Where Are We?

6.3.1 Ideology of equal rights

Botswana like many countries has adopted and proclaimed the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human rights UNESCO (2000:26) which states ‘everyone has the right to education; education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. This declaration needs some examination and contextualising especially in cultures where the concept of equality is interpreted differently. ‘While these ideologies are built on a strong concept of the equal individual, the Tswana values stress the collective before the individual’ (Ingstad & Whyte, 1995:190). They continue to explain that while ‘equality’ for the disabled individual became a powerful tool in the hands of political advocates in developed countries, it has less relevance in Botswana where the disabled person is seen primarily as part of a larger whole. Sefa - Dei (1996:180) supports ‘an individual is defined only in relation to a community, every individual right in society is matched with social responsibility’.

The right to education in western countries means those individuals, their parents or guardians can pressure the government into providing for even severely disabled individuals. In Botswana, children who are found in schools are those who have mild to moderate LD while those who have severe needs are not found in schools (especially government schools). This is because there are no facilities to cater for their needs in government schools (resource issue) and secondly because their families feel they can take better care of them, educate them (informal) than schools can. For these reasons, there is no pressure on the government. Does this mean these children have no right to education like others? Or does it mean that they have fewer rights? The rights of the disabled in Botswana at this point remain questionable as there are inequalities in schools.

In this study, research was carried out in urban, semi-urban and rural areas. The schools in urban and semi urban areas have advantages in terms of facilities, resources and manpower, so schools in rural areas find it difficult to compete with them on an equal footing. Given the socio-economic differences, this impinges on the rights of learners who are found in rural areas. For example, one school that I visited in a rural area had no electricity, and because of that teachers could not carry out some experiments in science lessons. Additionally, there are inequalities between learners, in the quest for a higher rate of learners advancing to the next level of education, learners who have LD struggle to cope with the pace. This right to education becomes totally a different concept because in Africa the educational package does not compare to that of western countries.

6.3.2 The repetition of the same

Having discussed theoretical implications of this study, one question to ask as far as implementing inclusive education in Botswana schools is: Where are we, are we repeating the same thing? The repetition of the same according to Stuart (1997) is a mechanical, stereotyped repetition of the same element. Muckelbaver (2008:73) explains repetition of the same as ‘attempting to identically reproduce the model’. The formal education system in Botswana was designed for the purpose of facilitating the exploitation of Botswana and their resources by the colonisers. For many centuries, the twin aberrations of colonialism and slavery had subjected the African mentality to a stream of racist stereotypes the effect of which was to rob him of his dignity and self worth (Mmegionline, 2010). The Vision 2016, the principle underpinning Botswana’s future, not only provides a national context for change, but also identifies closely with

the consciousness of globalisation. Though the National Development Plan (2003-2009) highlights globalization as the key context for development and emphasises the necessity for Botswana to position itself to take advantage of the opportunities in the rapidly changing global environment, it must be noted that globalisation has however placed considerable pressure on many educational systems around the world, Botswana included. The adaptation and the incorporation of such a discourse has not only changed how countries manage and run the affairs of including learners with special educational needs, it also has affected how countries attempt to align their education systems with the international standard hence 'the repetition of the same'. To me universalised education agendas are not applicable to the cultures, contexts, political and economical status of many countries. Armstrong et al (2010) argue that, ironically, these concepts, which are introduced as guiding principles of education reform, are unlikely to be effective. As a result, what is happening in most countries as far as implementing inclusive education is concerned, is either repeating or altering inclusive education models from western countries. This unfortunately does not fit within the education frameworks of many countries.

To take the debate forward, a major factor that Botswana has to consider in addressing the needs of learners who have LD is to link inclusive education with the way of life in Botswana. Roulstone and Prideaux (2008:24) refer to this as 'the notion of 'Paideia' (the notion of education as a training for liberty and noble appreciation) which holds within it an important archetype of education, and sees it as inextricably linked to the way we live, think and behave'. I argue that as much as Botswana needs to be part of the global village, its education should be suited to the social setting of the country which will in no way contradict the ways of life of its people. However, Obiakor & Offor (2011) argue African societies must embrace some foreign cultures to advance the education of all learners including those with disabilities. Instead of borrowing policies which hold different assumptions and values, it is advisable that African societies start building cultural bridges that value traditional and western cultures to enhance education for all.

6.3.3 The repetition of difference

The repetition of difference is about creating something new, acting differently in accordance with knowledge and Muckelbauer (2008) sees this as introducing a very curious dynamic movement which instead of responding to either a determinate or indeterminate content, the model becomes responsiveness itself. Deleuze (1994) says by

applying knowledge in new situations, we create new actions. The RNPE (1994) changed the language from that of 'integration' (which was the language used in the NCE (1977) to 'inclusive' education with the aim of making education more accessible through inclusive practices. What emanated from the findings of the current study is that regardless of the change of language, the practices in schools are still more inclined to integration ideology where learners who have LD are expected to fit into the system. In actual fact, 'it is the repetition of difference'. Looking at the status quo in Botswana, there isn't much that has changed from the colonial to the post-colonial era if we go by the findings of this study. Cowen (2009:320) writes about 'something that changes its 'shape' without changing its geographical locus'. The change present in Botswana schools is the language used but in actual fact there seems to be nothing different happening in schools. Classrooms are still dominated by traditional teacher centred approaches and the curriculum is still not accessed by some learners. Therefore, are we doing anything different or have we just changed the shape without necessarily changing the location?

This is the time to move and start reconceptualising schooling in Botswana to embrace all who are represented and begin to see education not only as a means to acquire knowledge, but also a means to acquire other aims of education. So, we need an education process that creates new loci, that is, a different focus as well as a different emphasis if inclusive education is to be effectively implemented in Botswana schools.

6.4 *Implications for practice*

In order to develop practice in Botswana schools, this study has attempted to suggest a range of practical implications which may assist. Given the multiple responses from participants of the study, it would be impossible to cover everything under this section therefore implications to be discussed will include curriculum, inclusion, pedagogy and teacher education.

