



**Secondary School Teachers' Experiences of Teaching Learners with Learning Disabilities
in Mainstream Classrooms in Qacha's Nek**

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DECLARATION

I, Ntsoaki Leken, hereby declare that this dissertation is my own original work and has not been previously submitted to any other academic institution for the purpose of obtaining a degree. Furthermore, I affirm that this work will not be submitted to any other institution for consideration towards the award of a Master's degree. Any information derived from the work of other scholars has been duly acknowledged through appropriate citation and referencing.

Signature _____

Date _____

CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this dissertation has been read and approved of as having met the requirements of the Faculty of Education, at the National University of Lesotho, for the award of the degree, Masters of Education.

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative case study investigates the experiences of secondary school teachers in addressing the educational needs of learners with learning disabilities in Qacha's Nek District, drawing on Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory as the theoretical framework. Eight teachers were purposely selected, four from an urban school and four from a rural counterpart and engaged in semi-structured interviews to provide in-depth insights into their practices and perceptions. Thematic analysis of the data revealed a spectrum of experiences: while some teachers expressed a sense of fulfilment in supporting learners with learning disabilities, others encountered considerable challenges. These included overcrowded classrooms, inadequate teaching and learning resources, limited specialized training, and the complex task of meeting diverse learner needs within mainstream settings. Additional barriers such as insufficient professional development opportunities and learner absenteeism without official authorization further hindered effective pedagogical interventions. Such challenges significantly constrain teachers' ability to deliver inclusive and high-quality education, often contributing to the underperformance of learners with learning disabilities. In light of these findings, the study recommends strategic interventions, including the recruitment of more teachers to lower learner-teacher ratios, the implementation of continuous professional development in inclusive education, and the allocation of sufficient resources to support teaching and learning. Furthermore, it urges the Ministry of Education and Training to adopt a holistic approach to strengthening inclusive education across both urban and rural schools, thereby promoting equitable access to meaningful learning experiences for all learners.

Keywords: *inclusive education, learning disabilities, mainstream classrooms, teachers, experiences*

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Person with Disabilities
EST	Ecological System Theory
LD	Learners with Learning Disabilities
LIEP	Lesotho Inclusive Education Policy
LNFOOD	Lesotho National Federation of Disability
MOET	Ministry of Education and Training
SMT	School Management Team
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization

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CHAPTER ONE

1.1 Introduction

Inclusive education has become a foundational element within global educational discourse and policy, prioritizing the integration of learners with varied educational needs into mainstream schooling environments (Jardinez & Natividad, 2024). Within this diverse cohort are learners identified with learning disabilities. “They are learners who despite demonstrating average or above-average intellectual capacity, face consistent challenges in core academic areas, including literacy, numeracy, attention, and cognitive processing” (Learning Disabilities Research & Practice, 2025, p.18). Their inclusion in regular classroom settings offers both considerable pedagogical opportunities and significant instructional complexities. Teachers, in particular, are tasked with ensuring equitable access to learning through differentiated teaching practices, all while addressing a broad spectrum of learner profiles.

The effectiveness of inclusive practices is closely linked to the engagement, skillset, and flexibility of classroom practitioners. Teachers' ability to support learners with learning disabilities is influenced by multiple intersecting factors, including their initial and ongoing professional development, perceptions of inclusive education, prior teaching experiences, and the extent of institutional and systemic support structures available to them. Notwithstanding the progressive ethos underpinning inclusion, many teachers express feelings of under preparedness and stress, often citing limited specialized training, inadequate teaching materials, and the difficulty of balancing personalized support with the demands of whole-class instruction (Adams, 2024).

In light of these challenges, the current study investigates the lived experiences of secondary school teachers in Qacha’s Nek as they work with learners with learning disabilities in inclusive settings. It seeks to examine their perspectives, the pedagogical strategies they employ,

and the barriers they encounter in delivering inclusive education. By doing so, the research aims to contribute substantive understanding to the practical realities of inclusive teaching and to inform policy, teacher preparation programmes, and classroom practice.

This chapter sets the stage for the investigation by first presenting the study's contextual background and delineating the research problem, thereby establishing the rationale for the inquiry. It proceeds to articulate the research objectives and questions that guide the exploration. Furthermore, the chapter outlines the significance of the study, introduces Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory as the theoretical framework underpinning the research, and details the chosen methodological approach along with other pertinent considerations shaping the study.

1.2 Background of the Study

The overarching global commitment within contemporary education is to ensure that all individuals, irrespective of their cognitive or physical challenges, have equitable access to quality learning. Although it is widely acknowledged that accommodating learners with cognitive and developmental differences in mainstream classrooms may present pedagogical complexities, the trend of integrating such learners into regular educational settings has become increasingly prominent (Ralejoe, 2016). This practice, commonly referred to as *inclusive education*, entails the participation of learners with diverse abilities in the same learning environment as their peers (Ralejoe, 2016).

The philosophical underpinning of inclusive education rests on the belief that every learner regardless of ability possesses the inherent right to be educated alongside others in their local schools (UNESCO Salamanca Statement, 1994). This educational approach represents a dynamic process that seeks to respond to the varied needs of all learners by reducing marginalization and fostering equitable participation in educational systems (Ministry of Education and Training

[MOET], 2019). It advocates for the universal right to inclusive and high-quality learning opportunities within mainstream classrooms.

Masuruse et al. (2021) observe that a multitude of strategies, frameworks, and global initiatives have been introduced to reform general education systems. One significant milestone was the 1994 World Conference on Special Needs Education in Salamanca, Spain, where governments were urged to adopt inclusive policies and allocate sufficient resources to ensure access to education for all learners, irrespective of disability or difference (UNESCO Salamanca Statement, 1994). According to Dela Fuente (2021), this initiative aimed to reinforce the global Education for All (EFA) movement by encouraging structural and policy reforms to support inclusion.

In alignment with international frameworks, Lesotho ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in 2008. The CRPD, as outlined by the United Nations (2022), seeks to uphold and promote the full realization of the rights and freedoms of individuals with disabilities. As part of its commitment to educational access, Lesotho implemented free and compulsory primary education in 2010 (MOET, 2010). The Education Act of 2010 mandates the development of policies aimed at enhancing the presence and participation of marginalized learners throughout the education system. Moreover, the Children's Protection and Welfare Act No. 7 of 2011 enshrines every child's right to education and healthcare, advocating for a school environment free from discrimination, prejudice, and stigma.

In further efforts to enhance inclusivity, several international conferences have been convened. For instance, the UNESCO International Bureau of Education (IBE) hosted a global meeting in Geneva in 2018, which focused on advancing non-discriminatory access to education worldwide (Ydo, 2020). Complementing this, the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable

Development reiterates the principle of inclusion as a central global objective, calling for educational systems that respect and uphold the dignity of all individuals (United Nations, 2019).

Reflecting this global direction, Lesotho has demonstrated its commitment to inclusive education through the formulation and adoption of the Lesotho Inclusive Education Policy (LIEP) in 2018. This policy mandates the integration of learners with disabilities into mainstream schools and classrooms, thereby promoting shared learning experiences among all students (UN Lesotho, 2022). As articulated by MOET (2019), the policy encourages an education system that accommodates the needs of every learner, while actively identifying and eliminating barriers that hinder full participation in education.

Inclusive education serves a critical function in enabling every child to realize their potential (Nishan, 2018). Hlatywayo and Mapolisa (2022) argue that inclusive practices are anchored in the belief that education should be accessible to all, regardless of learners' individual characteristics or support needs.

1.2.1 Learning Disabilities

As outlined by Dominguez and Carugno (2023), learning disabilities refer to a spectrum of neurodevelopmental conditions that disrupt a learner's ability to acquire, process, store, and communicate information effectively. These difficulties may manifest through challenges in both verbal and non-verbal communication, impeding the interpretation and understanding of spoken language and other forms of expression (Chieffo et al., 2023). In educational contexts, such conditions are frequently identified when learners exhibit persistent struggles with specific academic skills despite receiving standard instruction.

Recent research by Durham University has drawn attention to a marked decline in the performance of pupils with special educational needs in England, particularly in fundamental areas such as literacy and numeracy (Adams, 2024). This downward trend has intensified concerns regarding the persistent educational inequalities encountered by this group of learners and signals an urgent need for strategic, individualized support. Although learners with such difficulties often demonstrate typical or above-average intellectual capabilities, they may nonetheless experience significant obstacles in mastering key competencies including reading, writing, spelling, and mathematics.

Despite the enduring nature of most learning disabilities, early detection coupled with tailored instructional approaches can significantly enhance learners' academic outcomes and overall life chances. Current literature, including work published in Behavioural Sciences (2023), has increasingly focused on “the predictive value of early literacy, numeracy, and cognitive skill development in identifying potential learning difficulties” (p.1). These findings support the position that preventative, early-stage interventions are more beneficial than attempting to address difficulties at a later stage.

1.2.2 Inclusion of Learners with Learning Disabilities in Mainstream Classroom

Ainscow and Miles (2009) describe inclusive education as the integration of learners with disabilities into mainstream classrooms, ensuring they receive equitable opportunities within general education settings. Tyagi (2016) extends this definition by emphasizing that inclusion is not limited to addressing physical and cognitive impairments but encompasses the full acceptance of learners regardless of ability, culture, gender, or social background. Aas (2022) argues that regular schools bear the responsibility of adapting their practices to meet the educational needs of

all learners. Similarly, Khoaeane (2012) contends that inclusion should be seen as a comprehensive reform of the educational system to build a more equitable society.

To realize the goals of inclusive education, it is essential to establish classroom environments that support the academic success of all learners. As noted by Adebayo and Ngwenya (2015), inclusion allows learners with particular educational needs to remain in general classrooms, taught by mainstream teachers. This approach acknowledges the rights of these learners to access quality education alongside their peers and calls for teaching that is responsive to their individual needs.

Dube (2018) argues that learners facing marginalization and stigma, especially those with disabilities or social disadvantages, are among the most excluded from education globally. Inclusive education thus becomes vital in creating a bias-free space for learning (Paul et al., 2022). The pedagogical methods employed in inclusive settings are intentionally designed to cater to those who may otherwise be excluded (Adebayo & Ngwenya, 2015). Carrington et al. (2019) highlight that inclusion is an evolving process aimed at continually addressing diverse learner needs. Its successful implementation demands a collective effort from all stakeholders—educators, school leadership, policymakers, parents, and students—towards inclusive policy and practice (Tyagi, 2016).

According to Paul et al. (2022), inclusive education contributes to building cohesive communities by promoting values of fairness and accommodation. Equity-oriented teaching integrates learners with cognitive challenges into shared classroom spaces, offering them equal opportunities to participate in academic and social experiences (Ofori, 2018). Such practices not only benefit learners with disabilities but also enhance the social awareness of their peers without disabilities, as they engage with diverse perspectives and needs.

Inclusive classrooms foster mutual understanding, respect, and cooperation among learners. Ofori (2018) observes that inclusive environments help typical learners feel valued and encourage their involvement in both school and society. Beyond academic outcomes, inclusive education aims to build a shared sense of belonging and collective identity, regardless of ability. This shared identity cultivates motivation, resilience, and a deeper social connection among learners.

Hasanoglu and Girmem (2014) maintain that learner-centred pedagogies are grounded in the principle that learners with learning disabilities thrive when learning alongside their peers. Ofori (2018) affirms that such inclusion enhances curriculum accessibility, promotes academic and language development, encourages communication, and fosters meaningful peer relationships.

Carrington et al. (2019) further suggest that inclusive practices cultivate a broader human understanding and acceptance of diversity. Learners without disabilities develop empathy and awareness when learning in diverse classrooms. Gagare (2018) supports this view, noting that learners with disabilities gain not only academic skills but also a deeper understanding of themselves and their peers. The shared environment encourages the development of social competence, cooperation, and lasting friendships. As learners identify commonalities and acknowledge differences, they also gain insight into the complexities of the wider world.

Inclusive education also nurtures a strong sense of dignity and autonomy in learners with disabilities, reinforcing their self-worth and societal participation (Carrington et al., 2019). The Open Society Foundations (2019) assert that respectful and empathetic interactions are more likely when children of varying abilities learn, play, and grow together. This inclusive culture fosters belonging and promotes comprehensive development across cognitive, emotional, and social domains (Paul et al., 2022).

Furthermore, inclusive education upholds the participation of every learner in the mainstream classroom experience. When managed effectively, it empowers all learners to feel valued and involved. The Open Society Foundations (2019) also stress the importance of including parents and learners in educational planning and decision-making to ensure that their perspectives are reflected in policy and practice.

Tyagi (2016) argues that teachers must assume a proactive role in creating inclusive classrooms where every learner feels accepted and supported. In line with the United Nations' Leave No One Behind initiative (ATD Ireland, 2021), inclusive education strives to eliminate barriers and promote equitable opportunities for all learners (Zakiah et al., 2021). It ensures that learners requiring additional educational support are not excluded from mainstream learning but rather given access to tailored resources that enable their success.

Educators play a critical role in sustaining learner engagement by fostering dynamic and inclusive learning environments. As Mupa and Chinooneka (2015) emphasize, skilled teachers design instruction that supports independent learning while enabling learners to relate content to real-life contexts. Such pedagogical strategies encourage active participation, self-awareness, and lifelong learning habits.

Gagare (2018) observes that inclusive teaching practices promote learner autonomy, while Tyagi (2016) highlights the importance of educators embracing learners' diverse backgrounds and needs without preconceived notions. Teachers who approach their work with empathy and respect foster positive relationships between all learners and contribute meaningfully to inclusive school culture.

1.2.3 Challenges Facing the Implementation of Inclusive Education

Remote and rural regions frequently encounter numerous educational challenges, among which unfavourable learning conditions remain particularly prominent. Khoaeane (2012) acknowledges that Lesotho continues to experience significant difficulties in implementing fully inclusive, barrier-free education in its schools. Qacha's Nek, located in the southernmost and mountainous part of Lesotho, is particularly affected by these issues, especially in relation to the inclusion of learners with diverse educational needs in secondary school settings.

Thwala (2015) highlights that a range of systemic and institutional obstacles hinder the effective implementation of inclusive practices in such contexts. These include negative teacher perceptions of learners requiring specialized educational support, limited pedagogical methods, a lack of adequate teaching materials, weak institutional support structures, and unclear policy directives (Hlatywayo & Mapolisa, 2022; Ralejoe, 2016; Zagona et al., 2017). These barriers are often compounded by insufficient teacher training, leading to resistance or low motivation to embrace inclusive methods (Dladla, 2021). Consequently, many teachers in general education settings report struggling with negative attitudes, inadequate resources, and limited competence in applying inclusive strategies effectively.

A study by Offer (2017) found that negative sentiments towards inclusion persist among secondary school educators, with some expressing reluctance to accommodate disadvantaged learners within regular classrooms. Charley (2018) supports this view, reporting that many educators feel underprepared to teach marginalized learners and lack willingness to adapt their instructional methods even when students clearly struggle to understand. Mupa and Chinooneka (2015) similarly observe that some teachers neglect to modify their teaching in response to

learners' varying levels of comprehension, exacerbating the educational exclusion of those needing additional support.

The absence of specialized knowledge among teachers affects their ability to meet the academic needs of learners with disabilities and, over time, erodes their confidence and instructional capacity (Bailey et al., 2014; Mosia, 2014; Charley, 2015). Okongo et al. (2015) identify untrained or undertrained teachers as a key impediment to the realization of inclusive education. Jia and Santi (2020) further argue that the lack of cohesive pedagogical frameworks and professional development contributes significantly to the limited success of inclusive practices in mainstream schools.

The failure to equip teachers with suitable teaching materials also signals systemic neglect. Okongo et al. (2015) assert that without appropriate resources, general education settings often fail to serve the needs of disadvantaged learners. This exclusion not only deprives such learners of quality education but also hinders their participation in broader social contexts. Similarly, Rajovic and Jovanovic (2015) found that teachers frequently struggle to address the needs of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) due to material and infrastructural shortages.

The stress placed on teachers who lack the resources and support required to meet diverse learner needs can be considerable (Sibley et al., 2017). Inadequate access to teaching materials diminishes the quality of instruction and limits learners' performance, especially among those with learning difficulties. Maffea (2020) emphasizes that educators are often placed in classrooms with diverse student populations but are ill-equipped to provide differentiated instruction. As a result, many learners with disabilities are left behind academically.

Nonetheless, the literature consistently indicates that teachers are central to the effective implementation of inclusive education (Shevchenko et al., 2020). Prior research affirms that

educators can play a transformative role in creating equitable learning environments when equipped with the requisite skills and inclusive pedagogical values (Pit-ten Cate et al., 2018). By developing adaptive teaching strategies, teachers can cater to a wide spectrum of learning profiles and ensure that all students receive meaningful educational experiences.

Mazuruse et al. (2021) call upon school leaders and policymakers to reinforce inclusive pedagogies across all institutions. This aligns with the Ministry of Education and Training's (MOET, 2018) assertion that learners with disabilities have historically been sidelined in the education system. Shevchenko et al. (2020) stress that teacher education institutions must continuously revise their programmes to align with the principles of inclusive education policy. As noted in MOET (2019), numerous strategies and initiatives have been introduced to promote inclusive education, including in-service training programmes aimed at strengthening teacher preparedness. The national vision for education outlined in the Education Sector Plan (2005) aspires to develop a knowledgeable, ethical, and skilled Basotho society by 2020, and inclusive education forms a key part of that vision.

Keuning-LaFrence (2016) identifies collaboration among educators as a crucial component of successful inclusion. Through professional teamwork, teachers can exchange inclusive teaching practices and share experiences of supporting learners with special needs. Sibley et al. (2017) further argue that school-based support structures significantly alleviate teacher stress by facilitating inclusive practices. Such environments not only empower educators but also foster a positive attitude towards diversity and support systems within schools.

By strengthening their pedagogical skills, educators become more confident in their ability to teach learners with diverse needs in inclusive settings. Teacher confidence, alongside

institutional and systemic support, is essential to ensuring that no learner is left behind in the pursuit of quality education for all.