6.4.1 *Inclusion, curriculum and pedagogy*

In as much as the government of Botswana is advocating for an inclusive educational approach as a way of educating all learners, it was evident from the findings that the approach to inclusive education in schools seemed not to reflect what policy guidelines are recommending. This showed there is disconnect between policy and practice, the interpretation of what inclusive education is, showed that adopting concepts without analysing local contexts and perceptions has had an impact on the

practice in classrooms. At the forefront, policy makers should rethink inclusion capitalizing on traditional local informal, formal and non-formal education practices that can contribute towards actualisation of inclusive education (Kisanji, 1995). This is particularly important because basing local practices on international policy frameworks impinge on national policy processes. Such a situation renders subsequent policies and strategies ineffective (Booth et al, 2005). At the time of carrying out this study, the implementation of inclusive education seemed not to be improving outcomes for learners who have LD. It seems necessary for policy makers to look at how the definition of 'need' applies to the Botswana context. Identifying the definition of need may refocus attention from barriers to learning to other initiatives that would benefit these learners. Additionally, having identified the 'need' in the Botswana context may direct policy makers in planning and in resource allocation. Identification of available resources within communities where these children live may also help as this may reduce governments' expenditure. The needs of both rural and urban areas have to be addressed in order to realistically recognise such differences. There is no quick fix or cook book recipe on how to implement inclusive education as inclusive education is very much culture based (Kisanji et al, 2007). Being culturally relevant will also help learners to use their home culture as a basis from which to interrogate school knowledge.

To meet the challenge of ensuring that education is both accessible and equitable, one barrier to learning which needs attention is curriculum access for all learners particularly those who have LD. Findings revealed that teachers had difficulties in implementing inclusive education because the curriculum was examination oriented. The governments' commitment to retain academic achievements when not all learners will reach this demand calls for setting curricula objectives that do not aim exclusively at achieving and assessing the cognitive adequacy of learners since this approach leads to marginalising learners who have LD. Pereira dos Santos (2001:324) argues 'it is high time the issue of the educational process be seen as a means to create a society and not as a means to continue societies dictated by rules of exclusion of an economic perspective'. Options should be allowed in the same curriculum for learners to pursue their individual interests which will not only lead to academic careers but to other avenues of life.

The recognition that education is a fundamental right and therefore needs to be available to all learners (RNPE, 1994) underpins the fact that Botswana should provide

for and sustain such learning for all learners. Teachers also revealed that they want to take part in the curriculum development not only to be implementers. This calls for policy makers in Botswana to recognise that having input from teachers may improve classroom practices as teachers are the ones who know and deal with the realities of classrooms. Findings also revealed that because of the inflexible curriculum, teachers did not give learners the opportunity to engage with the curriculum. A constructivist approach views education in terms of offering a rich curriculum which takes into consideration what learners bring with them and also valuing their learning experiences rather than focusing on what a market oriented society tells them they should or must do or learn (Pereira dos Santos, 2001). A flexible curriculum which is not examination oriented is needed which will allow teachers to diversify their teaching without fear of not meeting the needs of predetermined content.

When it comes to the teaching and learning process, teachers seemed to be more dominant and this left learners to be recipients than constructors of their knowledge, and this seemed not to allow learners to use their background experiences. The Policy makers should re-think along the lines of Donald and Rattansi (1992:2) when pointing out ‘pedagogy sensitive to cultural differences and to varied cultural patterns cannot be based on superficial definition of curriculum’ that focuses on things those learners cannot associate with. Rather, pedagogy must be based on the local things that learners can associate with. If inclusive education is to be a workable ideology in Botswana, policy makers should start realising that inclusive education means a shared responsibility and a joint concern. Teachers on their own without the support of all stakeholders may not be able to implement inclusive education and ‘Education for all’ may not be realized in Botswana schools until this gap is closed. There is need for teachers to obtain the support they advocated for, not only to implement inclusive education but also to understand the principles underlying the innovation. This necessitates further research which will look into effective ways of keeping dialogue between policy makers and policy implementers.

For a focus on learning rather than teaching to take place in Botswana schools, there seems to be a need to change from a teaching paradigm to a learning paradigm. The latter is much more interactive, it focuses not only on what is learned but also how knowledge is acquired. Arguably, learner centred approaches, which are advocated for in Botswana, may not take into consideration learners’ needs but are only shifting the responsibility to learners to develop increasing independence in their own learning. This

may not necessarily address issues of needs as much as they could be addressed by personalised learning. Personalised approaches focus on individual differences and according to Philips et al (1999: 33), this is where ‘planning and delivering the curriculum takes into account of individual differences and, matches what is taught and how it is taught to individual learning styles and needs’. Personalised approaches acknowledges that everyone is different and that each learner has a different starting point, suggesting that the one size-fits-all approach to teaching does not work in inclusive settings. This also may provide data on moving from inclusive policies to inclusive practices. There is need for policy makers to think along the lines of giving teachers the autonomy to make decisions in classrooms without fear of working under pressure to finish set objectives within a specified period since the reality of learning is located within the learner her/himself, not within curriculum prescription. Further research is needed to explore the impact teachers’ autonomy may have in inclusive settings.

6.4.2 Teacher education

A corresponding kind of teacher education is needed if Botswana is to achieve its goals of inclusive education. There should be changes in the way teachers are trained so that their training synchronises with the culture and the social constructions of difference in the schools and in the society at large. Lawrence (1999) explains that these various changes need to affect curriculum reform processes during initial teacher training by developing professional competencies which will clearly affect the traditional role of the teacher. For these changes to have an impact, Hoyle & Megarry (2006) caution, an establishment of professional development demands the creation of a very different kind of social system. They continue to explain that these changes not only will involve the reorganization of the formal training process, but also of employment conditions. A related argument was put forth by Peresuh (2000) who also realised that inclusive education could work in Zimbabwe if teacher training courses were restructured to make them compatible with inclusive education and including special education content and practice in teacher training.

A process of professional development is proposed in this study which may increase teachers’ understanding of and knowledge about the real meaning of inclusion from the Botswana context. An awareness of their cultural heritage, coupled with an involvement in community activism, may also be a powerful source of knowledge (Sefa Dei, 1996) which might shape classroom pedagogy and instruction. When teachers are

aware of such, they may also develop pedagogical practices that (Landson- Billing, 1994) celebrate and validate learners' diverse cultures and they may be simultaneously involved in a transformative educational process that destabilise and breaks down unfair structures of schooling. These new realities of professional development call for attention to be paid to ethical aspects of a teacher's work and various factors connected to the profession. For example, Khoele (2008) in her study to explore the dilemmas teachers were faced with in South Africa in implementing inclusive education cautioned that significant attention need to be directed to the ongoing staff development of educators focusing on practical/common understanding of identifying learners with special needs and how to deal with challenges in a classroom. While Legault (2001) points out that new knowledge-based economy and globalization issues have a direct impact on the role, mission and operation of schools and therefore a higher level of continuing education will become necessary as part of lifelong learning. Botswana as a country is now faced with enormous social demands for wider access to better quality, more relevant teacher education which will not only equip teachers with knowledge but with 'generic' teaching skills that allow them to modify their practice in ways that meet the needs of all learners within 'inclusive' frameworks' (Bayliss, 1998).

Teacher training traditional approaches that have long been used in Botswana have proved not to be abreast with the current situations in schools. Teachers are faced with challenges of teaching learners from diverse backgrounds and different learning needs. Thomas and Vaughan (2004:79), however, argue 'the primary requirement for most ordinary teachers is not necessarily that they receive specialist training, but that they are given an increased opportunity to develop their skills with children with special needs within ordinary classrooms'. Similarly Lang (1999:168) posit that 'certification in a given subject is no longer the sole qualification needed in order to be considered competent to teach, but instead, teachers should be allowed to develop professional competencies in real life situations during their placement'. Dove (1986) also cautions that those who plan teacher training curricula should re-think content and re-structure programmes away from didactic, over-academic and passive 'courses' towards more practical, skills-oriented approaches.

Teachers in the current study believed that having 'training in special education' will help them adequately include all learners. Mitchell (2005) suggests that teacher education programmes should include diversity issues embedded throughout, with field experience provided as hands learning with a diverse population of students. Zeichner

(1996) emphasises that teaching practice should not be a test of endurance, nor an experience on practical teaching, but a platform which provides the context to integrate theory and practice. For example, in Botswana (University of Botswana) teaching practice is allocated only six weeks each of the first year and last year of training. The challenge to teacher trainers is to dedicate more time where trainees can work with diverse learners in and outside the classroom to understand their cultures and connect what they teach to the different cultures represented in their classrooms. This may assist teachers in making curriculum adaptations relevant to learners' experiences and cultural backgrounds. If such approaches are incorporated into teacher training programmes, they could provide training both on the psychological principles of teaching and learning resulting in a critical understanding of the educational process. For example, a child may be participating in home chores such as cooking, ploughing, or taking care of cattle and yet at school cannot cope with academic expectations. If teachers are aware of this, they could capitalise on what the child knows better, resulting in directing the teaching towards improving such skills.

Issues of professional development impact hugely on the society from which these teachers operate. Hoyle et al (1980:20) caution, 'planning professional development programmes raises serious questions about the quality of life not only within schools but throughout society'. The relationship between school and society is very important as this may transform the problems of schooling into those of society.

6.5 *Cultural context of the study*

This research is nothing more than the results of observations, interviews and document analysis conducted in six primary schools with seventeen participants in Botswana. The conclusions therefore cannot be generalized throughout all primary schools in Botswana, but I would reiterate that the findings and conclusions could represent the understandings of teachers and head-teachers in primary schools in the broader sense. The use of a tape-recorder during interviews was very useful in this study as it allowed me to listen to interviews time and again. But it posed some problems as teachers were a little uneasy when the tape recorder was switched on. Having to answer questions in English proved to be a challenge to some teachers therefore I had to encourage them to use Setswana and there was a problem with some of the words which could not easily be translated such as inclusion, mild, moderate and severe. During observations, as much as I tried to be unobtrusive, my presence in the classrooms

somehow affected the process of teaching and learning. Teachers were conscious of what they were doing and learners were also curious to know what I wanted as they continued looking at me regardless of how the teacher called for their attention. When it comes to document analysis, in some schools, they did not have photocopying machines when I needed the information for further reference; instead, I had to copy by writing the information I needed and this took most of my time.

Lastly, one other limitation of the study was that, as the researcher, I have an ongoing established, collegial relationship with teachers whom I have personally trained and some of them met through seminars and workshops. For this reason, some teachers were hesitant to participate in the study, perhaps because they were scared I would uncover some truth which they did not want me to know. Those who participated may have said what they thought I wanted to hear and painted positive picture of situations that are not altogether positive. Despite all these challenges, the participants provided rich and meaningful data.

Having discussed these limitations within a cultural context of Botswana, I suggest that findings must be interpreted with caution and they cannot be applied to other contexts because every context has its own cultural patterns and classroom environments. Such kind of factors may affect the findings of a similar study in other contexts.

However, I believe the study has made a valid contribution to knowledge concerning inclusion, curriculum and curriculum adaptations by providing a range of theoretical and practical implications.

6.6 *Recommendations for future research*

In light of the findings and the operational parameters of this study, insights gained have opened the ground for future research. This section presents recommendations in conjunction with findings of this study. These recommendations have implications for policy makers, teacher trainers, teachers, parents, head-teachers and future researchers.

This study revealed that all participants had heard about inclusive education and viewed it as physically having learners who have LD in their schools and classrooms even though some of them did not give them any additional provision. Inclusive

education should move beyond physical placement but paying attention to other aspects of schooling such as curriculum, pedagogy supports and so on (Mitchell, 2005). It is clear from this study that inclusive education should be defined as a social and cultural discipline, because limiting its definition could be difficult in some settings leading to it becoming a complex and problematic concept. Artiles & Dyson (in Mitchell, 2005:3) argue that ‘inclusive education is a multi-dimensional phenomenon with different countries developing not simply at different rates but in quite different directions.’ Therefore, there is a need for policy makers to define inclusive education in a way that would reflect the culture and beliefs of Botswana. Such a move may ensure effective and systematic implementation of inclusive education in Botswana schools which may benefit all learners resulting in becoming members of school community not visitors in regular classrooms. The study highlighted the influence of culture in understanding inclusive education. The concept of ‘botho’ played a major role in shaping their understanding. Further research is needed to find out how the concept of ‘botho’ can be utilized in influencing inclusive schooling in Botswana. Also, as indicated in this study how Botswana as a nation define an individual only in relation to a community, these data can contribute to research which will focus on how cultural beliefs and ideologies can influence classroom practice particularly in teaching learners who have LD within inclusive settings.

When it comes to understanding issues of curriculum/curricula, participants of the study understood curriculum to be a guide (a course of study) and their task as educators being to deliver that which it prescribed and such an understanding seemed to limit teachers’ pedagogical practices. This research could be a base for teachers to adopt a different approach of understanding curricula. Further research is needed to address how teachers can be given autonomy so that they begin to move away from viewing it as ‘the official curriculum’ to viewing it as ‘actual’ curriculum. The autonomy may assist teachers to develop objectives that are relevant to the learners’ needs. Additionally, this can provide future research with data on how to design a curriculum without behavioural objectives (objectives indicating the specific behaviours learners must demonstrate to indicate that learning has occurred).