1.2.4 Strategies for Implementing Inclusive Education

Fakudze (2012) contends that the identification of key components supporting inclusive practices should form part of the broader analysis of school climate and institutional culture. For inclusion to be effectively embedded within schools, there must be shared values and language, a cohesive and supportive school community, and leadership that demonstrates commitment through both attitudes and actions.

Teachers are widely regarded as the foundational agents in implementing inclusive education (Ngubane, 2018). Their role is central to the success of inclusive policies, as their levels of preparedness and engagement directly influence outcomes. Adequate training not only increases teachers' confidence but also strengthens their capacity to adopt inclusive strategies. However, sustainable inclusion requires a systemic approach. School leaders, educators, and other relevant stakeholders must work collaboratively to reform curricula and institutional structures to accommodate the needs of learners requiring additional support (Smith, 2010). Furthermore, educators are urged to eliminate stereotyping, as such biases hinder the realization of equitable educational opportunities. Even where teachers endeavour to implement inclusive techniques, their efforts are likely to remain limited if not reinforced by the broader school leadership and community.

Engelbrecht et al. (2003) highlight the persistent absence of effective support services for teachers, noting the importance of sustained assistance in inclusive educational contexts. In this regard, Cameron (2004) recommends that teacher education programmes at universities ensure graduates achieve a foundational level of competence in inclusive methodologies. This would

better equip them for practice in diverse classroom settings. Chen et al. (2022) further emphasize that a genuinely inclusive learning environment requires not only suitably trained teachers but also additional support personnel to meet diverse learner needs.

The quality and clarity of service provision in teacher training are thus vital for equipping educators with the competencies required for inclusive instruction. As Ngubane (2018) asserts, a long-term investment in teacher development is essential to enable successful implementation of inclusive education. This entails not only initial training but also continued professional learning through induction, in-service workshops, and post-service training (Mokhampanyane, 2024). Nonetheless, Emily (2019) and Ngubane (2018) both report that many educators, despite possessing formal qualifications, often lack a fundamental understanding of inclusive education and how to apply it in practice. Without the necessary knowledge and practical strategies, effective implementation remains unattainable.

It is also noted that for many teachers, existing training content is often perceived as abstract and insufficiently aligned with the realities of their professional environments. Effective initial teacher education should therefore be designed around inclusive pedagogies and reflect the contexts in which educators are expected to operate. Nel (2007) argues that the evolving demands placed on educators necessitate greater professional responsibility, including ongoing reflection on personal learning needs relevant to their specific educational settings. Supporting this view, Avramidis (2010) stresses that incorporating learners with Special Educational Needs (SEN) into mainstream classrooms presents notable challenges, particularly in the absence of a clearly articulated framework for teacher training that directly addresses these learners' educational requirements.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

For several decades, there has been a sustained global commitment to advancing quality and inclusive education. Central to this agenda is the expectation that mainstream classrooms accommodate learners with diverse educational needs, particularly those with learning difficulties, through the implementation of appropriate support strategies. Recognizing the vital role education plays in shaping human development, the Government of Lesotho adopted the Lesotho Inclusive Education Policy (LIEP) as a framework for promoting inclusive practices within its school system (MOET, 2018). In alignment with this policy, the Lesotho National Federation of the Disabled (LNFOD) facilitated training for 73 teachers across both primary and secondary levels to equip them with the skills necessary to address the challenges encountered when teaching learners with disabilities (Inclusive Education Report, 2021).

Despite national and international commitments to inclusive education, the anticipated outcomes have yet to be fully realized. Teachers in general education settings continue to encounter substantial difficulties in meeting the needs of learners with disabilities. Recent evidence points to persistent challenges such as insufficient professional knowledge, inadequate classroom resources, limited institutional support, and a lack of cohesive policy integration within teacher education programmes (Hlatywayo & Mapolisa, 2022; Maine, 2022).

Mosia and Kotelo (2024) report that many educators feel their initial training did not adequately prepare them to respond to the realities of diverse classroom contexts. Similarly, Charley (2018) notes that teachers often express reluctance or lack of readiness to teach learners with special educational needs in inclusive settings. These deficits negatively affect not only the quality of education received by learners with learning difficulties but also the broader dynamics of teaching and learning within the classroom environment.

Moreover, little attention has been paid to the voices and lived experiences of teachers operating in inclusive classrooms, particularly in remote districts such as Qacha's Nek. This oversight represents a significant gap in the research literature, given the importance of teacher perspectives in shaping effective inclusion policies and practices.

This study is therefore driven by the imperative to explore and document the lived experiences of teachers working with learners with learning disabilities in mainstream schools. A deeper understanding of these experiences is crucial for informing future policy directions, teacher education initiatives, and classroom interventions aimed at fostering genuine inclusivity. Without such empirical insight, the objectives set forth by both international frameworks and national policies concerning equitable and high-quality education for all may remain largely unfulfilled. The lack of robust research into teachers' perspectives in this context has thus prompted the present investigation, which seeks to identify key obstacles and critically reflect on possible shortcomings within Lesotho's education system.

1.4 Aim of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the experiences of secondary school teachers in Qacha's Nek in relation to educating learners with learning disabilities within mainstream classroom settings.

1.5 Research Objectives

To accomplish the above aim, the research formulated the following objectives;

1. To understand secondary school teachers' experiences of teaching learners with learning disabilities in the mainstream classroom?

2. To explore challenges of teaching learners with learning disabilities in the mainstream classroom.
3. To explore ways in which teachers could be helped to obtain professional skills in supporting learners with learning disabilities.
4. To examine mitigation strategies used in mainstream classrooms to overcome the challenges teachers encounter.

1.5.1 Research Questions

This study addressed the following research questions as part of its effort to investigate the experiences of secondary school teachers in Qacha's Nek regarding the instruction of learners with learning disabilities within mainstream classroom environments.

Main question

What are secondary school teachers' experiences of teaching learners with learning disabilities in mainstream classroom?

In order to address the main question this study was guided by the following sub-questions:

1. What are teachers' experiences of teaching learners with learning disabilities in the mainstream classroom?
2. What specific challenges do teachers face when teaching learners with learning disabilities in mainstream classrooms?
3. How can teachers be helped to acquire professional skills in supporting learners with learning disabilities?
4. Which mitigation strategies can be used in mainstream classrooms to overcome the challenges teachers encounter?

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study is anticipated to hold meaningful significance across several dimensions. Primarily, it seeks to fill a critical gap in the understanding of the lived experiences, challenges, and coping mechanisms of secondary school teachers educating learners with learning disabilities within mainstream classroom particularly within the under-researched rural context of Qacha's Nek. By centering teachers' voices, the research offers valuable insight into existing support structures, professional development needs, and resource constraints encountered in such educational settings.

The findings of this inquiry may serve to inform policymakers, educational authorities, and teacher education institutions about the practical realities on the ground. In doing so, it has the potential to guide the formulation of contextually responsive interventions, professional development initiatives, and inclusive education policies that are both sustainable and aligned with the specific needs of rural schools.

Moreover, through an exploration of both the successes and challenges encountered by teachers, the study contributes to the broader discourse on inclusive education in Lesotho and comparable contexts. It supports efforts to promote equitable access to quality education for all learners, irrespective of their individual learning needs. By addressing barriers highlighted through the perspectives of educators, the research may indirectly support improvements in the academic performance and social inclusion of learners who experience learning difficulties.

1.7 Definition of Terms

1.6.1 Inclusive education

According to the Lesotho National Federation of the Disabled [LNFOD] (2023), inclusive education is a model that integrates all learners with special educational needs into a common learning setting, ensuring that each student's unique requirements are met fairly and without separation. This approach involves educating students of varying abilities together within the same classroom. The primary objective of inclusive education is to support learners with diverse needs within mainstream classrooms, where educators actively collaborate and employ a range of assessment techniques and instructional strategies (Zakiah et al., 2021).

1.6.2 Learning disabilities

Muktamath et al. (2021) describe a learning disability as a neurodevelopmental condition rooted in biological factors that disrupts the brain's capacity to effectively process both verbal and non-verbal information. These disabilities frequently remain concealed because many learners affected do not show obvious physical signs; instead, their difficulties become apparent primarily through their experiences within teaching and learning contexts.

1.6.3 Mainstream classrooms

Mainstream classrooms refer to educational environments where learners with learning disabilities are taught alongside their peers within a common instructional setting. This approach involves integrating learners with diverse needs into broad educational contexts (IIEP-UNESCO, 2019) to foster a sense of respect and community. Such inclusive settings enable learners of varying abilities to develop the skills necessary to engage effectively both within the school environment and in wider society. Engaging in shared classroom activities encourages mutual understanding and empathy, as fellow students become more aware of the specific support requirements of those with learning disabilities.

1.6.4 Teachers

Lal (2016) defines a teacher as an individual responsible for delivering educational content, assessing learner involvement, and offering sustained leadership in instructional settings. Through targeted support, teachers play a vital role in cultivating learners' foundational skills, personal accountability, logical reasoning, and confidence in their abilities. Teachers equip learners with the essential skills and knowledge to thrive beyond the classroom and succeed in life. Teaching is about building confidence in learners to support them with ambition to be successful.

1.6.5 Experiences

According to Hohr (2012), experience emerges from the dynamic interplay between an organism and its environment, and is understood as a foundational component of interaction, shaped by communicative, historical, and cultural contexts, rather than being solely an individual or mental construct. Experience is the condition of being influenced by, or acquiring knowledge through, firsthand observation or active involvement (Merriam Webster, n.d.).

1.8 Theoretical Framework

This study is underpinned by Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1979). As described by Guy-Evans (2025), an individual's development is shaped by a complex interplay of environmental systems, ranging from immediate personal contexts to broader societal frameworks. The ecological model comprises five interrelated systems: the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem.

Within the context of this research, the theory offers a valuable lens through which to examine how multiple environmental layers impact both learners with learning disabilities and the secondary school teachers who support them in mainstream classrooms. Inclusive education, viewed through this framework, emphasizes the advantages of educating learners across diverse settings, thereby facilitating their acceptance as integral members of society (Jali, 2014). This

theoretical perspective is particularly pertinent as it enables an understanding of how teachers' experiences shape critical relationships with learners and foster effective communication within inclusive classrooms. Moreover, it guides the exploration of how secondary educators create conducive learning environments for learners with disabilities, assisting them in realizing their potential within society.

At the microsystem level, learners with learning disabilities are directly influenced by interactions within the classroom, including teacher attitudes and peer relationships, which can either support or impede their academic success (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). Correspondingly, secondary teachers encounter challenges within this system as they address diverse learner needs often without sufficient support.

The mesosystem highlights the significance of robust connections between home and school environments. Effective collaboration between teachers and parents has been shown to enhance educational outcomes for learners with disabilities while alleviating teacher stress (Okyere, Aldersey, & Lysaght, 2019). Within the exosystem, factors such as school policies, leadership decisions, and resource availability exert an indirect yet substantial influence on teaching and learning conditions. For example, limited access to specialized professional support or assistive technologies can constrain teachers' capacity to implement inclusive practices effectively (Smit, Preston, & Hay, 2020).

The macrosystem encompasses overarching societal values and national educational policies, which shape cultural perceptions of disability and inclusion. These broader influences can either empower teachers or present barriers to their inclusive efforts (Panopoulos & Drossinou-Korea, 2020). As Guy-Evans (2020) notes, community and cultural contexts play a critical role in influencing learner development.

Finally, the chronosystem addresses how experiences and contexts change over time. Teachers often refine and expand their inclusive strategies as they gain experience, while learners benefit from early identification and interventions shaped by evolving policies (Bronfenbrenner, 2005).

Collectively, these interconnected systems demonstrate that inclusive education is influenced not only by classroom dynamics but also by wider social, institutional, and cultural environments surrounding both learners and educators. The reciprocal interactions between learners with learning disabilities and their teachers affect the development of both parties. Hlophe (2020) emphasizes that learner–teacher interactions are embedded within school and community contexts, themselves shaped by broader societal, cultural, and policy frameworks. Therefore, Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Systems Theory provides a comprehensive framework for investigating how school leadership and administration mobilize resources and strategies to enhance learner achievement and adapt teaching to meet diverse educational needs.

1.9 Research Methodology

This section presents the fundamental principles underpinning the research design and procedures. Methodology constitutes the essential framework that directs the overall approach to the investigation. Developing an appropriate methodology involves understanding the research paradigms and theoretical foundations relevant to the study, thereby enabling the selection of methods aligned with the research objectives. According to McCombens (2020), research methodology encompasses the paradigm, approach, design, participant selection, data collection and analysis techniques, ethical considerations, and measures to ensure the study’s trustworthiness. The primary aim of this research is to explore the experiences of secondary school teachers in

Qacha's Nek regarding the education of learners with learning disabilities within mainstream classrooms. A more detailed account is provided in Chapter Three.

1.10 Research Paradigm

A research paradigm refers to the set of underlying beliefs and agreements that guide researchers in how they understand and address research problems. These paradigms are typically distinguished by the ways in which researchers respond to three fundamental questions concerning ontology, epistemology, and methodology (Perera, 2018).

This study adopted an interpretivist paradigm. Interpretivism is an approach focused on gaining insight into individuals' beliefs, motivations, and reasoning within their social contexts (Nickerson, 2022). The interpretive paradigm was deemed suitable for this research as it facilitates the exploration and interpretation of meanings embedded in participants' responses. Given its alignment with qualitative inquiry, an interpretive framework supports the use of unstructured interview techniques, allowing the researcher to appreciate the diverse perspectives and experiences of participants. This paradigm recognizes participants as complex beings who perceive and interpret actions and reasoning in unique ways, rendering purely scientific or positivist approaches inadequate for capturing such complexity (Thomson, 2015).

1.11 Research Approach

This study employed a qualitative research approach. As Mohajan (2018) explains, qualitative methods prioritize understanding how individuals interpret their experiences to make sense of their social realities. In this context, the research explored the experiences of secondary school teachers instructing learners with learning disabilities in mainstream classrooms, aiming to comprehend these experiences in their authentic form. This approach is particularly suitable for

addressing non-numerical questions and gaining insight into participants' lived realities (Mohajan, 2018).

The qualitative method is instrumental in providing rich, detailed information that helps explain the processes underlying observed phenomena, as well as capturing changes in individuals' perceptions of their well-being (Kabir, 2016). It emphasizes understanding human behaviour from the perspective of those experiencing it, thereby acknowledging multiple realities. This approach facilitated the identification of teachers' experiences within inclusive education settings through direct, face-to-face interviews conducted by the researcher. Data were gathered from a relatively small sample, using interviews and observations, and subsequently analyzed thematically, preserving the participants' own descriptions and perspectives in the reporting process (McLeod, 2019).

1.12 Research Design

This approach facilitates the exploration of teachers' experiences in educating learners with disabilities within inclusive settings, primarily through direct, face-to-face interviews conducted between the researcher and participants. The principal aim of employing a qualitative design is to develop a comprehensive understanding of the meanings derived from teachers' lived experiences. A critical aspect of the research design process involves the researcher's decisions regarding the procedures used to collect relevant and meaningful data (Sileyew, 2019).

Accordingly, this study adopted a case study methodology to obtain detailed and authentic insights. As Devi (2020) explains, a case study entails an in-depth examination of a specific subject or phenomenon. The research concentrated on a single case comprising teachers from two selected schools in Qacha's Nek, thereby enabling a nuanced and contextualized understanding of their experiences in teaching learners with disabilities in mainstream classrooms.

1.13 Population and Selection of Participants

The target population refers to a defined group of individuals who exhibit the specific characteristics relevant to the focus of a given study and who meet the requirements necessary to address the research questions (Asiamah et al., 2017). For this investigation, the target population comprised secondary school teachers actively engaged in mainstream classrooms, each with direct experience in teaching learners identified as having learning disabilities.

This qualitative study employed purposive sampling to intentionally select participants with specialized knowledge and relevant experience aligned with the research aims. According to Elmusharaf (2018), this approach involves the deliberate selection of individuals based on the researcher's informed judgement of their ability to provide rich and meaningful data. As a non-probability sampling technique, purposive sampling was particularly appropriate, as it allowed for the inclusion of participants who were well-positioned to offer insights into the educational experiences and challenges related to inclusive teaching practices (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Accordingly, a sample of eight experienced secondary school teachers from two selected schools in Qacha's Nek district was recruited. The selection was informed by a desire to understand the experiences of those working within both urban and rural settings, ensuring a diverse and comprehensive representation of perspectives on inclusive education. These participants were chosen based on their direct involvement in educating learners with learning disabilities in mainstream classrooms. A more detailed account of the sampling procedures and rationale is presented in Chapter Three.

1.14 Methods of Data Generation and Instruments

Data collection refers to the systematic process by which a researcher gathers information relevant to the research objectives, employing instruments or strategies that enable participants to respond meaningfully to pre-determined prompts or questions (Kabir, 2016). In this study, semi-structured interviews served as the principal method of data collection, offering a flexible yet focused means of obtaining detailed responses from participants. This approach facilitated the evaluation of emerging themes based on the information provided.

The decision to conduct interviews with teachers was critical to the study, as it allowed participants to articulate their views beyond the constraints of fixed questions, thereby capturing perspectives that may not have been initially anticipated by the researcher. The interviews were conducted in Qacha's Nek district across two purposively selected secondary schools. Each interview was audio-recorded with consent and subsequently transcribed for analysis.

Semi-structured interviews, as described by Dejonckheere and Vaughn (2019), involve a conversational exchange between interviewer and interviewee, guided by a flexible set of core questions. This format enables the interviewer to follow up on participants' responses with prompts for clarification, elaboration, or further reflection. According to Tegan (2022), such interaction helps generate a rich base of qualitative data that can support future research endeavours.

This open-ended structure allowed participating teachers to express their experiences and insights freely, creating space for unexpected yet relevant themes to emerge. These spontaneous contributions enriched the findings, offering nuanced perspectives that aligned closely with the central aims of the study.