The study indicated that learners who have LD were labelled using words such as ‘slow learners’ or ‘low achievers’ and such labelling determined how these learners were treated during the teaching and learning process. This research could be a base for further research to address issues on the impact of labelling on learners and their

learning. Also this may assist teachers in finding out relevant curriculum adaptations for learners who have LD basing on the context from which they are operating. Additionally, this can provide data on how learners who have LD can be meaningfully and successfully included in inclusive settings. Relating the concept of inclusive education to curriculum adaptations, participants in this study were adamant that curriculum adaptations could be feasible only if learners who have LD can be taught differently from other learners. This could be a base for research which could look into ways of avoiding exclusion in inclusive settings. Policy makers could use this data to look into whether ‘the curriculum’ used is designed to cater for exceptionality. Additionally, they could look into what is applicable in the Botswana situation in terms of whether these learners need supported access to an un-adapted curriculum (same curriculum and same expected outcomes) or they need access to a modified curriculum (different curriculum and different outcomes).

The study showed that what was happening in schools and classrooms as a way of implementing inclusive education was not what policy guidelines were reflecting. This showed that there was disconnect between policy and practice. Therefore, this can be a base for research which will focus on closing the gap between policy and practice and also, this has the potential to improve strategies in considering participation of stake-holders for the implementation of inclusive education. This study has the potential to influence teacher trainers to incorporate policy issues into their programmes in order for teacher trainees to create knowledge based future developments.

Finally, having undertaken this research from the Botswana context, I am aware that these recommendations may not be applicable to other contexts but they may add much to the understanding of inclusion, curriculum and curriculum adaptations and learners who have LD. Future researchers willing to take similar research may find it useful depending on their area of inquiry.

6.7 *Significance of this research to my personal, academic and professional growth.*

This research experience has been an immensely valuable exercise for me. The journey I have travelled through undergoing this academic route has contributed to making me aware of things which have left me critical. The major benefit of this research is in enhancing my perceptions and learning new concepts on complex issues, and enabling me to see beyond the superficial into the darkest corners of the complexity of inclusive education.

This academic journey has changed the way I approach research, for example, I have read many books, many journal papers, unpublished papers and surfed the internet many times, and this helped me to become faster and more efficient in reading and picking up the matter. Having improved my reading skills helped me to manage how I assembled data from various sources and how I presented them in the form of writing.

This journey has contributed to my professional growth in a very positive way. My goal when I return to my home country is not to do different things, but to do things differently. Having developed professionally, I intend to carry this development to create new models of understanding inclusive education, curriculum and learners who have LD. I am determined as never before to change the way I look at things, although unpredictable elements exist, I intend walking up a downward escalator (fig. 9).



Figure 9: Walking up a downward escalator - Adapted from Morrison, M. (1997)

Finally, my attempt was to report on my experiences as a researcher and a teacher trainer and I hope that reflecting on my presence by exploring the practice of reflexivity would increase the integrity of my study and therefore encourage the readers to be interested in my research. This research was an eye opener and a fruitful educational journey. This journey, served as an apprenticeship during which I developed as a researcher and writer for scholarly publications. I learnt from the experts and acquired the tools I needed to make continued engagement in qualitative research a rich and rewarding experience. I learnt the importance of preparing to publish my work, present at conferences and at professional organisations, and that even books may be viable products of this thesis. The research results could be a significant addition to the existing literature, providing answers to questions or offering new insights. My journey was indeed a memorable one and it will go a long way.

6.8 *Conclusions*

The major conclusions of this study are that participants had a contextual understanding of inclusive education but there was a wide gap between the understanding of the concept and implementing it based on the context of how it is defined by the guidelines on inclusive education in Botswana. Teachers' actions and their understanding of doing what they did established that their understanding seemed not to address the problems of access to curriculum for learners who have LD. To them inclusive education meant physically having and accepting learners who have LD in their school and in their classrooms. Offering learning experiences and providing opportunities which require learners to actively participate in their learning seemed minimal. This seemed to lead to these children lacking the curiosity and intrinsic motivation to learn as suggested by Montgomery (1990: 60). Inclusive education should move beyond just being comfortable with learners who have LD as physically present in inclusive settings. Mittler (2000: 121) points out that inclusion 'includes ensuring that all pupils take fullest part in a lesson, that they have opportunities to interact with the teacher and with each other'. Arguably, inclusionary practices should afford learners the opportunity to participate in their own learning within what Hick et al (2009: 39) describe as 'a rights based process of from curriculum'. Increasing participation and decreasing exclusion supports the idea presented by Corbett (2001:8) that inclusive education is a general school concern relating to quality and responsiveness. Teachers' level of responsiveness can be judged from the way they catered or did not cater for different learning needs through curriculum adaptations. Although all the teachers in this study embraced the concept of inclusive education, they suggested that lack of relevant skills and knowledge to work in inclusive settings was a major set-back in the implementation of inclusive education.

When it comes to issues of curricula and curriculum adaptations, data revealed that by and large participants of the study seemed to have little or no idea of what, how, when and for whom to adapt the curriculum. Their classroom practices seemed to not concur with the government's anticipated kind of inclusive education. Parallel to the arguments discussed above, it does not seem fair to put the blame only on teachers for a non inclusive educational system. As much as policy makers believe that teachers are to implement inclusive education in schools, this study hopes to make some suggestions that it is not about what teachers have to do it is about everybody getting involved to drive this implementation. We need to understand all the different circumstances and all the different contextual factors within a certain context to understand inclusion and to

understand why teachers respond in a certain way. Therefore, there is need for the government of Botswana to close the gap between policy and practice and take advantage of the fact that teachers (at least in this study) were positive about inclusive education. This gap may be closed if factors like politics, resources and organisational structures can change. This change may lead to outcomes of teaching and learning becoming qualitatively different for all learners.

Having good policies and not supporting teachers to implement them could lead to those policies positioning themselves in opposition to this process. The aim of such change should be an ongoing reflective process to all involved. This is what inclusion is, it is not Pather (2007) simply bottled with complex labels and definitions which confuse and marginalise teachers who are meant to engage with it, and who may have already the same desires at heart. The current study showed that both structural and ideological changes are necessary for creating an inclusive education framework in Botswana. It is important to continue to reflect upon what is feasible, manageable and workable given the deeply established cultural beliefs such as the notion of 'botho' and understandings of inclusion.

It is quite evident that the trend in Botswana is based on learners fitting into the system as opposed to the system making necessary accommodations for these learners. This approach reduces inclusive education to what Slee (2007:181) calls 'the assimilation imperative of neo special educational rhetoric and practice'. This assimilationist approach does not take into consideration establishing an inclusive curriculum, inclusive pedagogical practices or classroom organization to reconstruct schools. Thus, inclusion as an educational reform in Botswana schools has been based more on learners fitting into the system. Such a reform does not give learners opportunities to equally access the curriculum and this results in what Forlin (2010:183) refers to 'physical placement in regular schools which may not provide equality to education for all children'. As discussed in chapter 2, Botswana as a country has set a target that in 2016, Botswana should be an educated and informed nation. It might be interesting here to refer to cultural connotations of the word 'education' in the Botswanian context to mean day to day socialisation and Tabulawa (1999) points out 'traditional education served to maintain, perpetuate and reproduce Tswana beliefs, customs, values and traditions. From the Botswana context, knowledge is gained through socialization and therefore to be an 'educated person' in Botswana does not only refer to gaining academic skills, it also refers to being able to act in a morally

accepted manner. Therefore, it means, being able to partake in social activities for your own good and for the good of others. Having explained that, I argue that these assumptions could be used to reconstruct education in Botswana a move which could lead to including all learners and may help all learners to achieve aims of education as the education will not only be concentrating on academic outcomes, but will enable learners to achieve at different outcome levels within the same class.

An Examination oriented curriculum underpins effort to include all learners as teachers are pre-occupied with preparing learners for examinations. There is clearly a tension promoted by these two distinct aims. On one hand the government of Botswana supports the right to education for all learners and on the other hand examinations are still determining the progress of learners from one level of education to the next. These tensions therefore, leave teachers to be caught in between as they struggle to strike the balance between the two. The gap between policy and practice is evident when teachers attempt to merge the implementation of inclusive education with the pressure of preparing learners for examinations. In the light of this overwhelming tension, the need to redefine inclusive education in Botswana becomes imperative.

One of the main findings of this study on change is to look into barriers to inclusive education which participants alluded to. These included large class sizes, examination oriented curriculum and lack of knowledge and skills. Findings confirm previous studies in Zimbabwe by Mpofu (2000) & Peresuh (2000) where participants included large class sizes and lack of teaching materials as challenges to inclusive education. The findings of this study are also similar to those of Engelbrecht et al (2006) on their study on the Index of Inclusion which pointed out similar concerns of large class sizes, resources and lack of support. While participants had positive inclusive ethos, the scenario of structural and organizational constraints can be explained by Chireshe's (2011) argument that lack of commitment by policy makers towards students with disability hamper successful implementation of inclusive education in most African countries. Booth & Skelton (2010) explain that while we may often be able to do little to overcome the impairments of learners we can have a considerable impact in overcoming the physical, personal and institutional barriers to their access and participation. The challenge that the government of Botswana has is how to remove these barriers to open the way for inclusion to be implemented in schools basing on the ethos of educational process as understood in the context of Botswana. In Botswana the philosophy of inclusion seem to be rooted in the values of

social justice and respect for humanity. The classroom as the context in which the implementation of inclusive education takes place should uphold the principles of inclusion to facilitate its implementation. Knowledge is created and re-created between people as they bring their personal experiences and information (Wells, 2000). These social relationships take place in these classrooms during the learning process. Therefore, the relevancy of constructivism in this study and the shift in paradigm from teaching the curriculum to understanding curricula stems from the idea that knowledge is achieved through engagement in experiences, activities and discussions which challenge learners to make meaning of their social and physical environments. This knowledge is used by learners to relate to the school environment and the learning activities in the classroom. The constructivist approach used in this study provides a framework for understanding the role of learners, teachers and curriculum during the teaching and learning process to achieve the objective of inclusive education as advocated for by the policy guidelines used to guide the implementation of inclusive education in Botswana.

Additionally participants' conceptualisation of learners who have LD as different was embedded in their reflections about issues of acceptance and participation which are factors inherent in the Tswana culture. Berg (2003) refers to this as the moral discourse. This discourse tends to recognise predominant beliefs in school and society, for this particular study it affected the educational provision and seemed to have resulted in exclusionary practices during the teaching and learning process.

Lastly, as an educator, I would urge teachers to view the classroom as a place that both embodies and supports learning for all learners and view inclusive education as a process that happens in and outside those classrooms. I argue that policy makers in Botswana re-direct inclusive education towards increasing the quality of education through identifying and emphasising cultural strengths such as 'botho' and acceptance of difference within the larger socio-political context. If frameworks of thinking are geared towards building a greater understanding of inclusion within the Botswana context, interactions among stakeholders may push the case for inclusive education further. Such a move may determine the success or otherwise of inclusion in Botswana.

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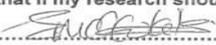
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APPENDICES

Appendix 1

STUDENT HIGHER-LEVEL RESEARCH
 UNIVERSITY OF EXETER Graduate School of Education
Certificate of ethical research approval
STUDENT RESEARCH/FIELDWORK/CASEWORK AND DISSERTATION/THESIS You will need to complete this certificate when you undertake a piece of higher-level <u>research</u> (e.g. Masters, PhD, EdD level).
To activate this certificate you need to first sign it yourself, and then have it signed by your supervisor and finally by the Chair of the School's Ethics Committee.
For further information on ethical educational research access the guidelines on the BERA web site: http://www.bera.ac.uk/blog/category/publications/guidelines/ and view the School's statement on the 'Student Documents' web site.
<u>READ THIS FORM CAREFULLY AND THEN COMPLETE IT ON YOUR COMPUTER</u> (the form will expand to contain the text you enter). <u>DO NOT COMPLETE BY HAND</u>
Your name: Mpho Otukile - Mongwaketse
Your student no: 570023531
Return address for this certificate: Flat 5, 38 New Bridge Street. Exeter, EX4 3AH
Degree/Programme of Study: EdD- Special Educational Needs
Project Supervisor(s): Dr. Phil Bayliss and Dr. Hazel Lawson
Your email address: meo206@ex.ac.uk
Tel: 07976954350
I hereby certify that I will abide by the details given overleaf and that I undertake in my dissertation / thesis (delete whichever is inappropriate) to respect the dignity and privacy of those participating in this research.
I confirm that if my research should change radically, I will complete a further form.
Signed:  date: 2/12/09.....
NB For Masters dissertations, which are marked blind, this first page must not be included in your work. It can be kept for your records.
Chair of the School's Ethics Committee last updated: August 2009

Appendix 2

GRADUATE SCHOOL
OF EDUCATION
St Luke's Campus
Heavitree Road
Exeter
EX1 2LU
United Kingdom
Telephone +44 (0)1392 264892
Fax +44 (0)1392 264922
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4th January, 2010

Head of Research Unit
Ministry of Education & Skills Development
P/Bag 005
Gaborone
Botswana

Dear Sir/Madam,

I, Mpho Otukile-Mongwaketse currently a doctoral student at the University of Exeter under the supervision of Dr. Phil Bayliss would like to ask for permission to carry out research in six primary schools in Botswana. These proposed schools are to be in urban, semi-urban and rural areas preferably.