1.15 Data Analysis

Data analysis involves a systematic and logical process used to interpret and examine information by applying structured reasoning to understand each component of the collected data (Perez, 2019). It entails synthesizing and summarizing the responses in a coherent manner that reflects the underlying patterns and meanings.

In this study, thematic analysis was employed to interpret the data. According to Kiger and Varpio (2020), thematic analysis is a flexible qualitative analytic method used to identify, analyze, and report patterns (themes) within a dataset. This technique was well-suited to the research, as it enabled an in-depth exploration of how secondary school teachers understand and make sense of their experiences when teaching learners with learning disabilities in inclusive classrooms.

The interview data were transcribed verbatim and subsequently coded to uncover recurring themes and categories related to participants' knowledge, perceptions, attitudes, and instructional experiences. Thematic analysis is particularly effective when applied to qualitative data such as interview transcripts, as it helps uncover both explicit content and underlying meanings in participants' narratives. This method facilitated a structured yet nuanced interpretation of the data, allowing for the emergence of themes that directly addressed the research questions.

1.16 Ethical Consideration

The researcher took into account potential ethical considerations prior to undertaking the study. This included obtaining formal permission letters from the National University of Lesotho (NUL) and the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET). Approval was also requested from the relevant educational authorities, including school principals from the selected institutions where the research was conducted.

Participants namely, secondary school teachers were fully informed about the nature and purpose of the study. They were provided with a clear explanation of the research objectives, the types of questions to be asked during interviews, and how the collected data would be used. Participation was entirely voluntary, and individuals were assured that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any point without facing any form of coercion or negative consequence.

To ensure ethical integrity, the anonymity and confidentiality of participants were strictly maintained. Personal identifiers were excluded from all transcripts and research documents. Data gathered during interviews and fieldwork were securely stored and made accessible only with the participants' explicit consent. Furthermore, the researcher committed to maintaining honesty and accuracy throughout the study, avoiding exaggeration or misrepresentation of findings.

1.17 Organization of the Study

This analytical investigation into the experiences of secondary school teachers educating learners with learning disabilities in mainstream classrooms within Qacha's Nek is organized into five chapters. A summary of the content covered in each chapter is provided below.

Chapter One

This introductory chapter presents a general overview of the research topic. It outlines the background to the study, the problem under investigation, and the rationale behind undertaking the research. The chapter introduces the key research questions and defines essential terminology. It also summarizes the relevant literature, presents the theoretical underpinnings of the study, and describes the research methodology, including approaches to data collection, analysis, and measures to ensure trustworthiness. Ethical considerations are also addressed. The chapter concludes by outlining the structure of the entire dissertation.

Chapter Two

This chapter engages with Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, which forms the conceptual foundation of the study. It discusses the suitability of this framework for interpreting the research findings and supporting the core arguments. The chapter further offers a detailed review of existing literature on the experiences of secondary teachers working with learners who have learning disabilities in mainstream settings. It also examines strategies aimed at enhancing teachers' professional competence in inclusive education.

Chapter Three

Here, the research design and methodological approach are detailed. The chapter explains the philosophical stance underpinning the research, along with the qualitative approach and case study design employed. It describes the purposive sampling strategy, participant recruitment, and data generation techniques. Additionally, it addresses issues related to trustworthiness and outlines the ethical procedures adhered to in order to protect and respect participants' rights.

Chapter Four

This chapter presents the findings derived from the semi-structured interviews conducted with participating teachers. The data is systematically organized, and emergent themes are identified and analyzed. Interpretations are drawn with reference to the study's theoretical framework and the literature reviewed in earlier chapters.

Chapter Five

The final chapter offers a synthesis of the major findings, drawing conclusions based on the data analysis. It reflects on the limitations of the study and provides recommendations for practice, policy development, and future research in the area of inclusive education.

1.18 Summary

This chapter offers a general introduction to the study, beginning with the contextual background and proceeding to outline critical components such as the research problem, justification for the study, objectives, and guiding questions. It further highlights the significance of the investigation and clarifies key terminology used throughout the research. To provide a foundational context, the chapter includes a concise review of pertinent literature alongside a discussion of the theoretical lens informing the study. It also summarizes the methodological approach undertaken and presents a structural overview of the dissertation.

The overarching purpose of this research is to examine the lived experiences of secondary school teachers in delivering instruction to learners with learning disabilities within mainstream educational settings. Chapter Two extends this discussion by evaluating the suitability of the selected theoretical framework and offering an in-depth analysis of existing scholarship relating to teacher experiences and the development of professional competencies necessary for inclusive education.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter laid a comprehensive foundation for this inquiry by outlining the study's context, research problem, aims, and objectives. This investigation is primarily concerned with understanding the experiences of secondary school educators in teaching learners with learning disabilities within inclusive classroom settings.

In contrast, the current chapter provides a detailed examination of existing scholarly work relevant to the research focus. It closely aligns with the stated research objectives and draws upon academic literature to contextualize and frame the study. According to McCombes (2025), a literature review entails a critical appraisal of scholarly sources in order to synthesize prevailing

knowledge, identify key theoretical and methodological approaches, and pinpoint areas where further exploration is needed.

This chapter begins by discussing the theoretical framework underpinning the research, followed by an evaluation of empirical studies that address educators' experiences in mainstream schools. In doing so, it seeks to consolidate established findings and identify gaps within the existing body of knowledge, thereby positioning the current study within broader academic discourse.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

A theoretical framework, as explained by Adom et al. (2018), provides the structural basis upon which a research study is organized. It serves as a conceptual foundation informed by existing theory, reflecting the underlying assumptions guiding the investigation. The current study seeks to extend understanding of secondary school teachers' experiences in educating learners with learning disabilities within mainstream educational settings. It explores the complex challenges teachers face, the professional competencies required to support these learners effectively, and the strategies adopted to overcome barriers to inclusive learning. By grounding the research within a theoretical context, the study highlights the critical role that theory plays in enhancing teaching practice and improving learning outcomes for all pupils.

2.2.1 Ecological Systems Theory

This study is underpinned by Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1979), a multidimensional model that emphasizes the reciprocal interactions between individuals and the

nested systems in which they operate. The theory is especially pertinent to this research as it acknowledges that human behaviour and development are not shaped in isolation but are instead influenced by the broader socio-environmental context (Hausiku, 2017; Maine, 2022). In educational settings, particularly where teachers engage with learners requiring additional support, it becomes essential to recognize how students' experiences are shaped by the multiple systems surrounding them.

The Ecological Systems Theory (EST) offers a valuable lens through which to examine secondary school teachers' experiences of educating learners with learning disabilities in inclusive classrooms. It draws attention to the ways in which personal, institutional, and societal factors intersect to influence both teaching practices and learner outcomes. As noted by Tudge et al. (2017), the theory encourages educators to reflect on the proximal processes they engage in with their learners and to acknowledge the broader systems that impact their pupils' learning behaviours and needs.

Learners' development is deeply influenced by a range of environmental contexts, including their families, schools, communities, and societal structures. These systems shape learners' cognitive, emotional, and behavioural outcomes, either enhancing or constraining their development (Hausiku, 2017). The theory affirms that learners absorb cultural norms, social expectations, and shared meanings through their interaction with these environments (Zumarova, 2014). In inclusive classrooms, this perspective is instrumental in highlighting the importance of social integration, as it supports the view that learners with disabilities should be embraced as valued members of society (Jali, 2014).

Drawing on their professional experiences, secondary school teachers are often well-positioned to construct supportive learning environments responsive to the varied needs of their

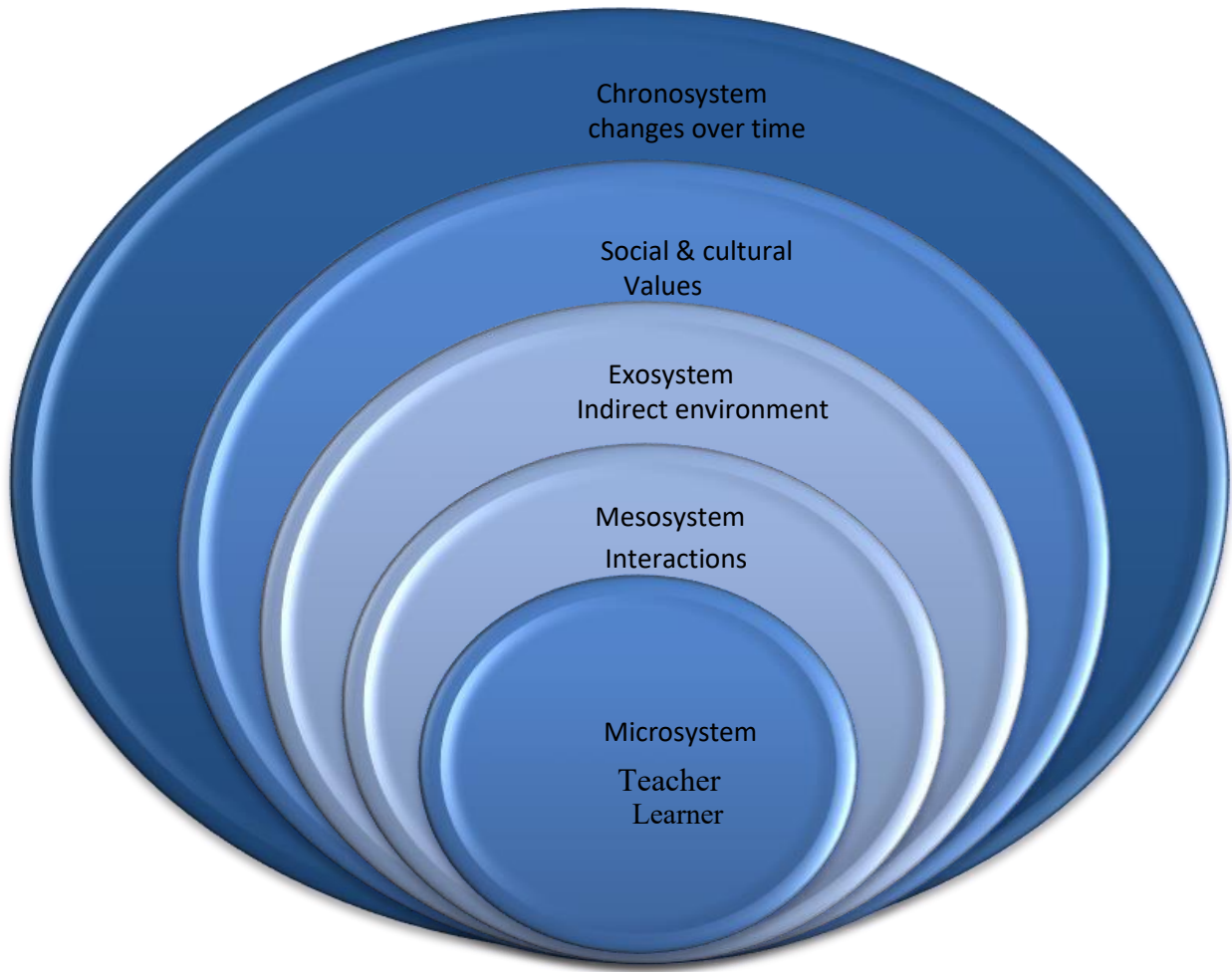
learners. The theory enables educators to identify learners' capabilities and difficulties, facilitating more tailored and inclusive instructional strategies. In this respect, EST supports teachers in fostering a classroom environment conducive to both academic achievement and social belonging.

Moreover, the theory illustrates how broader cultural and community contexts shape learners' developmental pathways (Guy-Evans, 2020). Influences such as educational policies, societal beliefs, and media discourse significantly impact how learners engage with education. As learners mature, their interactions with these systems grow more complex and impactful (Jali, 2014). Hlophe (2020) further observes that teacher–learner interactions are shaped by the school's wider context and are conditioned by socio-cultural and political forces.

According to Open Society Foundations (2019), inclusive education relies on committed, flexible, and well-prepared teachers who can respond to the needs of diverse learners. Such systems not only promote quality learning outcomes but also serve to challenge discriminatory practices and reshape societal attitudes. Within this context, the present study adopts EST to interpret how secondary school teachers navigate the realities of inclusive education in Qacha's Nek. The theory offers a coherent framework for examining how layered systems influence teachers' practices and learners' experiences.

Bronfenbrenner's model identifies five interconnected systems that shape human development: the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem (Maine, 2022). These systems are central to understanding how secondary teachers respond to the challenges faced by learners with disabilities and how their teaching experiences are mediated by broader institutional and societal forces.

Figure 2.1: Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; 1994)



2.2.1.1 Microsystem

According to Bronfenbrenner (1994), the microsystem refers to the immediate environment in which individuals interact through direct roles, relationships, and activities that significantly shape their development. Cherry (2023) further describes this system as comprising those closest to the individual such as parents, siblings, peers, and educators who exert a direct influence on the learner's growth. Within the context of this study, the microsystem pertains specifically to the dynamic interactions between teachers and learners in mainstream classrooms, with a focus on the support extended to learners with learning disabilities.

Learners with learning disabilities often encounter difficulties in mainstream classrooms, primarily due to deficits in the cognitive processes essential for academic learning. Ali and Rafi (2016) define learning disabilities as developmental impairments that interfere with fundamental mental processes required for understanding and using spoken or written language. These challenges may affect learners' capacity to listen, speak, read, write, spell, or engage in mathematical reasoning. Consequently, many affected students struggle academically and may lose motivation, undermining their sense of agency and academic self-efficacy.

The nature of the teacher–learner relationship plays a pivotal role in mitigating such barriers. Fitzmorris (2022) conceptualizes this relationship as an evolving, reciprocal connection founded on respect, trust, and cooperation, which shapes both the educational environment and learners' social and emotional outcomes. Through regular classroom interactions, teachers influence learners' behaviour, while the learners' responses, in turn, shape teachers' experiences and pedagogical approaches (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). Tahir (2019) stresses that learners' behavioral responses within the microsystem are often influenced by the quality of interactions with others, particularly those in positions of authority such as teachers.

In inclusive settings, it is essential that teachers recognize learners with learning difficulties and cultivate supportive, trusting relationships that promote a sense of safety and belonging. These relationships are foundational to inclusive pedagogy, enabling learners to participate meaningfully alongside their peers. Coristine et al. (2022) argue that nurturing constructive and compassionate connections with students enhances the overall learning environment and improves both academic and psychosocial outcomes.

Teachers' day-to-day experiences with learners who have learning disabilities exemplify the significance of microsystemic interactions. Positive, empathetic engagement fosters learners'

self-esteem, encourages participation, and supports emotional well-being. Geldenhuys and Wevers (2013) assert that when teachers display affirmative attitudes and provide consistent encouragement, learners are more likely to pursue personal development, cultivate a sense of self-worth, and contribute to their communities. Coristine et al. (2022) also affirm that student–teacher relationships rooted in mutual respect promote inclusivity and acceptance of individual differences.

Such relationships empower learners with learning disabilities to navigate their educational journeys with confidence and dignity. When learners feel understood and respected, they are more likely to engage actively in classroom life and utilize available support systems (Geldenhuys & Wevers, 2013). Teachers, through their interactions and observations, develop a deeper understanding of learners’ developmental trajectories. According to Tahir (2019), effective microsystems are characterized by supportive, inclusive environments that respond to diverse learning needs.

In summary, the quality of interactions within the microsystem—particularly between teachers and learners plays a vital role in fostering an inclusive and responsive learning environment. Strong interpersonal connections not only support academic development but also contribute to the emotional and social growth of learners with learning disabilities. As Coristine et al. (2022) observe, such connections encourage learners to make meaningful choices, develop resilience, and thrive within the inclusive classroom.

2.2.1.2 Mesosystem

Bronfenbrenner (1994) defines the mesosystem as the network of interrelations between two or more immediate environments, such as the home and school, which collectively influence an individual’s development. Essentially, the mesosystem is composed of interactions between

different microsystems. In the context of this study, the mesosystem reflects the dynamic interplay between teachers and parents of learners with learning disabilities in mainstream classrooms.

Teacher Parent Interactions

According to WiserRead (2024), teacher-parent interactions encompass ongoing communication, collaboration, and relationship-building efforts between educators and the families of their pupils. Such interactions are vital in establishing a supportive learning environment that ensures consistency in guidance both within school settings and at home. In the case of learners with learning disabilities who often face considerable social, emotional, behavioural, or academic difficulties, these relationships serve a critical developmental role (Pham et al., 2018).

Within the microsystem, teachers may observe that a learner with learning disabilities is struggling to adjust to the demands of mainstream education. Often, teachers find it challenging to fully accommodate the diverse needs of such learners within the classroom environment. Consequently, home visits and direct communication with parents become essential components of addressing these challenges, representing a key mesosystemic interaction linking school and home.

When learners encounter difficulties either at school or at home, strong, trusting relationships between teachers and parents facilitate constructive dialogue, fostering the learner's academic and social success during challenging times. Open communication allows both parties to work collaboratively; creating an environment that nurtures effective learning and support beyond the classroom. This collaboration affords teachers a more nuanced understanding of the learner's broader circumstances, enabling them to tailor appropriate interventions to assist the student's successful integration.

Teacher-parent relationships form the essential bridge connecting the home and school microsystems. This partnership promotes both immediate and long-term learner success by enabling a coordinated approach to support. Through cooperation, teachers and parents gain compassionate insight into the learner's individual strengths and challenges, which informs the development of targeted strategies to overcome barriers to learning (Pham et al., 2018). Together, they can identify obstacles to academic progress and establish a unified support system aimed at improving educational outcomes.

Furthermore, such collaboration heightens teachers' awareness of learners' specific needs, including special educational requirements and family contexts (Pham et al., 2018). This enhanced understanding allows for more personalized educational provision and mitigates potential negative biases held by educators towards learners and their families. When positive, trusting teacher parent relationships are in place, learners benefit significantly. Therefore, the importance of these enduring connections should not be underestimated, as they underpin effective communication, foster trust, and contribute to a positive and inclusive learning environment.