The aim of my research is to get an in-depth understanding and insight into the nature and process of adapting curriculum by teachers to meet the educational needs of learners with Learning Difficulties (LD) in mainstream primary school settings and its impact on the implementation of inclusive education in Botswana. In order to collect the necessary data, I will observe teachers during the teaching process, use tape recorders for interviews, access documents (which may include children's exercise books, teacher's lesson notes and administrative documents). Two teachers in each school plus two learners will be observed. The same teachers who were observed as well as their head-teachers will be interviewed.

Please note that all participants who will be involved in this study will be allocated pseudonyms to protect their identity and guarantee that any information revealed will be regarded absolutely confidential. The study has potential to contribute to scholarly research, improving policy and practice of teaching learners with Learning Disabilities (LD) as well as informing Teacher - Trainers on the gaps that exist in Botswana's special education programmes with regard to curriculum adaptations, and they can identify and collate the knowledge and competencies required by teacher trainees to enable them to have confidence and competence in teaching learners with LD. The study will also bring new insights to the Ministry of Education, policy makers and policy implementers to examine the impact of curriculum context that surround the implementation of inclusive education.

I would appreciate if I could be granted permission to access these schools from the 24th of January to 20th March 2010.

Thanking you for your continued cooperation,

Yours Faithfully,

Mpho Otukile- Mongwaketse

(Researcher)

Dr. Phil Bayliss/Dr. Hazel Lawson

(Supervisor(s))

Appendix 3



Dr. Phil Bayliss,
Senior Lecturer, SEN and Disability,
Graduate School of Education,
University of Exeter, EX1 2LU
Tel: (0044) (0) 1392 264798
Fax: (0044) (0) 1392 264902

The Ministry of Education,
Head of Research Unit,
Gaborone, Botswana.

9th December, 2009

Re: Otukile-Mwongwaketse, Mpho. Doctoral Study

I am writing in support of Mpho's intended fieldwork in Botswana, January –March, 2010. The fieldwork is the main research focus for her Doctoral Research (Doctor of Education).

As her first supervisor I am fully aware of the scope and nature of her research and have approved her research proposal, including her ethical approval obtained from the School of Education.

Mpho has completed her research training and is fully competent to conduct fieldwork.

Yours sincerely,



Dr. Phil Bayliss

The signature is a cursive script. The stamp is rectangular with a double border. Inside, it reads "UNIVERSITY OF EXETER" at the top, "Graduate School of Education" in the middle, and "EXETER" in a large font at the bottom. There is also some smaller text at the very bottom of the stamp.

TELEPHONE: 3655400
TELEX: 2944 THUTO BD
FAX: 3972531/3655408
REFERENCE E 1/20/2 VIII (03)



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
PRIVATE BAG 005
GABORONE
BOTSWANA

REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA

22/01/2010.

To: Mrs. Mpho Otukile-Mongwaketse
Box 81256
Gaborone

**RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH STUDY ON:
"IMPLEMENTING SPECIAL EDUCATION IN BOTSWANA: AN
EXPLORATION OF TEACHERS CURRICULUM FOR CHILDREN WITH
LEARNING DIFFICULTIES (LD) IN MAINSTERAM PRIMARY SETTINGS."**

We acknowledge receipt of your application to conduct a research on the topic mentioned above.

This serves to grant you a permit to conduct your study amongst primary school Heads and Teachers to address the following research question and sub-questions:

1. *What do teachers do in their classrooms to implement inclusive education and what is their understanding of what they do?*
 - a) *What inclusive education in teachers' classrooms is all about?*
 - b) *How does it relate to the concept of classroom adaptations?*
 - c) *What do teachers do to distinguish children with LD from others through their teaching?*
 - d) *How do teachers understand issues of curriculum and/or curricular?*
 - e) *How do teachers' actions and understanding fit the national requirements (standards and curriculum)?*

It is of paramount importance to seek Consent from Chief Education Officers, School Heads and Teachers you are going to interview before conducting the study. The Ministry advocates for appropriate arrangements to be made with schools where data collection methods such as classroom observation are used to minimize disruption of school programmes. We hope and trust that you will conduct the study as stated in your Proposal and to strictly adhere to Research Ethics so that the research permit serves its purpose.

Please note that this permit is valid for a period of one year effective from 22nd January 2010 to 22nd January 2011.