2.2.1.3 Exosystem

Bronfenbrenner (1994) characterizes the exosystem as comprising the interrelations and processes that occur between two or more contexts, at least one of which does not involve the developing individual directly. Despite this indirect involvement, events and activities within these external environments nonetheless affect the individual's experiences within their immediate surroundings. Examples of such settings include the education system, local community organizations, healthcare services, and a parent's workplace (Maine, 2022). Within the exosystem, formal and informal social structures operate without direct participation of the learner, yet their influence permeates the learner's microsystem.

In the present study, institutions such as the school board, School Management Teams (SMTs), and the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) represent exosystem factors that indirectly shape the experiences of learners. These bodies provide a spectrum of educational support services intended to foster academic success for all learners. Mosia (2011) describes educational support as the array of assistance provided by specialists to learners with additional educational needs within mainstream settings. Such support includes tailored teaching strategies, mentoring, and necessary accommodations for learners with learning disabilities, delivered either through the school or external agencies. The overarching aim of these interventions is to ensure equitable access to learning opportunities, enabling all learners to reach their full potential.

School Board

School boards hold responsibility for establishing policies and making decisions that impact the education of learners, including overseeing school operations and governance (Henrikson, 2023). Their duties encompass the appointment and evaluation of school leadership, setting district goals and priorities, and ensuring that schools are equipped with necessary resources such as special education teachers and modified learning plans. Collaboration between school boards and teachers is crucial to guarantee that educators receive appropriate training and resources to support learners with learning disabilities.

Pennepacker and Schlafer (2023) note that school boards engage with parents by communicating relevant policies and refining them collaboratively to meet individual learner needs. These boards advocate for the rights of learners with disabilities and strive to secure equal educational opportunities. For secondary teachers aiming to effect meaningful change, awareness of systems extending beyond the microsystem and mesosystem is essential.

School Management Teams

A School Management Team typically comprises senior school staff—principals, deputy principals, and heads of department—who oversee teaching, learning, and day-to-day school activities. Within this study’s context, SMTs operate within the exosystem as key agents influencing school culture and the implementation of inclusive education policies.

Ramango (2021) highlights SMTs as pivotal actors in applying inclusive education and transforming school environments. They address learning barriers and diverse needs through pre-service and in-service teacher training and professional support (Hausiku, 2017). By fostering an inclusive ethos, SMTs support learners with learning disabilities, ensuring a welcoming and supportive atmosphere for all students.

According to Ramango (2021), SMTs are responsible for delivering varied learning experiences that consider learners’ barriers. Hausiku (2017) stresses the importance of including specialists in inclusive education within these teams to champion positive change, despite challenges that may arise. For example, Educational Support Service (ESS) teams provide essential training and resources to secondary teachers, enabling them to better support learners with disabilities. These teams also facilitate resource distribution and promote knowledge exchange among educators (Maine, 2022).

Maine (2022) underscores SMTs’ role in establishing support structures like ESS teams to identify learning challenges and develop classroom strategies. Ramango (2021) further emphasizes the central role of School-Based Support Teams (SBSTs) in recognizing at-risk learners and addressing their difficulties. These teams cultivate inclusive school cultures that celebrate diversity and promote social justice, ensuring all students feel respected and valued. Boitumelo et al. (2020) affirm that school leadership profoundly influences teachers’ attitudes and the successful inclusion of learners with learning disabilities.

Collaboration among school-based teams is crucial to enable stakeholders to share expertise, particularly in managing diversity (Hausiku, 2017). SMTs also work closely with parents to foster partnerships that support learner achievement. A robust connection among schools, families, and communities is vital, aligning efforts towards common educational goals (Hausiku, 2017). Additionally, SMTs liaise with external organizations to secure resources and services such as mental health support, special education provisions, and community programmes. These collaborations ensure the school meets community needs and advocates effectively for learners with learning disabilities.

Ministry of Education and Training

The Ministry of Education and Training is the governmental authority responsible for regulating and overseeing the education sector. Through its regional offices, the Ministry implements inclusive education policies mandating that schools provide appropriate support for learners encountering educational barriers (Hausiku, 2017). Its responsibilities include policy formulation, resource allocation, institutional accreditation, and teacher certification, all aimed at maintaining quality education accessible to all learners.

The Ministry plays a crucial role in supporting professional leadership and enhancing teaching and learning practices. It ensures that teacher training programmes incorporate exposure to learners with learning disabilities through practical placements and field visits before educators commence formal teaching duties (Boitumelo et al., 2020). Hausiku (2017) emphasizes the necessity of supporting educators, many of whom feel inadequately prepared to identify and address learning barriers effectively.

To address these challenges, the Ministry develops policy frameworks, curriculum standards, and resource provisions that underpin effective teaching, assessment, and leadership. It

also organizes continuous professional development opportunities, such as workshops and conferences, aimed at equipping teachers with the skills required for inclusive education.

The Ministry's mandate extends to delivering specialized interventions and support services tailored to learners with learning disabilities and developmental needs. This includes safeguarding learner rights and enhancing teacher quality to improve educational outcomes (Warman, 2021). Furthermore, the Ministry establishes partnerships with other agencies to broaden the scope of support available. It also formulates policies promoting the inclusion of learners with disabilities within mainstream curricula.

As Morabe (2021) asserts, initial teacher education is the responsibility of accredited institutions, while the Ministry oversees ongoing professional development to ensure educators remain competent in meeting diverse learner needs.

2.2.1.4 Macrosystem

Bronfenbrenner (1994) defines the macrosystem as the broadest environmental layer encompassing cultural patterns, including belief systems, resources, customs, lifestyles, opportunities, and life-course choices that indirectly influence individual development through their interaction with micro-, meso-, and exosystems. This system represents the wider societal context within which learners exist, comprising governmental policies, political ideologies, cultural norms, and traditional values (Geldenhuys & Wevers, 2013; Duerden & Witt, 2010). Within this framework, cultural elements such as the enactment of inclusive education policies in mainstream classrooms significantly affect teachers' perceptions and attitudes towards learners with learning disabilities, shaping how educators respond to these learners' needs and challenges.

Inclusive Education Policies

The macrosystem holds considerable influence over the formulation and implementation of inclusive education policies, which are vital in removing barriers to learning and advancing equity and social justice by guaranteeing all learners equal access to education (Shaeffer, 2019). Such policies operate at this level to transform educators' attitudes and beliefs regarding learners with disabilities (Sahamkhadam, 2020). They also affect instructional methods and teachers' engagement with learners of diverse abilities. Evaluations of teachers' perceptions regarding inclusive education often reveal systemic gaps that may adversely influence their attitudes and teaching strategies (Hunter Johnson et al., 2014). Consequently, inclusive education policies shape educators' self-efficacy and conceptions of the educational mission. Furthermore, these policies inform teacher education programmes, ongoing professional development, and the provision of appropriate resources and support services. A clear understanding of inclusive education principles enables teachers to cultivate learning environments that embrace and affirm the individuality of every learner, thereby fostering enhanced self-esteem, social inclusion, and academic achievement.

The Open Society Foundations (2019) affirm that educators play a crucial role in promoting a more inclusive and tolerant society, where diversity is respected and valued. By ensuring equitable access to education, inclusive policies contribute to reducing societal inequalities and building a fairer community (Shaeffer, 2019). Within the macrosystem, teachers apply their professional expertise to address identified challenges faced by learners in mainstream settings, providing tailored support and resources to meet their specific needs.

2.2.1.5 Chronosystem

Bronfenbrenner (1994) identifies the chronosystem as encompassing the temporal dimension of development, capturing both changes and consistencies over time in the individual

and their environment. This includes transformations in family dynamics, educational institutions, and shifts in daily challenges and capacities. The chronosystem therefore accounts for all environmental fluctuations occurring across an individual's lifespan that influence their developmental trajectory, such as significant life transitions and historical occurrences.

Within the scope of this research, the chronosystem pertains to the effects of temporal and historical factors on the integration of learners with learning disabilities into mainstream educational settings. For example, legislation like the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in the United States has markedly increased the inclusion of disabled learners within regular classrooms (McKenna et al., 2023). Broader social and political shifts, including a heightened focus on diversity and inclusion, have transformed societal attitudes and educational practices concerning learners with learning disabilities (Drew, 2023). Furthermore, Drew (2023) notes that technological progress has significantly influenced inclusive education, introducing innovative tools and approaches to better support learners with diverse needs.

In essence, the chronosystem provides a vital lens for examining the evolving impact of inclusive education policies, encapsulating the complex interplay of historical, social, political, and technological developments over time.

In conclusion, the researcher contends that applying this ecological framework will enhance the study by illuminating how various environmental systems influence teaching experiences. This theoretical perspective is particularly relevant to one of the research questions concerning strategies to mitigate challenges faced by teachers in mainstream classrooms. The participating teachers at the selected schools are uniquely positioned to articulate the realities of educating learners with learning disabilities.

2.3 Conceptual Review

This study is underpinned by two central concepts: teachers' experiences within mainstream classroom settings and the learning disabilities encountered by learners. This subsection critically explores these concepts to illustrate their relevance and alignment with the overarching aims of the study.

2.3.1 Learners with Learning Disabilities

Learners with learning disabilities (LDs) are individuals who exhibit enduring difficulties in acquiring and applying core academic skills, including reading, writing, mathematics, and reasoning, despite demonstrating average or above-average intellectual abilities (Learning Disabilities Research & Practice [LDRP], 2025). These challenges are neurologically rooted, often arising from atypical development or functioning within specific brain regions associated with language processing, memory, and executive functioning (American Psychiatric Association, 2022). LDs are categorically distinct from intellectual disabilities and are not attributable to external influences such as inadequate teaching, socio-cultural background, or sensory impairments (Bryant, Bryant, & Smith, 2017).

Learners with LDs frequently demonstrate inconsistent academic performance, characterized by pronounced strengths in areas such as verbal reasoning or creative thinking, juxtaposed with marked difficulties in tasks like decoding text, structuring written assignments, or solving mathematical problems. Consequently, these learners may experience emotional distress, diminished self-confidence, and heightened anxiety, particularly within conventional classroom environments that fail to address their specific learning profiles.

According to Walton (2018), effective inclusion of learners with disabilities requires a shift from deficit-based models of learning towards strength-based and relational pedagogies that recognize learner diversity as an asset to classroom learning. Similarly, Makoelle (2014, 2020) emphasizes that inclusive education should move beyond mere physical placement to embrace pedagogical responsiveness where teachers adapt curriculum content, assessment, and instruction to the unique learning profiles of all students. This aligns closely with the principles of Universal Design for

Learning (UDL), which advocates for adaptable pedagogical approaches and personalized support mechanisms aimed at promoting both academic achievement and social integration for learners with LDs (Bhat & Dar, 2024; Hove & Phasha, 2023).

Mosia (2017) highlights that early identification and interventions are critical to preventing the compounding effects of undiagnosed learning disabilities, particularly in resource-constrained schooling systems where specialist support is limited. This underscores the need for collaboration between teachers, parents, and educational psychologists in creating supportive learning environments. In the same vein, Sefotho (2015) argues that inclusive education must also be underpinned by a philosophy of “education for being,” which positions learners with disabilities not as problems to be solved but as full human beings with agency, purpose, and capabilities that can flourish in enabling contexts.

Critical to the success of these learners are early identification, the implementation of differentiated instructional strategies, and collaborative teaching practices. These measures play a vital role in cultivating equitable learning contexts and in mitigating school dropout rates among students with LDs (UNESCO, 2018; Hayes & Bulat, 2017; Makoelle, 2020).

2.3.2 Learning Disabilities

In both developed and developing nations, education is recognized not only as a fundamental human right for all children regardless of ability but also as a vital instrument for personal and societal advancement (Matsenjwa et al., 2020). This principle is embedded in inclusive education policies and legislative frameworks such as the Education Act of 1995, which stipulates that learners with mental or physical impairments should receive appropriate educational opportunities (MOET, 1995).

Learning disabilities (LDs) refer to a spectrum of conditions that significantly impair a learner’s ability to acquire, interpret, organize, retain, and use verbal and non-verbal information effectively (Seliane & Kgothule, 2022). Such impairments persist even when extrinsic barriers within the learning environment have been addressed. It is important to distinguish LDs from learning difficulties that may arise from sensory impairments, intellectual disabilities, or inadequate instruction (Cortiella & Horowitz, 2014). A key characteristic of learning disabilities is their

neurological or psychological origin, which affects brain function and structure in ways that hinder the processing and communication of information (Cortiella & Horowitz, 2014).

Learners with LDs often struggle with foundational academic skills, including reading, spelling, comprehension, mathematical reasoning, and social interaction (Gillespie & Graham, 2014). LDs manifest in varied forms, each influencing specific cognitive processes. Among the most common are dyslexia, dyscalculia, and dysgraphia. These may also be accompanied by associated challenges such as auditory or visual processing deficits, difficulties with executive functioning, and attention-related issues (Gupta, 2022).

The core learning disabilities are briefly outlined below, following Cortiella and Horowitz (2014), while related deficits are embedded within the descriptions.

- **Dyslexia** is a reading-related learning disability that varies across individuals but typically involves difficulties with phonemic awareness, phonological processing, word decoding, reading fluency, spelling, and vocabulary acquisition.
- **Dyscalculia** refers to a specific difficulty in understanding and applying mathematical concepts. Learners with dyscalculia often face challenges in counting, managing money, and solving numerical problems.
- **Dysgraphia** is a disability affecting writing skills, particularly the physical act of writing and the clarity of written expression. Common indicators include poor pencil grip, inconsistent letter formation, inadequate spacing, and disorganized written output. While elements of dysgraphia may overlap with other LDs, it is marked by distinct difficulties in fine motor coordination and expressive writing.

Although learning disabilities differ in form and intensity across individuals, they tend to result in shared challenges within academic contexts. Research has consistently shown that learners with LDs often exhibit reduced self-efficacy and limited metacognitive awareness when compared to their typically developing peers (Crane et al., 2017; Grainger et al., 2016; Soto et al., 2018). Furthermore, these learners frequently struggle with academic planning and are often unable to accurately assess or predict their performance except in cases where such estimations may serve as a psychological buffer against repeated academic failure (Tamm et al., 2021).

Beyond academic competence, learning disabilities may also have social implications. They can influence a learner's behaviour and interpersonal relationships within the school setting, which, in turn, affects academic outcomes. For instance, Zheng et al. (2014) identified a strong association between academic performance and both self-concept and self-determination factors heavily shaped by the quality of a learner's social environment. Difficulties such as low self-esteem, limited peer relationships, and feelings of isolation are common among learners with LDs and contribute to a cycle of academic underperformance (Musetti et al., 2019).

Walton (2018) and Makoelle (2020) further emphasize that the inclusion of learners with LDs demands systemic transformation where school cultures, leadership, and teacher training all work cohesively to dismantle exclusionary practices. Mosia (2017) also stresses that inclusive education in developing contexts must be rooted in accessibility and responsiveness, ensuring that learners with LDs receive both pedagogical and psychosocial support. Likewise, Sefotho (2015) calls for an ontological shift towards humanizing pedagogy, where the learner is viewed holistically and learning is aligned with individual purpose and potential.

2.3.3 Teaching and Teacher's Experiences

Teaching can be conceptualized from a range of perspectives, including cultural, mentalistic, and functional viewpoints (Kline, 2015). Within the context of this study, however, teaching is regarded as a professional practice in which educators facilitate the transfer of knowledge and skills to learners. Specifically, it is defined as the purposeful act of enabling learners to acquire understanding or competence in particular subject areas (Rajagopalan, 2019). Teaching is widely recognized as both an art and a science (Bouffard, 2018).

Viewed as an art, teaching draws on the teacher's creativity, intuition, and sensitivity in shaping meaningful and engaging learning experiences. In contrast, the scientific dimension of teaching refers to the application of evidence-based strategies, structured methodologies, and systematic planning aimed at achieving desired educational outcomes (Rajagopalan, 2019). This dual nature of teaching is particularly relevant when working with learners who have learning

disabilities, as it requires educators to design inclusive, responsive environments that address diverse needs while upholding educational standards.

Bak et al. (2010) describe teaching as a globally recognized daily activity that serves a formal educational purpose. It comprises a variety of tasks, including lesson planning, resource selection, instruction delivery, and the assessment of learner progress. Effective teaching, especially in inclusive settings, involves more than mastery of subject knowledge—it also requires the ability to communicate clearly, build rapport, and adapt strategies to accommodate learners with unique learning profiles, such as those with learning disabilities.

Teaching is fundamentally a process of facilitating learners' growth by helping them construct knowledge and develop essential skills (Rajagopalan, 2019). It plays a critical role in the educational development of all learners, including those with learning disabilities, by fostering understanding, encouraging innovation, and promoting intellectual and moral growth. Furthermore, teaching supports the cultivation of critical thinking, problem-solving, and ethical reasoning (Bak et al., 2010).

For learners with learning disabilities, high-quality teaching contributes to personal empowerment by equipping them with the tools necessary for autonomy, academic success, and lifelong learning. Inclusive pedagogical approaches also foster a more accepting and empathetic classroom culture, reducing stigma and encouraging participation. By ensuring equitable access to learning opportunities, teaching enhances not only individual well-being but also the broader societal commitment to social justice and educational equity.

2.4 Empirical Framework

This section provides a critical review of existing literature concerning the experiences of secondary school teachers in educating learners with learning disabilities within mainstream

classroom settings. The review is structured around the specific objectives of the current study, with the discussion of prior research findings organized thematically to ensure alignment with these objectives.

2.4.1 Teachers' Experiences of Teaching Learners with Learning Disabilities in Mainstream Classrooms

Teachers play a central role in the effective delivery of the curriculum and are instrumental in cultivating inclusive educational settings for pupils with learning disabilities. Their day-to-day experiences in the classroom significantly influence learners' access to instruction and subsequent academic progress. Recent scholarship has highlighted that mainstream educational environments present educators with both rewarding experiences and complex challenges (Jardinez & Natividad, 2024).