Appendix 5

Observation guide used for the research

Name of school: School D

Date: 24/02/2010

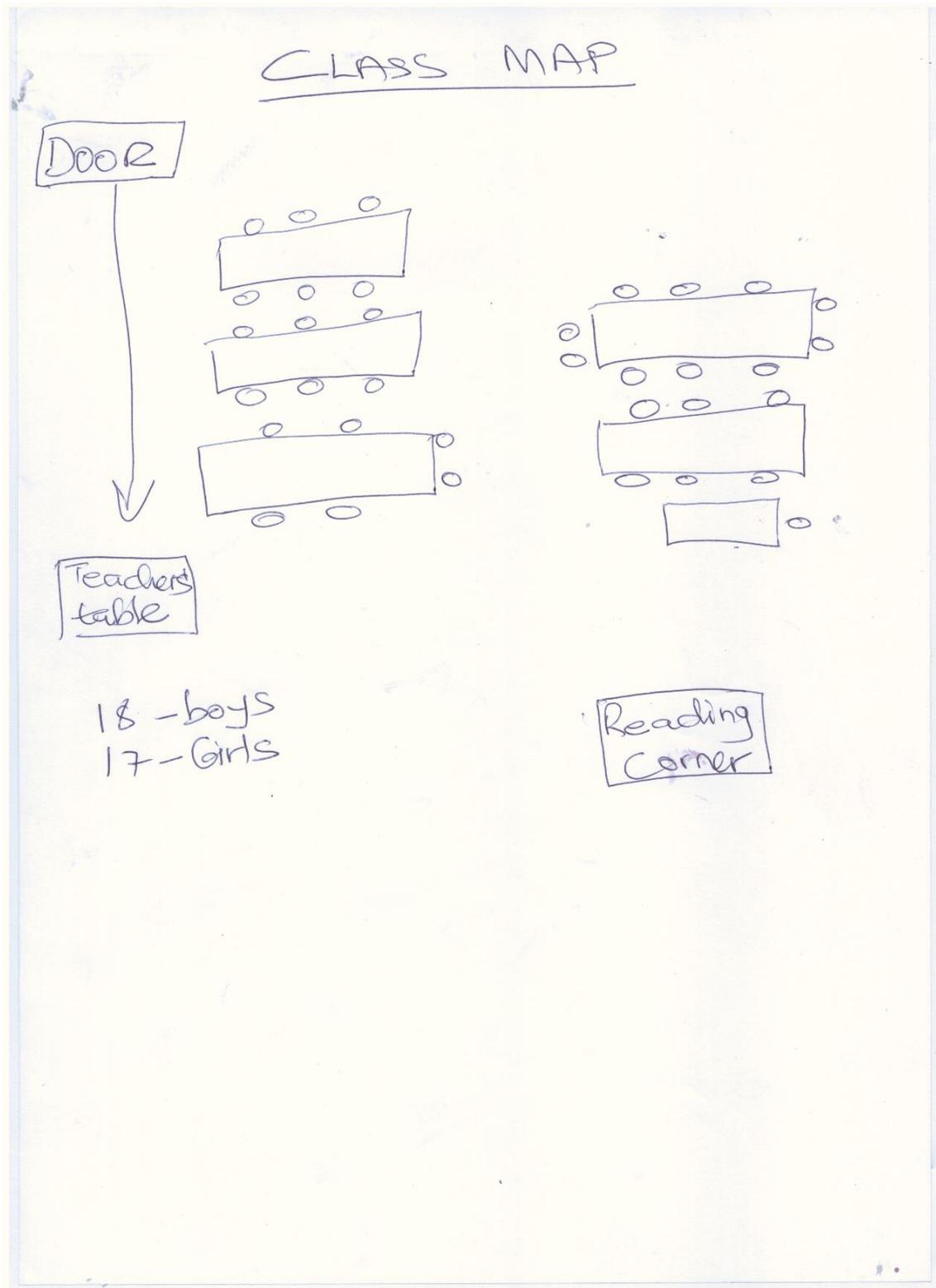
Name of teacher: Teacher B

Lesson observed: Social Studies

Topic: Animals found in National parks and Game reserves in Botswana

Objective: By the end of the lesson, pupils should be able to identify animals found in game reserves and national parks in Botswana.

Time	Instructional strategies	Access and participation	Interaction	Classroom environment	Students as individuals/inter-dependence
0830-0910	<p>Teacher starts the lesson by discussing the topic for the day.</p> <p>teacher asks learners to give names of animals they know</p> <p>teacher asks learners to discuss amongst themselves which animals are tamed and which ones are not tamed</p> <p>teacher discusses with learners and introduces the topic for the day</p>	<p>Learners participate by answering questions</p> <p>Learners discuss in their groups</p> <p>Learners draw animals, some write about the animals found in game reserves and national parks.</p>	<p>Learners interact with the teacher</p> <p>Learners interact among themselves</p> <p>Teacher going around to mark learners' work</p>	<p>Learners seated in mixed ability groups, classroom with wall charts for different subjects.</p> <p>Reading corner with different books.</p>	<p>Learners doing individual activities, for example, drawing and writing.</p>



Appendix 7

A) Example of raw interview data with level 1 coding

<p>Example:</p> <p>Q: What do you do as a school as a way of including all the learners?</p> <p>A: We do remedial work, put them in groups of ability, and then make what we call activities for them (practicing inclusive education) and we want them to participate but I am not satisfied with the way teachers include students, the large number of the class sometimes prevents the teachers from catering for these students. Even the content of the syllabus because they are always chasing after objectives.</p>	<p><u>Level 1</u></p> <p>Remedial work</p> <p>Groups of ability</p> <p>Practicing inclusive education</p> <p>Satisfaction</p> <p>prevention</p> <p>Large class sizes</p> <p>Content</p> <p>Objectives</p> <p>Syllabus</p> <p>chasing</p>
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B) Example of observation and field notes data with level 1 coding

SAMPLE: OBSERVATION AND FIELD NOTES	
Raw data	Level 1 Codes
<p>There are 35 learners in the classroom. 18 boys</p> <p>And 17 girls and 1 teacher (woman).</p> <p>The classroom is in the middle of two other class-rooms and is not carpeted unless at the corner where there is a carpet at the reading corner. There are charts learners work, books on the wall for different subject and learners' work is</p>	<p>reading corner (RC)</p> <p>charts (CH)</p>

also pasted on the wall for different subjects. At the reading corner there are different books and learners go to the reading corner only if they have finished their assigned activities.

Learners were seated in groups of four tables and the grouping was based on mixed ability and in each group there were mixture of boys and girls.

The lesson started with the teacher asking learners what they did the previous day in Setswana Through raising their hands the teacher randomly called their names to give answers.

The teacher then discussed the topic for the new lesson and asked learners to open their text books so that they follow as she reads the story. Learners were randomly chosen to read the remaining part of the story. Then at the end, learners were asked to individually answer questions which were under the story they read. Two boys stood up to give out exercise books to their classmates. They started writing and the teacher went around to see what learners were doing at the same time marking what they have already done. Some learners took about 15 minutes to finish while others did not finish until the 40 minutes of the lesson lapsed.

mixed ability grouping(MAG)

question and answer (QA)

writing (W)

teacher-learner interaction (TLI)

Fast and slow(FS)

Level 2:

Following are 12 categories which came out of level one and are grouped into coding families:

<p>A) Curriculum adaptations remedial work, step by step teaching, reading corner, differentiation by task, time & quality, special time, Remedial teaching corrections, fast and slow, charts.</p>	<p>G) Support Parental support, teachers' support, mentoring, collaboration-school & community, workshops, school committees, sharing.</p>
<p>B) Pedagogical Approaches & Inclusion groups of ability – groupings, group work, abilities, mixed ability teaching, mixed ability grouping, discussions, different activities, assistive activities, peer teaching, mentoring, teach each other, sharing, participation, oral instruction, question and answer, class-work, question & answer, inquiry method, small group teaching, outside classroom teaching, recall of information, telling, helping learners to read, teacher/learner interaction, writing</p>	<p>H) Difference & Sameness (us & them) Categories/ types of disability, LD, MR, PD, identification, reading problems, sight problems, slow learners, worse students, handicapped, disabilities, slow reading, own pace</p>
<p>C) Benefits of inclusion Freedom, self-esteem, interaction, identity, sameness, happiness, liking, relationships, friendships, comfortable</p>	<p>I) FEELINGS ABOUT INCLUSION Hesitant, unwilling, not eager, hiccups, uncomfortable, satisfaction</p>

D) Curriculum Concept Syllabus, content, helping learners to read, lesson plan, objectives, finishing objectives, specific, similar tasks, lower tasks, teaching from known to unknown, concept, understand, comprehend, remembering, recalling, good lesson, achievement, exam oriented	J) Key areas of barriers on implementing inclusive education Time constraints, time consuming, strenuous, extra work, large class sizes, difficult, not easy, hard, difficult, overworked, lack of competence, challenges, number of subjects, more knowledge, training, prevention, chasing objectives
E) Translation of curriculum Guided curriculum, deliver, tested, assessment, evaluate, expansion, curriculum materials, screening, observations	K) Philosophical understanding of inclusion and inclusive education Acceptance, no discrimination, good, safe learning environment, inclusive teaching, exclusion, access, participation, membership, benefit
F) Linguistic power & Instruction culture, language, mother-tongue	L) Policy & Practice Government policies, government requirement, government schools, private schools, policy document, parental choice, special class, Non – governmental Organisations

Level 3

Categories were now separated from coding families to stand on their own so that I can now refine the themes.