According to Ralejoe (2016), teachers' perceptions of learners with disabilities tend to become more constructive when inclusive strategies are systematically integrated into regular teaching practices. Engaging with a diverse range of learning needs was reported to foster greater empathy, patience, and a heightened sense of job satisfaction among educators. Teaching within inclusive contexts encouraged self-reflection, promoted pedagogical growth, and instilled a deeper sense of vocational purpose. Consequently, the presence of learners with disabilities enhanced the professional experience of many educators, making their work more dynamic and impactful (Ralejoe, 2019).

Despite these positive aspects, mainstream classroom environments often present considerable difficulties. Teachers are frequently confronted with challenges such as limited instructional resources, large class sizes, and a wide array of learner needs requiring tailored approaches. Msomi (2020) observed that, without adequate training in inclusive education,

teachers may struggle to adapt the curriculum effectively for learners with disabilities, thereby impeding the goals of inclusive policy. A lack of foundational expertise in special needs education often restricts the application of innovative and research-informed teaching methods.

In addition, the successful implementation of inclusive education demands that teachers acquire specific competencies, including knowledge of learning barriers, the ability to modify teaching techniques, and basic psychosocial support skills (Matsenjwa et al., 2020). Teachers who benefit from targeted professional learning opportunities typically report higher confidence and a greater sense of preparedness, while those without such training may feel overwhelmed and professionally unsupported.

Motivational levels also influence teachers' engagement with inclusive practices. Rodzi et al. (2017) found that seasoned educators often demonstrate higher motivation and dedication when working with learners experiencing difficulties, whereas less experienced teachers may feel underprepared and uncertain. Further factors contributing to diminished morale include low salaries, insufficient institutional backing, and limited encouragement from peers and management (Busingye, 2016).

To summarize, while inclusive education offers meaningful avenues for professional growth and the enrichment of instructional methods, it also imposes considerable demands on teachers. Their experiences within inclusive settings are shaped by both the opportunities they embrace and the constraints they navigate. For inclusive education to be effectively realized there is a pressing need for ongoing teacher development, supportive infrastructures, and systemic reforms that reinforce sustainable and equitable teaching practices.

2.4.2 Challenges Teachers Encounter in the Mainstream Classroom

Despite the recognized advantages of inclusive education and the global backing it receives from bodies such as the United Nations, evidence suggests that its practical implementation remains far from fully achieved. Contemporary inclusive education systems continue to face numerous difficulties in integrating learners with learning disabilities into general education settings. Research by Priya (2016) underscores persistent challenges, such as inadequate physical infrastructure, inflexible curricular structures, limited access to specialized support services, insufficient teacher preparation, and a widespread lack of awareness among educators and parents about relevant legislation, inclusive policies, and the resources available to support diverse learners. Similarly, findings by Leballo (2021) indicate that factors such as overcrowded classrooms, restricted planning time, excessive teacher workloads, high learner-to-teacher ratios, and a shortage of instructional materials significantly hinder effective engagement. These conditions not only obstruct inclusive teaching but also contribute to the development of negative perceptions toward learners with learning difficulties.

Outlined below are further critical barriers that continue to impede the realization of inclusive education.

2.4.2.1 Lack of Teachers' Training

Teachers hold a central position in facilitating learning, yet they encounter considerable obstacles in delivering inclusive education. A key challenge lies in the insufficient training they receive in supporting pupils with disabilities (Imaniah & Fitria, 2018; Mag et al., 2017; Materechera, 2020). In the absence of relevant knowledge and specialized competencies, many educators find it difficult to establish inclusive classroom settings or to offer the differentiated

support required to meet varied learning profiles. As a result, learners with disabilities may be denied the opportunity to fully realize their academic and developmental potential.

Although research suggests that numerous teachers maintain favorable views toward inclusive educational practices (Ali, 2014), there remains a significant gap in their practical preparedness. Brief, surface-level workshops on inclusive education frameworks often fail to equip teachers with the necessary tools to respond effectively to the complex demands of the mainstream classroom. Further compounding these difficulties are challenges such as overcrowded classrooms and restricted instructional time, which inhibit the application of inclusive methodologies (Materechera, 2020). Additionally, limited access to robust professional development restricts teachers from adopting evidence-based strategies, often leaving them to rely solely on personal judgement (Zagona et al., 2017).

The deficit of adequately trained educators within inclusive classrooms directly undermines the educational experiences of learners with disabilities (Ofori, 2018; Nishan, 2018). In response, Hettiarachchi and Das (2014) recommend the integration of specialized content on inclusive pedagogy within both initial teacher education and ongoing in-service training. Such a dual approach would ensure that educators across both general and special education sectors possess the expertise required to implement inclusive practices effectively.

In summation, the realization of inclusive education extends beyond favorable attitudes it necessitates systemic investment in teacher education, continuous professional development, and institutional support. Only by empowering teachers with the requisite capabilities can educational institutions make meaningful progress toward achieving truly inclusive learning environments for all pupils, regardless of ability.

2.4.2.2 Negative Attitudes

Teachers' perceptions of learners with learning disabilities play a crucial role in shaping the effectiveness of inclusive education. When educators hold unfavourable views, this can impede both teaching quality and learners' academic progress. As Hansanoglu and Girmen (2014) argue, teacher attitudes are central to successful instruction, and negative predispositions can undermine inclusive practices within mainstream educational settings.

Such attitudes may result in learners perceiving themselves as marginalized or alienated from the broader school community (Ofori, 2018). Research by Hansanoglu and Girmen (2014) revealed that a significant proportion of teachers maintain either indifferent or negative stances towards the integration of pupils with additional learning needs into mainstream classrooms. This persists despite sustained governmental promotion of inclusive education and its consistent endorsement within scholarly discourse (Andrews & Frankel, 2010; McCray & McHatton, 2011).

Ofori (2018) highlights the importance of nurturing supportive and inclusive mindsets among teachers in order to accommodate learner diversity. Nevertheless, empirical evidence suggests that negative perceptions remain prevalent and may contribute to learners with disabilities feeling excluded or unfairly treated. Sharma and Bhambri (2015) caution that such marginalization reinforces systemic inequalities and obstructs the realization of an equitable educational experience for all learners.

2.4.2.3 Lack of Adequate Resources

One of the significant barriers encountered by educators in inclusive classrooms is the persistent shortage of essential teaching resources. Teachers frequently report that insufficient access to instructional materials, assistive technologies, and relevant teaching aids constrains their

ability to meet the diverse needs of learners with disabilities (Parveen & Qounsar, 2018; Seliane & Kgothule, 2022). Research consistently indicates that such limitations significantly hinder inclusive teaching practices and reduce overall instructional effectiveness (Allam & Martin, 2021; Singh, 2023). Maffea (2020) refers to this persistent lack of resources as a "wicked problem", suggesting that it contributes to stress and dissatisfaction among both educators and learners. In the absence of appropriate support tools, the realization of inclusive pedagogical goals becomes highly challenging.

This issue is particularly acute in rural educational settings, where teachers often grapple with severe material shortages and limited guidance in selecting resources suitable for learners with special educational needs (Hansanoglu & Girmen, 2014). Financial constraints further exacerbate the situation, undermining efforts to create equitable learning environments (Jali, 2014). In many cases, educators are not provided with the necessary equipment or materials to implement differentiated instruction, thereby restricting their capacity to support learners requiring additional assistance. Nishan (2018) notes that the lack of tailored curriculum content for diverse learner profiles inhibits teachers' effectiveness and negatively affects academic progress.

2.4.2.4 Poor Peer Relationships

Although inclusive education seeks to create supportive environments for all learners, some individuals with special educational needs may encounter social difficulties, such as peer exclusion, which can detrimentally affect their emotional well-being and interpersonal development (Chen et al., 2022). Such exclusion often undermines self-confidence and limits opportunities for positive social interaction, making it harder for these learners to establish and maintain peer relationships. Moreover, learners with disabilities may be subjected to bullying or

discrimination linked to their conditions, resulting in heightened levels of loneliness, anxiety, and psychological distress.

Coelho (2019) argues that mainstream inclusion may not be suitable for all learners, particularly those diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The distinct sensory sensitivities and social communication challenges associated with ASD can create substantial obstacles in general education settings, thereby compromising both their social integration and educational experience. Difficulties in verbal and non-verbal interaction may further restrict their capacity to fully participate in classroom and peer-related activities, raising important concerns about the appropriateness of universal inclusion models for this group.

2.4.2.5. Limited Parental Support

The effectiveness of inclusive education is strongly dependent on meaningful collaboration between educators and the families of learners. However, several factors such as limited parental involvement, inadequate understanding of inclusive practices and weak communication channels often hinder its successful implementation. Doménech and Moliner (2014) observe that some parents of children with disabilities maintain reservations about inclusive education, frequently driven by concerns that their children may face discrimination or social marginalization. In consequence, these parents may express reluctance towards full integration, placing greater emphasis on their child's emotional security and social acceptance than on the broader objectives of inclusion.

2.4.2.6 Limited Administrative Support

Hansanoglu and Girmen (2014) emphasize that teachers often operate without adequate institutional support, receiving limited guidance from school leadership, peers, and auxiliary staff such as counsellors. A significant number of schools lack access to specialist professionals in

inclusive education, and external support is seldom available to assist teachers in navigating the challenges inherent in heterogeneous classroom settings. In a similar vein, Jali (2014) highlights the exacerbation of these challenges in the absence of coordinated support mechanisms, such as district- and school-based support teams, compounded further by minimal parental involvement. This systemic lack of collaborative infrastructure poses a substantial barrier to the effective implementation of inclusive educational practices. In contrast, Leballo (2021) offers a more optimistic perspective, contending that inclusive education flourishes in contexts where strategic partnerships, innovative pedagogical approaches, and active engagement from both school and community stakeholders are actively fostered.

2.4.2.7 Legal and Policy Barriers

Numerous nations, including Lesotho, have demonstrated a commitment to implementing inclusive education for learners with learning disabilities. Nevertheless, several studies suggest that the policies underpinning inclusive practices are often insufficiently articulated, rendering them difficult for mainstream educators to interpret and apply effectively. Tyagi (2016) draws attention to persistent issues in the literature, observing that the enactment of inclusive education policies remains challenging, primarily due to inadequate teacher training and limited institutional support. Although governments have endorsed policy frameworks designed to promote access to education for learners with special educational needs (SEN), the translation of these frameworks into actionable strategies is frequently ambiguous, casting doubt on their capacity to deliver genuine inclusion (Adewumi & Mosito, 2019).

The successful realization of inclusive education also depends significantly on the engagement and cooperation of parents and guardians. However, the process is often impeded by minimal family involvement, a lack of awareness, and weak communication channels. Doménech

and Moliner (2014) report that certain parents of children with disabilities may hold reservations about inclusive education, frequently influenced by concerns about potential discrimination. These apprehensions can lead to reluctance in supporting the integration of learners with and without disabilities; as such parents may prioritize their child's emotional well-being and social acceptance over broader inclusion objectives.

2.4.2.8 Lack of Teaching Skills

Kazmi et al. (2023) observed that educators' readiness to accommodate learners with disabilities is significantly shaped by the type and extent of the disabilities involved. Their study suggests that teachers who demonstrate resilience and confidence tend to develop strong professional capabilities, maintain emotional stability, and exhibit motivation factors which enable them to manage stress and navigate negative emotional responses effectively. Confidence and a sense of self-efficacy are therefore essential attributes for teachers operating within inclusive mainstream settings.

The role of teachers is central to the effective delivery of inclusive education for learners with learning disabilities. Their pedagogical knowledge, professional attitudes, and the strategies they employ directly impact the success of inclusive practices. Nonetheless, Msomi (2020) notes that a considerable number of mainstream educators lack the requisite skills and knowledge to implement inclusive education policies effectively. Despite these challenges, the shift towards inclusive education has placed increasing responsibility on teachers to meet the diverse needs of all learners within their classrooms.

In light of these challenges, it is essential that higher education institutions incorporate inclusive education modules as a fundamental component of teacher training programmes. Comprehensive pre-service education is crucial in fostering inclusive mindsets and equipping

future teachers with the competencies required to support learners with diverse educational needs. In well-structured inclusive settings, adequately trained teachers are better positioned to respond to individual learner needs and to promote active engagement and adaptation within the classroom environment.

2.4.3 Teachers' Professional Help and Skills to Support Learners with Learning Disabilities

Educators require specialized professional competencies and sustained support to effectively meet the needs of learners with disabilities within mainstream classroom settings. The successful implementation of inclusive education is contingent upon targeted training in adaptive instructional strategies, coupled with continuous professional assistance. In the absence of such preparation and backing, the goal of providing equitable and meaningful learning experiences for all pupils becomes difficult to achieve.

2.4.3.1 Professional Support

To ensure that teachers receive adequate professional support, it is essential to provide them with access to ongoing professional development initiatives, including workshops, seminars, and online learning platforms. These forums create spaces for the exchange of ideas, teaching strategies, and effective practices. According to Chitiyo et al. (2019), engaging educators in the design and implementation of their own professional development not only enhances their autonomy but also enables them to assess their individual needs and choose learning opportunities that are most relevant to their specific teaching environments. This participatory approach fosters greater teacher engagement and ownership, which are critical for the successful implementation and sustainability of professional development programmes.

2.4.3.1.1 Support for Teachers in Implementing Inclusive Education

The Ministry of Education holds the responsibility of equipping both teachers and learners with the necessary training and resources to effectively participate in technology integration. A foundational understanding of information and communication technologies is essential for educators, enabling them not only to facilitate instruction but also to ensure the protection of sensitive data.

Emily (2019) argues that fostering a genuinely inclusive learning environment requires comprehensive preparation, the availability of qualified teaching staff, and a network of supportive personnel. Similarly, Harvey et al. (2010) note that inclusive classrooms and the expectation of high academic standards for all learners have a significant impact on pre-service teacher education. Other scholars (Abuda et al., 2025; Astudillo et al., 2025; Ngubane, 2018) assert that educators must possess specialized knowledge and pedagogical expertise to address the needs of learners with disabilities effectively. Accordingly, teachers must be supported in refining their instructional approaches to meet a diversity of learning requirements. For many, the success of inclusive education is closely connected to the presence of strong support systems.

Keeping abreast of advancements in educational technology, particularly in the context of special needs education, through regular workshops and professional literature, including journals and reference texts, can substantially enrich teaching practices (Smith, 2010). Smith further posits that access to appropriate technological tools enables teachers to support learners with disabilities in adapting to mainstream classroom settings. Muthukrishnan and Schoeman (2000) contend that inclusive education would be more effective if school support structures prioritized assisting educators rather than focusing solely on removing barriers to learning.

Cardona (2009) emphasizes that the most effective approach to cultivating a new generation of teachers capable of enacting inclusive policies lies in reforming initial teacher education. In this regard, Abuda et al. (2025) maintain that educators should be equipped with both the pedagogical tools and resources necessary to manage heterogeneous classrooms and respond to the distinct needs of every learner. A shift in mindset may also be required, one that promotes a collective sense of purpose among educators and encourages the re-evaluation of current pedagogical models to ensure they are inclusive, adaptable, and learner-centred. According to Ngubane (2018), well-structured and rigorous training has the potential to transform teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education positively.

Avramidis (2010) highlights the pivotal role of expert support in shaping positive teacher attitudes towards inclusion. Astudillo et al. (2025) suggest that a combination of factors including sufficient resourcing, parental involvement, increased funding, and the provision of specialized support staff can enhance teachers' receptiveness to inclusive practices. Strategies that promote collaborative support structures include the formation of district-based support teams, employment of educational psychologists and school counsellors, development of specialized schools serving as resource centers, and the establishment of School-Based Support Teams (SBSTs). These structures are essential for embedding inclusivity within the educational support system.

South Africa's Education White Paper 6 on Inclusive Education (Department of Education, 2021) advocates for increased involvement of support professionals across various tiers of educational support, including district and school levels. Nel (2002) contends that teachers require a shared conceptual framework, common language, and coordinated goals in order to meet learners' diverse needs effectively, in addition to technical pedagogical competence. Nel (2000)

also identifies a widespread gap in teacher preparedness, noting that many educators lack the necessary training to support learners facing learning difficulties.

Leadership within schools plays a crucial role in fostering inclusive environments. As Mokhampanyane (2024) observes, school leaders are instrumental in promoting institutional change, enabling schools to become inclusive spaces that nurture both academic and socio-emotional development. Principals and school management teams are tasked with supporting educators, learners, and parents, thereby facilitating the adoption of inclusive values and behaviors. Through effective resource mobilization and strategic leadership, they help guide and sustain the transformation process.

Moreover, it is imperative for school leaders to cultivate understanding and buy-in from parents, staff, and the broader community. Emily (2019) underscores the importance of school leadership in creating welcoming school climates, encouraging teacher development, and promoting lifelong learning among educators. By fostering a collaborative culture and designing schedules that encourage teamwork, principals can enhance teacher morale and mutual support. Instructional quality improves when classrooms are deliberately organized, well-managed, and resourced to support evidence-based teaching practices (Crawford, 2024).

Inclusive education also requires a collective commitment from school personnel. Effective leadership involves bringing together diverse stakeholders within the school community to form collaborative teams. In such scenarios, principals and SBSTs are positioned to coordinate administrative resources and initiate necessary policy reforms. Changes aimed at enhancing inclusivity may focus on institutional structures such as timetabling, staffing patterns, class allocation methods, capacity-building initiatives, and skills development programmes (Mokhampanyane, 2024).

Astudillo et al. (2025) stress that effective implementation of inclusive education depends on school leaders' comprehensive understanding of inclusive principles and practices. Abuda et al. (2025) further argue that financial policies are a key factor, with flexible and efficient funding mechanisms required to respond to learners' diverse needs. Such policies should foster collaboration among educational personnel and align institutional and national financial strategies to support inclusive goals. If well designed, these systems can facilitate rather than impede progress towards educational equity.

To ensure inclusive practice is both sustainable and economically viable, resource allocation must be responsive to local priorities and learner needs. National and regional policy frameworks must guarantee appropriate support for learners with special needs, while maintaining the flexibility to address school-specific requirements. As resource limitations continue to present obstacles, careful policy implementation remains essential. Without access to appropriate facilities and services, inclusive efforts may fall short of achieving equitable learning opportunities for all.

Inclusive education is inherently a shared endeavour. While school leaders serve as critical agents of change, meaningful and sustained progress depends on the collaborative involvement of teachers, learners, parents, and support staff. Duffield, Brown, and Riddell (1995) identified five foundational components for effective staff development in support of inclusive learning environments. These include: (1) collaborative engagement with subject and class teachers, (2) the design of differentiated curricula, (3) provision of targeted one-to-one instruction, (4) participation in whole-school learning support policies, and (5) professional development centered on inclusive pedagogy. The authors argue that classroom-based collaborative learning provides essential instructional guidance and that teachers have a primary responsibility to offer individualized support to struggling learners.

One strategic means of supporting educators involved in inclusive education is through advisory roles aimed at strengthening instructional capacities. These roles enhance teachers' abilities to assess learning needs, diagnose challenges, and tailor interventions such as personalized lesson planning (Clough, 1998). Duncan et al. (2021) highlight the pressing need for area-based training initiatives focused on special educational needs, noting their critical role in advancing inclusive teaching practices across educational contexts.

2.4.3.1.2 Support through Co-teaching

Abuda et al. (2025) argue that when schools possess the necessary capacity to appoint an assistant teacher for individual classrooms, co-teaching emerges as an effective pedagogical strategy to support learners in inclusive educational settings. Within this model, one educator assumes responsibility for leading instruction, while the other provides targeted support. For instance, while one teacher delivers a lesson such as training learners in listening strategies or preparing them for an assessment the co-teacher may simultaneously collect observational data on specific learners to inform future planning and support.

Alternatively, the co-teacher may help maintain learner engagement during lessons, provide immediate feedback on written tasks, or offer discreet clarification in response to learners' questions (Abuda et al., 2025). In inclusive schools, co-teachers are frequently designated as inclusion support facilitators. Their responsibilities typically extend beyond instruction to include collaborative problem-solving with classroom teachers and the coordination of learner support services. These facilitators often focus on addressing the complex needs of learners with moderate to severe disabilities (Duncan et al., 2021). In cases where a learner is suspected of having an undiagnosed disability, support facilitators can assist classroom teachers in deciding whether a formal referral for special educational assessment is warranted (Jardinez & Natividad, 2024).

Ngubane (2018) argues that many scholars endorse inclusive classrooms due to their positive developmental outcomes for learners with special educational needs. These benefits include improved social interaction, enhanced autonomy, strengthened skill acquisition, better health outcomes, and more effective attainment of functional goals. According to Abuda et al. (2025), policy documents such as South Africa's Education White Paper provide comprehensive guidelines outlining appropriate practice in inclusive education and serve as a reference framework for mainstream schools. However, debates persist regarding whether such regulations facilitate or hinder the effective implementation of inclusive practices.

Teachers are often required to manage a wide range of learning needs with minimal institutional support (Lomofsky & Lazarus, 2001). Duncan et al. (2021) highlight that this challenge is particularly acute in under-resourced areas, where support services are typically lacking, in contrast to more affluent contexts where such services are often adequately provided.

During the early stages of their careers, novice teachers are typically supported through mentorship schemes led by experienced educators. Participation in induction programmes has been linked to an increased likelihood of new teachers assuming mentoring roles later in their careers. In some countries, additional support is provided through structured training opportunities (Duncan et al., 2021). Induction programmes often incorporate regular mentoring meetings, assistance with lesson planning, and opportunities for job shadowing. Although collaboration between schools and initial teacher education (ITE) institutions varies, it frequently includes academic modules, seminars, and professional development workshops. Even in contexts where formal induction schemes are not in place, mentoring support for newly qualified teachers is often available (European Commission, 2014).

2.4.3.2 Professional Skills to Support Learners with Learning Disabilities

Kiely et al. (2014) observed that the successful inclusion of students with disabilities (SWD) in mainstream education is largely dependent on teachers' subject knowledge, pedagogical competencies, and their ability to collaborate effectively with colleagues. Learners with learning disabilities often require a broader and more tailored range of support strategies than their peers. Dube (2018) suggests that teachers may hold varying beliefs regarding the most appropriate ways to assist such learners, which can significantly influence the support they provide.

Chitiyo et al. (2019) argue that professional development initiatives yield better outcomes when teachers are meaningfully involved in both the planning and delivery processes. This contrasts with top-down models that impose pre-determined content and modes of engagement, which often fail to meet teachers' contextual needs.

Professional teaching competencies encompass a range of abilities, including lesson planning, instructional delivery, collaboration with school leadership, and meaningful engagement with parents and caregivers. Saeed and Akbar (2021) maintain that these professional capabilities form a critical component of teacher preparation and ongoing capacity-building efforts. In consequence, educators working in inclusive mainstream classrooms must be equipped with a broad set of professional skills. These may include:

2.4.3.2.1 Classroom Management

Classroom management refers to the application of various pedagogical strategies and organizational techniques that enable teachers to maintain structure, learner engagement, and academic progress within the learning environment (Santhanam, 2022). This includes the formulation of clear rules and routines, the regulation of learner behaviour, and the proactive

handling of disruptions to ensure that the classroom remains conducive to learning. In inclusive mainstream classrooms, effective management further demands that educators are well-prepared, demonstrate sound lesson planning, possess a solid grasp of subject content, draw on their professional experience, and communicate concepts clearly and engagingly (Saeed & Akbar, 2021). Collectively, these competencies help establish a supportive and inclusive classroom climate that enhances meaningful learning for all pupils.

2.4.3.2.2 Curriculum Development

Curriculum development, as outlined by Li et al. (2020), entails equipping educators with the competencies necessary to structure and facilitate learning experiences that align with institutional educational objectives. This process involves designing instructional methods that are responsive to the diverse needs of learners in mainstream educational settings. Alsubaie (2016) argues that curriculum design must be reflective of evolving societal expectations, while Motitswe (2012) contends that it must also remain flexible and inclusive to accommodate a wide range of learner profiles. In this regard, Tyagi (2016) underscores the critical role the teachers play in adapting curricular content to address the specific requirements of learners with disabilities. The South African Department of Basic Education (SME, 2019) asserts that inclusive education depends on both curriculum responsiveness and systemic support to cultivate inclusive learning communities. Teachers facilitate this process by identifying individual learners' strengths and learning needs, then developing suitable modifications to support their academic, emotional, social, and behavioural growth.

A widely recognized approach to inclusive curriculum design is the Universal Design for Learning (UDL), which TEAL (2010) defines as a framework that assists educators in developing instruction to serve learners from diverse backgrounds. UDL encourages the use of flexible

strategies, teaching materials, and assessment tools to meet a variety of learning preferences and needs. This model enables educators to deliver content through multiple modalities, thus ensuring that students are supported regardless of their preferred learning style or rate of progress. Lleo (2022) affirms that inclusive teaching practices enhance the educational experience for all learners, and UDL contributes to this by recognizing individual strengths and fostering diversity in the classroom. Antinbhai (2019) advocates for the integration of both general and specialist teaching skills to effectively adjust instruction. This involves collecting relevant background data, employing differentiated instructional tools, and acknowledging diverse perspectives, thereby enriching both pedagogy and learner understanding an argument echoed by Dube (2018).

In order to adapt the curriculum effectively, teachers must have a robust understanding of subject content, pedagogical processes, and assessment strategies. Warman (2021) highlights the importance of disciplinary expertise, combined with a nuanced awareness of learners' needs, as a basis for selecting and implementing varied teaching methods. For instance, multimedia tools such as images and videos can support learners who encounter difficulties with text-heavy resources (Brame, 2017). Additionally, annotated worksheets and graded reading materials can offer multiple avenues for engagement, enabling learners to demonstrate their understanding through differentiated outputs. Antinbhai (2019) further advocates for collaborative teaching approaches, encouraging educators to work together to resolve instructional challenges and enhance learner outcomes. Similarly, Warman (2021) emphasizes the value of aligning pedagogical techniques with learners' characteristics, employing illustrative examples, visual aids, and interlinked concepts to foster meaningful connections with the curriculum and enable learners to progress at a pace suited to their individual capacities.

2.4.3.2.3 Assessment

Totus (2020) defines assessment as the systematic collection and analysis of data from diverse sources and activities, aimed at gaining a comprehensive understanding of learners' knowledge, skills, and developmental progress. Within inclusive classroom settings, effective assessment hinges on the teacher's capacity to evaluate learning outcomes accurately and utilize this information to inform instructional decisions that address the varied needs of all students.

Majoko (2019) highlights the necessity for teachers working in mainstream classrooms to be proficient in assessment methods that enable the identification of learners with educational disabilities, as well as those requiring intensified support. Such teachers must be able to adapt the academic curriculum to align with the cognitive abilities of individual learners, both with and without special educational needs. In terms of pedagogical expertise, Warman (2021) stresses that educators should demonstrate extensive subject knowledge and possess the flexibility to deliver instruction across multiple disciplines, extending beyond their primary specialisms.

2.4.3.2.4 Effective Communication

Communication skills are fundamental for teachers, enabling them to establish meaningful connections with learners through daily interactions. Chen (2019) argues that the effective functioning of mainstream classrooms depends on teachers possessing a clear understanding of each learner, facilitated through communication that fosters productive collaboration and deepens mutual understanding. Fardila (2018) emphasizes that in educational settings where learners have diverse needs, prompt and efficient communication between schools, educators, parents, relevant institutions, government bodies, and local communities is essential. According to Fardila (2018),

professional development programmes and teacher planning should prioritize the enhancement of communication competencies.

Dube (2018) further highlights that collaboration between teachers and learners is crucial for ensuring that learners with disabilities benefit from a range of specialist services. They contend that sustained communication and cooperation are vital for the effective delivery of instruction, with teachers expected to maintain high expectations for all learners. The level of expectation set by educators often influences learners' responses, and when combined with appropriate support, it can significantly enhance learner outcomes (Dube, 2018). To facilitate this, teachers must consistently seek advice and support from specialists regarding the education of learners with learning disabilities, and actively collaborate with colleagues and non-governmental organizations across schools to remain informed and update their professional knowledge (Antinbhai, 2019).

2.4.3.2.5 Observation and Identification of Learners with Learning Disabilities in the Classroom

A critical competency for teachers working in mainstream classrooms is the ability to accurately observe and identify the needs of their learners. The Global Education Monitoring Report (GEMR, 2020) highlights the importance of educators recognizing and appreciating the unique experiences and abilities of each student, acknowledging that learning potential is fluid and influenced by individual diversity.

Accordingly, teachers must be attuned to the social, emotional, behavioral, physical, and academic strengths of learners with special educational needs. Warman (2021) stresses that effective educators require extensive subject knowledge alongside the capability to instruct across a range of disciplines, both within and beyond their primary fields.

Research by Majoko (2019) underscores that teachers' proficiency in screening and assessment such as the design and administration of diagnostic tests to identify diverse learner needs and the implementation of early interventions are essential components of inclusive education. When a teacher suspects that a learner may exhibit signs of a learning disability requiring specialized support, it is incumbent upon them to initiate a formal evaluation. Tyagi (2016) recommends that educators refer such learners to appropriate specialists for further assessment and intervention, while also contributing to the development of diagnostic and achievement measures. Once a diagnosis of learning disability is confirmed, teachers have a responsibility to support these learners within the mainstream environment without becoming overwhelmed by the challenges involved.

2.4.3.2.6 Accepting Learners with Learning Disabilities

The success of mainstream classrooms largely depends on teachers' willingness and capability to create an inclusive and supportive learning environment for all students (Dimitrova-Radojichikj & Chichevska-Jovanova, 2015). Teaching learners with learning disabilities can be challenging, often leaving inadequately prepared teachers feeling frustrated, demotivated, and overwhelmed. Dube (2018) argues that a lack of understanding about disabilities, combined with negative attitudes, contributes significantly to the marginalization of learners with learning disabilities within families, schools, and communities. To address these challenges, the Global Education Monitoring Report (GEMR, 2020) highlights the necessity of fostering positive teacher attitudes, inclusive pedagogical approaches, and enhanced professional competence through teacher education programmes. These factors are crucial in dismantling exclusionary practices and promoting acceptance of learners with disabilities in mainstream classrooms.

Nishan (2018) stresses that inclusive education involves embracing diversity, setting high academic expectations, and eliminating social prejudices. Consequently, teachers in mainstream settings are expected to accept, understand, and value learners with learning disabilities, implementing appropriate interventions and adjustments tailored to their individual needs. This professional development also includes cultivating ethical awareness and cultural sensitivity, enabling educators to create equitable and respectful learning environments (Antinbhai, 2019).

The acceptance of learners within mainstream classrooms fosters positive teacher–learner relationships, which are essential for motivating students and enhancing their engagement in learning activities. Sivaranjani et al. (2015) found that when positive interactions are established, learners exhibit greater enthusiasm and a more proactive attitude towards learning. Such supportive relationships contribute to learners’ development of communication skills, which are critical for demonstrating their competencies. This suggests that teachers who accept learners with learning disabilities are better able to recognize their abilities and support their communicative growth.

Inclusion further encourages the cultivation of positive peer attitudes, promoting acceptance of classmates with learning disabilities within mainstream classrooms. Nishan (2018) notes that learners with special educational needs benefit socially and behaviorally from observing and modelling their peers, thereby enhancing their interpersonal skills and facilitating more effective adaptation to the educational setting.

2.4.4 Mitigation Strategies used in Mainstream Classrooms to Overcome the Challenges Teachers Encounter

Despite the challenges and complexities associated with inclusive education, particularly concerning learners with learning disabilities, teachers can employ a variety of strategies to address

and surmount these obstacles. This section explores several key approaches identified within the existing literature.

2.4.4.1 Collaboration

Hansanoglu and Girmen (2014) contend that the lack of effective collaboration between mainstream and special education teachers presents a significant barrier to the successful implementation of inclusive education. Therefore, promoting a culture of cooperation is vital. Educators in mainstream settings do not operate in isolation; instead, they work alongside specialists, parents, psychologists, and other key stakeholders to enrich teaching practices and exchange professional knowledge (Anthony & Campbell, 2020). Collaborative practice among teachers is associated with improved learner outcomes (CRS Vietnam, 2010) and plays a fundamental role in supporting inclusive approaches (Hansanoglu & Girmen, 2014). Antinbhai (2019) conceptualizes collaboration as a dynamic and interactive process that facilitates creative problem-solving by integrating varied perspectives. Similarly, Paires and Mandal (2023) assert that joint efforts lead to the development of more engaging and differentiated lessons tailored to meet the diverse needs of learners. Given the heterogeneity of contemporary classrooms, it is increasingly evident that no single teacher can address all learning requirements independently.

To meet these demands, mainstream educators must work in close partnership with special education professionals, psychologists, instructional aides, and support staff (Antinbhai, 2019). Such interdisciplinary collaboration fosters shared accountability, inclusive lesson design, and a nurturing classroom climate. Schools that prioritize collaboration often cultivate strong connections with their local communities, enhancing the broader educational ecosystem (Hansanoglu & Girmen, 2014).

Parental engagement also plays a crucial role. Teachers facilitate regular communication with families, provide educational guidance, and involve parents in tailoring individualized learning plans (Antinbhai, 2019; Chen, 2019). Consistent dialogue builds mutual trust, increases learners' motivation, and reinforces positive home school relationships. Chen (2019) suggests that such collaboration empowers children to reflect on their learning and supports their personal development. Strong partnerships between families and schools are associated with improved learner outcomes and the nurturing of learners' individual capabilities (Chen, 2019; Fardila, 2018). Inclusive education is most effective when schools collaborate with both families and community organizations to co-construct equitable and responsive educational frameworks (Antinbhai, 2019).

Diversity within collaborative environments contributes to innovation and strengthens the collective ability to address complex educational challenges (Hansanoglu & Girmen, 2014). Cooperative interactions between educators and learners foster inclusive and supportive classroom cultures (Chen, 2019). When adequate resources and institutional support are in place, inclusive classrooms can yield significant academic and social benefits for all pupils (Dube, 2018). However, the effectiveness of such collaboration hinges on a shared understanding of professional roles. Keuning-LaFrence (2016) notes that addressing misconceptions between general and specialist educators enhances cooperation and positively influences learner achievement.

In summary, successful inclusive education is underpinned by robust collaboration. When teachers, families, and support professionals work collectively, learners particularly those with learning disabilities benefit from personalized support and enriched learning experiences. A cohesive, team-based approach not only cultivates inclusive classroom environments but also strengthens relationships and improves educational outcomes for all.

2.4.4.2 Provision of Remedial Instructions

Teachers can employ remedial instruction to support learners with learning disabilities (Tyagi, 2016). In mainstream classrooms, such learners often require additional assistance, which may differ substantially from one learner to another. For instance, some may benefit from a summary of instructions at the end of each lesson, while others may not require such reinforcement. To effectively implement remedial teaching, educators must adapt their instructional approaches to accommodate the diverse capabilities of all learners. This often involves the use of varied techniques and resources tailored to individual learning styles, with an emphasis on learners' strengths rather than their challenges.

According to Antinbhai (2019), mainstream educators need to be proficient in a range of instructional strategies including differentiated instruction, activity-based learning, peer tutoring, experiential learning, and collaborative learning to ensure inclusivity. Leballo et al. (2021) further emphasize that differentiated instruction recognizes learners' varying levels of readiness and affirms the necessity of tailoring teaching to meet individual needs. Remedial classes thus provide an opportunity for educators to personalize learning, ensuring that each learner progresses at a pace and in a manner best suited to them.