Categories	Emerging themes
A	Curriculum management (CM)
B	Pedagogical approaches and inclusion (PAI)
C	Benefits of inclusive education (BIE)
D	Curriculum concept (CC)
E	Translation of curriculum (TC)
F	Linguistic power and instruction (LPI)
G	Support (S)
G	Difference and sameness (us & them) (DS)
I	Feelings about inclusion(FAI)
J	Key areas of barriers on implementing inclusive education (KAB)
K	Philosophical understanding of inclusion and inclusive education -Teacher's views (PUIE)
L	Policy and Practice (PP)

Refining Themes:

This step left me with only six themes and six sub- themes. There was a close relationship between themes and sub-themes that is why I decided to merge them.

Themes	Sub-themes
Curriculum (C)	a) Translation of curriculum b) Curriculum concept c) Curriculum adaptation
Pedagogy (P)	a) Pedagogical approaches b) Linguistic Power and instruction
Inclusive Education (IE)	a) Philosophical understanding of inclusion and inclusive education b) Feelings about inclusive education c) Key areas of barriers for implementing inclusive education d) Benefits of inclusive education
Difference and Sameness (us and them) (DS)	
Policy and practice (PP)	
Support (S)	

Appendix 8

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

St Luke's Campus

Heavitree Road

Exeter

EX1 2LU

United Kingdom

17 January, 2010

Dear Participant,

I, Mpho Otukile-Mongwaketse currently a doctoral student at the University of Exeter under the supervision of Dr. Phil Bayliss and Dr. Hazel Lawson would like to invite you to participate in the research study I am undertaking as partial fulfilment for the completion of my Doctoral degree. The aim of my research is to get an in-depth understanding and insight into the nature and process of adapting curriculum by teachers to meet the educational needs of learners with Learning Disabilities (LD) in mainstream primary school settings and its impact on the implementation of inclusive education in Botswana.

Please note that if you agree to take part in this study, you are at liberty to withdraw at any time. Pseudonyms will be allocated to you to protect your identity and guarantee that any information revealed will be regarded absolutely confidential. Additionally, as a participant you could benefit from the contacts and literature to which I have been exposed thus far regarding curriculum as a process, you will also have access to the outcomes of this study and get input from other educators who participated in this study.

If you agree to participate in this study, kindly sign the attached letter which indicates that you are aware of the research conditions and give permission to be observed and interviewed. Once this letter has been signed and returned to me forms part of the ethical requirements for ethical research measures as required by the Ethics Committee of Graduate School of Education of the University of Exeter.

Thanking you for your cooperation.

Yours Sincerely,

Mpho Otukile- Mongwaketse

Researcher

Dr. Phil Bayliss/ Dr.Hazel Lawson

Supervisor(s)

Appendix 9

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT

“Implementing Inclusive Education in Botswana: Teachers’ curriculum adaptations for learners with LD in Mainstream Primary Settings”

I _____ hereby agree to participate in the above-mentioned research project. I am aware that my participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw from the study at any time.

I am aware that anonymity is guaranteed and that no mention will be made of my identity. My biographical details as well as that of the school at which I am employed will therefore not be mentioned in the study.

Signature

Date

Appendix 10

TEACHING PLAN

WEEK ENDING: 12/02/10 SUBJECT: SETSWANA DURATION: 5 DAYS
 TOPIC/S: STORIES PERIODS PER WEEK:
 REFERENCE MATERIALS:

OBJECTIVES: DAY 4: 1, 2, 4, 4. GIVE REASONS FOR OPINIONS OFFERED OR TAKEN IN A STORY.
 DAY 5: 4, 3 TO PARAPHRASE SHORT PLAYS AND STORIES THEY HAVE READ OR HEARD

CONTENT	ACTIVITIES	TEACHING / LEARNING AIDS	LESSON EVALUATION
DAY 4: GIVING REASONS FOR OPINIONS OFFERED OR TAKEN IN A STORY E.G. MOLA THEGI KE ENG MOLA THEGI A KGATHICELA GO NNA LE BO ISHEPO	PUPILS READING WORDS ON CARD PUPILS READ ATLEAST A PARAGRAPH ANSWERING QUESTIONS FROM THE TEACHER	FLASH CARDS	
DAY 5: PARAPHRASING SHORT PLAYS AND STORIES THAT THEY HAVE READ SEKAI MMUTLA, KUBU LE TLOU	TEACHER READS THE STORY TO PUPILS TEACHER ASKS QUESTIONS SPELLING EXERCISES	SENTENCE STRIPES	

Appendix 11

departments

Upper departments – STD 6 to 7

Middle department – STD 4 to 5

Lower department – STD 1 to 3

is a school of diverse culture, that is ; it comprises of different nationalities.

Our school has a library, dining hall and a special unit for the disabled. There is also an admin block in our school

VISION

At Primary school we strive to produce a well rounded student (physically, mentally, socially and emotionally) who will fit well into the society he or she belongs

MISSION STATEMENT

We at Primary School will work cooperatively with stakeholders to promote quality education through consultation and involvement so as to create a conducive working and learning environment.

- Create a conducive learning and working environment by planting decorative plants and flowers, paving school grounds and carpeting some buildings.
- Monitor teaching and learning progress through supervision, appraisal, motivation and assessment.

OBJECTIVES

- Involve all stakeholders in decision-making and practice transparency by consulting them in whatever activity or changes we want to make.
- Develop varied talents of pupils by encouraging them to participate in extracurricular activities; e.g. athletics, table tennis, soccer, music and lawn tennis.
- Encourage parents to fully participate in the education of their children by assisting pupils in their homework, inviting them to open days and farewell parties.
- Expose both parents and pupils to syllabus content by requesting parents to help in the teaching of some syllabus topics e.g. culture.

VALUES	PRINCIPLE
Botho	We will be compassionate courteous, self-less and professional in dealing with our customers
Transparency	We will abide by the principles of good governance and provide accurate information on matters of public interest
Customer focus	We will be prompt and responsive to the needs of the customer at all times