Additionally, teachers are responsible for preparing necessary teaching materials and adapting instructional aids to enhance the learning experiences of students with disabilities (Tyagi, 2016; Antinbhai, 2019). Evaluation in inclusive settings also requires thoughtful adaptation. Recognizing each learner's uniqueness, teachers must employ appropriate assessment strategies that promote meaningful participation. Antinbhai (2019) notes that the ability to make informed educational decisions through formal assessments is a critical skill for teachers in inclusive classrooms. Assessments in remedial sessions not only measure learning outcomes but also

identify areas requiring further attention, allowing learners to revisit concepts they may not have fully grasped.

Furthermore, teachers must possess confidence in their own abilities, in their learners, and in their colleagues. Such confidence can inspire and empower learners to strive for personal and academic growth. Teachers play an essential role in adapting to the evolving needs of their students. Their continuous professional development enables them to respond effectively to a wide range of learning styles, cognitive abilities, and the dynamic nature of curricular and technological advancements. As McLean et al. (2023) observe, adaptability is fundamental to teaching effectiveness.

Flexible instructional strategies are vital across all subject areas. By providing multiple pathways to understanding, educators can ensure equitable access to learning opportunities. These strategies may include the integration of multimedia resources such as videos, audio materials, and interactive activities to create engaging and inclusive learning environments.

2.4.4.3 Use of Personalized Instructional Methods

Teachers can address the challenges associated with educating learners with disabilities by employing personalized instructional strategies. This involves the use of differentiated instruction, which allows teaching to be tailored to the specific needs and developmental levels of individual learners, thereby maximizing their potential while avoiding the risk of stigmatization (Rajagopalan, 2019). Instructional methods and pedagogical approaches within mainstream classrooms are thus structured to respond to learners' unique requirements, fostering responsibility and facilitating meaningful learning outcomes.

The Asian Development Bank (ADB, 2022) advocates for a twin-track approach to inclusion, which simultaneously promotes the integration of all learners into mainstream education

while providing targeted support for those with learning disabilities. Personalized teaching practices for such learners may include the implementation of Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), curriculum modifications, the adaptation of teaching aids and resources, and adjustments to the physical and social learning environment to ensure accessibility and engagement for children with disabilities.

Furthermore, ADB (2022) emphasizes that differentiated instruction represents an effective strategy for supporting learners through individualized learning experiences. This approach prioritizes learners' strengths and competencies, enabling the customization of subject content, instructional processes, and expected learning outcomes in ways that align with each learner's profile and promote inclusive educational success.

2.4.4.5 Developing Positive Attitudes Between Learners With and Without Learning Disabilities

Teachers in mainstream classrooms play a pivotal role in fostering positive and supportive learning environments. Dube (2018) notes that, in certain cultural contexts, the birth of a child with disabilities is often interpreted through a lens of blame, shame, and fear. These misconceptions frequently lead to the concealment, marginalization, and mistreatment of children with disabilities, denying them access to critical developmental opportunities. As a result, such discrimination contributes to adverse health outcomes, limited educational attainment, reduced self-worth, and restricted social engagement (Griender, 2010).

To mitigate these challenges, Tyagi (2016) and Antinbhai (2019) emphasize the need for teachers to ensure the full participation of learners with learning disabilities in all classroom and school-related activities. By designing inclusive learning experiences and promoting collaborative tasks, educators can provide tailored support that facilitates both academic progress and social

integration. Antinbhai (2019) further underscores the necessity of establishing school-based support structures for children with special educational needs, while Aas (2022) highlights the importance of teachers holding a firm belief in the learning potential of every pupil, alongside their professional duty to ensure equitable educational opportunities.

Inclusive pedagogy requires a heightened sensitivity to the diverse experiences, strengths, and challenges of all learners. Recognizing that learning capacities vary and evolve over time, teachers can cultivate classroom environments grounded in acceptance, cooperation, and ongoing professional reflection (GEMR, 2020; Policy Paper 43, 2020).

Encouraging positive learner attitudes is fundamental to building peer-supported learning communities, where collaboration with individuals of differing abilities benefits all participants. Inclusive practices play a vital role in challenging prejudicial attitudes and dismantling social stigmas associated with disability. Nishan (2018) asserts that when learners with disabilities are afforded meaningful opportunities to engage with their peers, it fosters mutual acceptance and supports the development of essential social competencies.

Teachers facilitate inclusive cooperation by integrating learners with disabilities into group activities, collaborative tasks, and everyday classroom interactions. Through the application of differentiated instruction, educators provide varied modes of participation, ensuring that every learner is engaged in a way that reflects their needs and capabilities (Dube, 2018). This approach not only supports learners' confidence and motivation but also promotes a culture of respect, inclusion, and appreciation for diversity within the educational setting.

2.4.4.6 Creation of Inclusive Environment

According to the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education (SME, 2019), fostering an inclusive learning environment within mainstream classrooms requires teachers to attend to three critical

components: cultivating a supportive classroom climate, identifying the most effective modifications to facilitate learning, and recognizing their own professional responsibilities in delivering targeted or intensified support to learners in need. Inclusion, in this context, is defined as the intentional creation of a setting in which all individuals are respected, provided with equal opportunities to participate, and granted access to the same resources and learning experiences, irrespective of their backgrounds or abilities.

Teachers occupy a central role in identifying and responding to obstacles that hinder learner engagement. They must remain attentive to signs of exclusion within their classrooms and take proactive steps to ensure that all learners are meaningfully included. This includes the removal of structural or physical barriers that may inhibit the mobility or independence of learners with special educational needs (Tyagi, 2016). The SME (2019) conceptualizes an inclusive classroom as one that is welcoming, adaptable, and affirming where every learner is entitled to accessible, barrier-free educational experiences.

All learners benefit from appropriately tailored support services that align with their individual learning profiles and interests. In inclusive settings, learners develop a strong sense of belonging, are encouraged to take ownership of their learning, and are empowered to advocate for themselves and others. They are also more likely to believe in their capacity to succeed when supported in an environment that affirms their identities and potential (SME, 2019).

Granziera et al. (2019) argue that teaching is inherently dynamic, unfolding within an ever-changing and often unpredictable educational landscape. Consequently, educators must be prepared to adjust instructional content, reconfigure learning spaces, and adopt flexible pedagogical strategies to meet the evolving needs of all learners.

2.4.4.7 Participation in Professional Skills Development Programmes

An additional strategy for addressing the challenges associated with teaching learners with learning disabilities involves teachers' active engagement in ongoing professional development. According to Richard et al. (2004), incorporating programmes such as life skills education, household management, and caregiving training into the school context can enhance the relevance of the core curriculum by connecting it more directly to the lived experiences of learners. To effectively address the underlying challenges that contribute to poor academic performance and increased dropout rates, teachers must be equipped with specialized skills and knowledge.

It is essential that educators consistently monitor and support learners as they apply the life skills acquired both at school and within the home environment. Wood and Goba (2011) highlight that life orientation training enhances teachers' understanding and positively shapes their attitudes towards supporting learners experiencing difficulties in mainstream educational settings. Learners with learning disabilities often encounter a multitude of obstacles, including developmental delays, low self-esteem, and limited interaction with teachers and peers. These ongoing difficulties underscore the importance of accessible counselling services. Mwoma and Pillay (2015) note that behavioural concerns, emotional regulation issues such as anger, and diminished self-confidence present challenges not only for learners but also for the educators responsible for their development.

Teachers' perceptions and competencies regarding inclusive education are critical to the successful implementation of inclusive practices. In recent decades, inclusive education approaches have gained both recognition and endorsement. The Asian Development Bank (ADB, 2022) advocates for differentiated instruction as a pedagogical strategy that acknowledges and responds to the unique needs of every learner within their age cohort. This method aims to optimize

learning opportunities by adapting teaching and learning processes to suit individual learners' requirements.

Deku and Vanderpuye (2017) argue that the growing complexity and scope of developments in inclusive education necessitate a comprehensive reform of teacher training curricula. Such reform should incorporate relevant resources, methodologies, and pedagogical tools designed to address the specific demands of inclusive classroom settings effectively.

2.5 Research Gaps

Drawing on insights from prior empirical research, this study aimed to address notable gaps in both geographical coverage and teacher professional development. It specifically examined the often-overlooked experiences of secondary school educators teaching learners with learning disabilities in mainstream classroom settings. While considerable academic attention has been devoted to inclusive education across diverse contexts and disciplines, the specific realities faced by teachers in rural areas such as those in the Qacha's Nek district remain underexplored. In response to this gap, the study sought to offer an in-depth account of the lived experiences of rural secondary school teachers, with a particular focus on the challenges they encounter in implementing inclusive education and the pedagogical approaches they adopt to support learners with diverse needs.

2.6 Summary

This chapter outlined the theoretical framework that informed the philosophical assumptions underpinning the study. Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, which guided the research, provided a lens through which to understand the dynamic interactions between learners and teachers within mainstream classrooms, as well as the broader systems that influence

their development. The conceptual framework supporting the study was also discussed. In addition, the chapter examined the principles of realist research, which offered insight into teachers' lived experiences of instructing learners with learning disabilities and the challenges they face in doing so.

The reviewed literature highlighted that teachers frequently encounter difficulties in addressing the needs of learners with learning disabilities within inclusive classrooms. Moreover, the professional knowledge and support available to teachers, along with the strategies they employ to mitigate these challenges, were explored. This investigation underscored the need to enhance the quality of teaching and learning in inclusive educational environments.

The next chapter presents and discusses the methodological considerations and research design adopted to address the primary research questions of the study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter explored secondary school teachers' experiences in educating learners with learning disabilities within mainstream classrooms, supported by an extensive review of relevant literature. This chapter provides a detailed account of the methodological framework adopted in the study. It outlines the research paradigm, approach, design, participant selection, sampling technique and sample, methods of data generation and analysis, measures to ensure trustworthiness, ethical considerations, and the study's limitations.

3.2 Research Paradigm

Guraya et al. (2023) describe a research paradigm as a foundational set of beliefs and principles that guide researchers in structuring their inquiries and interpreting findings. Paradigms reflect researchers' assumptions about reality (ontology), knowledge (epistemology), and the methods used to investigate it (methodology) (Perera, 2018). This study adopts an interpretive

paradigm, which informed the research design and guided the processes of data collection and analysis.

3.2.1 Interpretive Paradigm

Interpretivism seeks to understand individuals' beliefs, motivations, and reasoning within their social contexts (Nickerson, 2022). Rehman and Alharthi (2016) argue that this paradigm aims to comprehend the subjective dimensions of human experience. In this study, the interpretive paradigm facilitates an exploration of secondary teachers' perspectives on teaching learners with learning disabilities, enabling an understanding of how they interpret and make meaning of their professional experiences in inclusive classroom settings.

This approach allows the researcher to gain insight into participants' emotional and pedagogical responses, and the strategies they use to address challenges in their practice (Mustofa, 2023). It highlights the significance of subjective experience and embraces multiple realities, employing qualitative methods to uncover diverse meanings (Guraya et al., 2023). Given the study's focus on the lived experiences of teachers, this paradigm is appropriate as it foregrounds the meanings that individuals attach to their social and professional worlds (Dignath et al., 2022).

According to Scheibelhofer (2023), interpretivism is well suited to qualitative interview-based research. It supports the notion that reality is socially constructed and experienced differently by each individual (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016). Thomson (2015) contends that people engage with similar phenomena in unique ways based on their personal reasoning. Accordingly, the researcher seeks to construct knowledge by interpreting the insights of secondary teachers working with learners with learning disabilities.

Gjermstad et al. (2023) stress that the interpretive paradigm emphasizes context-specific experiences, especially when dealing with diverse needs such as neurodevelopmental and learning

disabilities. Therefore, participants were selected based on their direct, personal engagement with the phenomenon under investigation. As Rehman and Alharthi (2016) observe, in this paradigm, knowledge is co-constructed through interaction between the researcher and participants. This collaborative exchange allows for a richer understanding of the participants' world.

In summary, the interpretive paradigm enabled the researcher to investigate the subjective experiences of secondary teachers, thereby facilitating a nuanced understanding of their pedagogical practices in inclusive classrooms. Accordingly, qualitative methods were employed to collect the necessary data.

3.3 Research Approach

This study employed a qualitative research approach. McLeod (2023) defines qualitative research as the collection and interpretation of non-numerical data such as language, narratives, and observation to understand human experience. According to Mohajan (2018), this approach allows researchers to explore how individuals construct meaning from their lived experiences.

The qualitative approach was chosen to explore the experiences of secondary school teachers instructing learners with learning disabilities. It allowed for in-depth inquiry into their thoughts, emotions, and strategies. Through this method, the researcher was able to pose open-ended questions, yielding detailed, reflective responses (Mohajan, 2018). As Kabir (2016) notes, qualitative research is instrumental in understanding the processes behind observed behaviours, including shifts in participants' perceptions and wellbeing.

Qualitative methods prioritize the insider's perspective, allowing researchers to interpret behaviour and experience as participants understand it (Burney et al., 2024). Alnaim (2023) suggests that this approach is especially valuable when examining complex social realities, such as those encountered in inclusive education. Accordingly, the study focused on the intricate,

context-dependent experiences of teachers, capturing the emotional and practical dimensions of their work.

3.4 Research Design

Jain (2023) defines research design as the structural framework that guides the planning, implementation, and analysis of a study. It outlines the methodological choices that shape how data is collected and interpreted (Sileyew, 2019). A well-defined research design ensures coherence between the research objectives and the tools used to address them. In this study, a qualitative research design was employed to provide a comprehensive understanding of teachers' experiences through the lens of inclusion.

3.4.1 Case Study Design

This study adopted a case study design to investigate secondary teachers' experiences within two selected schools in Qacha's Nek. As defined by Devi (2020), a case study is an in-depth examination of a specific phenomenon within its real-life context. McCombes (2023) emphasizes that case studies are especially valuable when researchers aim to examine multiple variables within a natural setting.

The case study approach was suitable for exploring the complexities of inclusive teaching practices. By focusing on two schools, the researcher was able to observe how teachers adapted to their specific environments analyzing teaching strategies, classroom interactions, and available resources. Case studies provide rich, contextualized understanding of human experiences and the meanings individuals attach to them (Matua & Van Der Wal, 2015).

This design facilitated a nuanced interpretation of how teachers navigate inclusion, capturing their emotional responses, coping mechanisms, and reflections. Furthermore, it enabled the researcher to apply theoretical insights to practical, real-world challenges (Shuttleworth, 2008).

According to Dahal et al. (2024), participant selection in case studies should be intentional, focusing on individuals whose experiences align with the study's aims. This allowed the researcher to generate meaningful, context-specific knowledge capable of informing inclusive education practices and policies.

3.5 Population

Ahmad et al. (2023) define a research population as the entire group of individuals, objects, or events sharing a common characteristic and relevant to the focus of the study. Similarly, Bhandari (2023) states that the population encompasses the broader group from which a sample is drawn. In this study, the population consists of secondary school teachers in two selected schools in Qacha's Nek who teach learners with learning disabilities in mainstream classrooms.

3.6 Participant Selection

As noted by Dahal et al. (2024), participant selection involves identifying individuals whose experiences align with the research objectives. Shukla (2020) explains that this process begins with defining the population and then selecting participants who can provide relevant insights. In this case, the target population comprised eight secondary teachers—four from each of the two schools. These educators were chosen because of their direct involvement in teaching learners with learning disabilities.

Their frontline role in curriculum delivery and learner support uniquely positioned them to provide rich, authentic insights. Their perspectives are essential for informing policy, improving inclusive practices, and identifying institutional gaps in support and training.

3.7 Sampling Technique and Sample

Turner (2020) defines sampling as the process of selecting a subset from a larger population for the purpose of data collection. In this study, eight secondary school teachers were selected to represent the wider population of educators working with learners with learning disabilities.

3.7.1 Purposive Sampling

This study employed purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling technique where participants are selected based on specific characteristics relevant to the research (Nikolopoulou, 2022). According to Palinkas et al. (2015), purposive sampling targets individuals with substantial knowledge or experience concerning the phenomenon under investigation.

Teachers were selected because they had direct experience of teaching learners with learning disabilities in inclusive settings. Their insights were central to the research objectives, ensuring the collection of meaningful, contextually relevant data. As Nikolopoulou (2022) notes, purposive sampling ensures depth and quality by focusing on participants who meet defined criteria.

Elmusharaf (2018) observes that purposive sampling allows researchers to use their judgement in selecting participants who are most likely to yield rich and valuable data. Teachers who demonstrated willingness and reflective capacity were invited to participate in the study.

To ensure diversity, the sample included teachers from both urban and rural schools. Urban schools tend to be better resourced, whereas rural institutions often experience significant

challenges. Callado Moreno et al. (2015) argue that limited resources in rural contexts can hinder effective inclusion. Similarly, Yadav and Solanki (2023) highlight the need for contextually sensitive approaches that address educational disparities. Including both settings allowed the study to present a more balanced and inclusive perspective on the challenges and strategies associated with inclusive teaching.

3.7.2 Characteristics of the Schools Involved in the Study

The selection of schools for this study was informed by considerations of logistical accessibility and financial constraints, particularly concerning transportation expenses. Furthermore, the selected schools embodied specific contextual features relevant to the investigation of secondary school teachers' experiences in educating learners with learning disabilities within mainstream classrooms. Both institutions are publicly funded and operate as non-residential schools. Neither provides a school feeding programme, and both charge the same tuition fees.

A key distinction between the two schools lies in their geographical location. School 1 (SCH-1) is an urban-based secondary school situated approximately three kilometers from the town centre of Qacha's Nek district. Its proximity to the town makes it a financially viable option for many learners. By contrast, School 2 (SCH-2) is located in a rural setting, positioned on a hillside across the Senqu River, and is significantly more remote in terms of accessibility from the town.

The purposive inclusion of one urban and one rural school was intended to ensure contextual variation and to explore how geographical location shapes teachers' experiences in inclusive educational settings. This comparative dimension allowed the study to capture both

commonalities and location-specific challenges and strategies, thereby contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of inclusive education across different educational contexts.

3.7.3 Biographical Information of Participating Teachers

This section presents an overview of the biographical profiles of the participating teachers and their associated schools. To preserve confidentiality, all schools and participants were anonymized using pseudonyms. The schools were labelled SCH and assigned numerical identifiers (SCH-1 and SCH-2), while teachers were designated by the letter T and numbered accordingly T1 to T4 for teachers from SCH-1 and T1 to T4 for teachers from SCH-2.

These teachers were interviewed within the context of their respective schools to gather in-depth insights into their professional experiences. The use of pseudonyms aligns with the ethical protocols outlined in the relevant section of this study and ensures that participants' identities remain protected. Tables 3.1 and 3.2 present detailed biographical information about the participants from each school.

Table 3.1: Biographical Information for Teachers in School 1 (SCH-1)

Teachers	T1 SCH-1	T2SCH-1	T3 SCH -1	T4 SCH-1
Age	41-45	41-45	36-40	36-40
Sex	Female	Female	Female	Female
Teachers' qualifications	B.Ed.	Diploma	B.Ed.	B.Ed.
Years of teaching experience	17	12	8	14
Years of teaching experience at a target school	16	12	8	14
Grades	8-11	8-9	8-11	8-11
Subjects	English and Literature	Maths and Physical Science	English and Geography	Physical Science and Geography

Table 3.2: Biographical Information for Teachers in School 2 (SCH-2)

Teachers	T1 SCH-2	T2 SCH-2	T3 SCH-2	T4 SCH-2
Age	26-30	46-50	31-35	26-30
Sex	Female	Female	Female	Female
Teachers' qualifications	Diploma	B.Ed.	Diploma	Diploma
Teaching experience	4	19	6	3
Years of teaching experience at a target school	4	16	6	3
Grades	8-11	8-11	8-9	8-9
Subjects	Maths and Physical Science	Sesotho and English	Biology	Accounting

Clarification of Codes:

- T1 SCH-1 indicates Teacher 1 from school- 1

- T2 SCH-1 indicates Teacher 2 from school-1
- T3 SCH-1 indicates Teacher 3 from school-1
- T4 SCH-1 indicates Teacher 4 from school-1
- T1 SCH-2 indicates Teacher 1 from school-2
- T2 SCH-2 indicates Teacher 2 from school-2
- T3 SCH-2 indicates Teacher 3 from school-2
- T4 SCH-2 indicates Teacher 4 from school-2

The selection of schools for this research was influenced by considerations of accessibility and financial constraints, particularly regarding transport costs. Additionally, the schools chosen possessed specific attributes relevant to examining secondary school teachers' experiences of educating learners with learning disabilities in mainstream classrooms. Both institutions are government-funded, non-residential secondary schools that do not provide feeding schemes and levy the same school fees.

A notable difference between the two schools is their location: School 1 (SCH-1) is situated in an urban area approximately three kilometers from the centre of Qacha's Nek district, making it accessible and affordable for many learners. Conversely, School 2 (SCH-2) is located in a rural area, positioned on a hillside across the Senqu River, which places it at a considerable distance from the town.

The purposeful selection of one urban and one rural school aimed to ensure contextual variation, allowing an exploration of how geographical setting influences teachers' experiences of teaching learners with learning disabilities in mainstream classrooms. This approach facilitates identification of both shared and context-specific challenges and strategies, thereby enriching the study's relevance to diverse educational environments.

3.7.4 Combined Participant Profile Overview

Data from both schools, as displayed in Tables 3.1 and 3.2, reveal that participants' ages ranged from 26 to 50 years, with the youngest teacher aged 27 and the eldest 48, both from SCH-2. Most teachers were aged between 30 and 45 years across both schools. Regarding gender distribution, there was one male and seven female participants. Concerning qualifications, the majority held a Diploma in Education, followed by those with a Degree in Education, with one teacher possessing a B.Ed. Honours in Special Education. Most teachers had over five years' teaching experience, except for two from SCH-2 who had less. The majority taught learners from Grades 8 to 11, with four teaching Grades 8 to 11, three teaching Grades 8 to 9, and one teaching Grades 9 to 11. Those teaching narrower grade ranges reported regularly covering all relevant grades during the year through shared class and subject responsibilities. Subjects taught included Mathematics, Physical Sciences, Geography, English, Sesotho, Biology, and Accounting.

These teachers were selected based on their direct and relevant experience in teaching learners with learning disabilities within mainstream classrooms, providing valuable, in-depth insights into their daily professional realities.

3.8 Data Collection Methods and Instruments

According to Jain (2025), data collection involves systematically gathering and evaluating information from multiple sources to address research questions, analyze outcomes, and predict future trends. Kabir (2016) describes data collection as obtaining information on specific topics through participant responses to targeted questions, subsequently analyzed to draw conclusions. In this study, data were collected primarily through interviews.

Interviewing secondary school teachers allowed them to articulate their views comprehensively, including on unforeseen questions. These interviews were conducted at the two selected schools in Qacha's Nek district and were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim.

3.8.1 Semi-structured Interviews

The study employed semi-structured interviews as the principal data collection method. Dejonkheere and Vaughn (2019) describe semi-structured interviews as flexible, guided conversations between interviewer and interviewee, supplemented by follow-up questions and clarifications. George (2022) emphasizes that such responses can inform subsequent questions and contribute to building a rich data set for further inquiry. Teachers were invited to elaborate, clarify, or restate their answers to deepen understanding.

This approach is particularly suitable because it allows participants to introduce new perspectives during interviews and provides rich, detailed responses relevant to the research questions (Inglethorpe, 2024). While a guiding question framework structured the discussion, participants retained flexibility to explore topics in depth, enhancing the quality of data (George, 2022).

Semi-structured interviews also foster a supportive atmosphere conducive to discussing sensitive topics related to teaching learners with learning disabilities. This environment encourages openness and honesty, enabling teachers to share challenges and experiences candidly.

3.9 Data Analysis

Jonson (2023) defines data analysis as the process of organizing, transforming, and interpreting data to extract meaningful information that supports informed decision-making. Perez

(2019) views analysis as a systematic examination of collected information to clarify and summarize findings.

3.9.1 Thematic Analysis

This study utilized thematic analysis, an adaptable qualitative method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns within data (Kiger & Varpio, 2020). Thematic analysis is applicable across various epistemologies and research designs, facilitating the organization of data into coherent themes (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). It supports exploration of commonalities and differences in participant perspectives, thereby generating novel insights (Nowell et al., 2017).

The purpose of thematic analysis is to categorize key themes that address research questions, enabling the development of new conceptual understandings grounded in the data (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). In this study, an inductive coding approach was used to identify salient ideas emerging directly from participants' responses, thereby allowing comprehensive interpretation of teachers' experiences.

Thematic analysis was well-suited to capturing the complexities of secondary school teachers' experiences with inclusive education for learners with learning disabilities. By organizing data into meaningful categories, the analysis highlighted recurring themes such as educational challenges, support mechanisms, and pedagogical strategies in both urban and rural settings.

Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step process guided the analysis:

1. Familiarization with the data through repeated reading of transcripts and note-taking to identify initial concepts.
2. Generating initial codes to label relevant data segments consistently.
3. Searching for themes by grouping related codes and iteratively refining these clusters.

4. Reviewing themes to ensure coherence with the data and refining thematic boundaries.
5. Defining and naming themes clearly to capture their essence and significance (Caulfield, 2022; Naeem et al., 2023).
6. Producing a comprehensive report supported by illustrative participant quotations and visual maps showing connections between codes and themes.

This rigorous process facilitated a nuanced understanding of teachers' perspectives, enabling the study to reveal how educators navigate the challenges and strategies of teaching learners with learning disabilities in mainstream classrooms.

3.10 Use of Verbatim Quotations

Khalema (2023) highlights that verbatim quotations preserve participants' authentic voices and perspectives, enhancing the credibility and authenticity of qualitative findings. Such quotations bring theoretical concepts to life and provide readers with a direct connection to the data (Thorne, 2020). Kurata (2024) notes that exact participant language captures emotions and unique expressions, offering robust evidence that supports interpretations. Employing verbatim quotes thus upholds the integrity of the research and substantiates its conclusions.

3.11 Ethical Considerations

3.11.1 Permission

Ethical protocols were observed prior to data collection, including securing approval from the National University of Lesotho (NUL) and the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET). Permission was also sought from the principals of the participating secondary schools.

3.11.2 Informed and Voluntary Consent

Participants were fully informed of the study's purpose, potential risks, benefits, and data usage before providing written consent (Bhandari, 2024). Teachers were reassured that participation was voluntary, with freedom to withdraw at any point without penalty or requirement to provide reasons. The researcher ensured transparency regarding interview content, study duration, and contact details for supervisory and institutional oversight.

3.11.3 Confidentiality and Anonymity

Strict measures were implemented to maintain confidentiality and protect participants' identities. Personal identifiers were removed from reports, and all data were securely stored and accessible only with prior permission. The researcher committed to honesty and accuracy throughout the study.

3.12 Trustworthiness

3.12.1 Credibility

Credibility reflects confidence in the accuracy and validity of qualitative findings (Stahl & King, 2020). To enhance credibility, member checking was conducted, allowing participants to verify and confirm the accuracy of interpretations prior to publication.

3.12.2 Dependability

Dependability concerns the stability and consistency of findings over time (McLeod, 2024). This study ensured dependability by documenting methodological decisions and changes

thoroughly and by inviting peer review of data and interpretations to confirm reliability (Slegle, 2013).

3.12.3 Generalizability

Generalizability refers to the applicability of findings beyond the studied sample (Barnes et al., 2012). Given that this study was limited to two schools in Qacha's Nek district, generalization to wider populations is not claimed.

3.12.4 Transferability

According to Munthe-Kaas et al. (2020), transferability pertains to the extent to which the context of a study aligns with or diverges from the settings of other research contributing relevant data, based on predetermined characteristics. Slegle (2013) adds that authentic qualitative research maximizes contextual detail by intentionally selecting diverse settings and informants. This diversity facilitates the demonstration of how the findings may be applicable in other contexts.

In this study, transferability is established through the provision of rich, contextual descriptions, including comprehensive information about the research setting, the participants (secondary school teachers), and the methods used to generate data. Such detailed accounts enable readers to determine whether the findings may be relevant to their own contexts or experiences (Munthe-Kaas et al., 2020). Furthermore, the methods employed in this study permit secondary school teachers to relate the findings to their own classroom experiences of teaching learners with learning disabilities in mainstream educational environments.

3.12.5 Confirmability

McLeod (2024) defines confirmability in qualitative research as the degree to which the findings are grounded in the actual data rather than being shaped by the researcher's personal assumptions or biases. In a similar vein, Stahl and King (2020) assert that confirmability represents the researcher's commitment to achieving the most accurate representation of participants' realities.

In this study, I maintained objectivity by ensuring that all interpretations and conclusions are directly traceable to the data collected from participants. Documentation was clearly linked to participant responses, thereby demonstrating a neutral and transparent analytic stance. Such practices enhance the trustworthiness and rigour of the research.

3.13 Summary

This chapter outlined the methodological framework and research design employed to address the central research questions of the study. It detailed the procedures for data generation and analysis, and addressed considerations relating to trustworthiness, including credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability. Ethical safeguards for participant rights and data integrity were also discussed.

The subsequent chapter, Chapter 4, presents the analysis and interpretation of the empirical data collected.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter detailed the research methodology employed in this study, which investigates the lived experiences of secondary school teachers educating learners with learning disabilities in mainstream classrooms in Qacha's Nek. Building upon the qualitative data collected through semi-structured interviews, this chapter presents an in-depth analysis and interpretation of the findings in direct response to the study's primary research questions. Guided by thematic analysis, the discussion highlights the everyday realities, pedagogical challenges, and instructional strategies described by participants, thereby contributing meaningfully to the achievement of the study's aims.

4.2 Research Objectives

- To understand teachers' experiences of teaching learners with learning disabilities in mainstream classrooms.
- To explore the challenges of teaching learners with learning disabilities in mainstream classrooms.
- To explore ways in which teachers could be helped to obtain professional skills in supporting learners with learning disabilities.
- To examine mitigation strategies used in mainstream classrooms to overcome the challenges teachers encounter.

4.3 Presentation and Interpretation of Findings

This section presents and interprets the findings obtained from the semi-structured interviews from teachers regarding their experiences of teaching learners with learning disabilities in mainstream classrooms. The findings are systematically organized into distinct themes and subthemes that emerged from participants' response. A total of four primary themes have been identified as presented in the Table below, encompassing 20 subthemes.

Table 4.1: Themes, Subthemes, and Alignment with Research Sub-Questions (RQs)

Theme	Subtheme	Key Findings	Linked Research Sub-Question (RQ)
Theme 1: Experiences of Teaching Learners with Learning Disabilities	Understanding of learning disabilities	Teachers understand learners with learning disabilities.	RQ1
	Learning Disabilities	They know different types of learning disabilities.	RQ1
	Difficulties of teaching learners with learning Disabilities	Teachers found it difficult to work with learners with learning disabilities.	RQ1
	Rewarding Experience	Some other teachers found it rewarding to teach learners with learning disabilities.	RQ1
Theme 2: Challenges Teachers Faced	Lack of Resources	Teachers reported insufficient teaching materials, reliance on standard textbooks, and difficulty differentiating instruction for learners with disabilities.	RQ2
	Lack of Teaching Skills	Teachers expressed frustration due to inadequate training, feelings of helplessness, and inability to modify teaching methods for learners with disabilities.	RQ2
	Balancing the Needs of Learners	Teachers struggled to manage diverse learner needs, resulting in gaps in academic achievement and reduced learner motivation.	RQ2
	Overcrowded Classrooms	Large class sizes hinder individual attention, create classroom management issues, and affect learners' social-emotional well-being.	RQ2
	Unauthorized Absenteeism	Learners with disabilities often missed lessons or withdrew, disrupting learning continuity and affecting academic progress.	RQ2
Theme 3: Teacher Professional Help and Skills	Training Received	Mixed experiences: some teachers received formal training in identifying and supporting learners with disabilities; others relied on self-directed learning.	RQ3
	Communication Skills	Effective communication helps identify learning disabilities and enhances teacher-student interaction.	RQ3
	Patience in Challenging Situations	Patience supports emotional regulation, classroom management, and individualized attention for learners with disabilities.	RQ3
	Self-Taught Expertise	Teachers developed their own strategies and knowledge to support learners in the absence of formal training.	RQ3
Theme 4: Mitigation Strategies in Mainstream Classrooms	Team Teaching	Collaboration among teachers through team teaching and shared strategies improves support for learners with disabilities.	RQ4
	Parental Involvement	Parents and siblings provide information and learning support, strengthening home-school partnerships.	RQ4
	MOET Support	Minimal direct support from the Ministry; bureaucratic processes dominate over practical assistance.	RQ4
	Individualized Instruction	Tailored lessons based on learner strengths and needs enhance engagement and learning outcomes.	RQ4
	Safe and Supportive Environment	Teachers create inclusive, emotionally safe classrooms that foster participation and well-being.	RQ4
	Collaboration	Teachers work with parents, colleagues, and specialists to implement inclusive practices and individualized plans.	RQ4
	Remedial Classes	After-school or additional support sessions improve comprehension and bridge learning gaps for learners with disabilities.	RQ4

4.4 Theme 1: Teachers' Experiences of Teaching Learners with Learning Disabilities in Mainstream Classrooms

The responses under this theme were derived from teachers understanding of learners with learning disabilities, the type of learning disabilities they have and teachers' experiences of teaching learners with learning disabilities in mainstream classrooms. All the eight interviewees responded according to their knowledge and experiences of teaching learners with learning disabilities in mainstream classroom.

4.4.1 Teachers' Understanding of Learners with Learning Disabilities

Responding to teachers' understanding of learners with learning disabilities, teachers consistently described these learners as individuals who struggle to learn due to various cognitive and academic challenges. Teachers pointed that such learners are often unable to meet expected learning objectives and require specialized attention and support within the classroom setting. Reflecting their understanding, they mentioned that:

I understand that learners with learning disabilities are learners who struggle to learn due to some difficulties they encounter in the process of teaching and learning such as reading, writing, speaking, listening, reasoning, and calculations. They are the learners who need a serious special attention (T1 SCH-1).

I understand that they are the learners who are facing difficulties in learning (T2 SCH-1).
Ke bana ba nang le se ikhethileng seo re sitoang ho se fihlela re le litichere. Seo re lokelang hore re sebetsane le sona empa re sa atlehe ho etsa joalo

[They are learners with unique needs that we, as teachers, are unable to fully meet. They require specific support that we are expected to provide, but we often struggle to do so effectively] (T3 SCH-1).

They are learners who are unable to reach learning objectives due to their disabilities as opposed to the learners without disabilities (T4 SCH-1).

They are learners who are struggling to understand and facing difficulties in calculations, reading and writing. They are the learners who need special attention (T1 SCH-2).

They are learners in need of all different kind of education support services to learn (T2 SCH-2).

In my understanding, learners with learning disabilities are individuals who have one or more specific learning difficulties that can impact their ability to learn and recall information. These difficulties can range from mild to severe, and may affect different areas of learning such as reading, writing, math, or social skills (T3 SCH-2).

They have loss of functional activities to perform in a normal manner. They have difficulty in understanding what they are taught or told to do (T4 SCH-2).

Teachers' responses indicate a foundational understanding of learning disabilities, characterized by the recognition that learners with such disabilities have persistent difficulties in acquiring and processing information. By describing these learners as "struggling to learn" and "unable to reach objectives", teachers demonstrate an awareness of academic gaps and limitations these learners encounter in the mainstream classrooms. The emphasis on the need for "special attention" suggests that teachers perceive these learners as requiring additional support compared to their peers.

4.4.2 Learning Disabilities

When teachers asked about the types of learning disabilities present in their classrooms, they provided varied responses. Some demonstrate awareness of specific learning disabilities, such as dyslexia and dyscalculia, which affect learners' abilities to read, write, and perform mathematical calculations. During the interview, they mentioned that:

Learners with learning disabilities in my class are those who are struggling on reading and writing. They are unable to read a question paper. Ke bana ba sa atleheng ho bala ho hang 'm'e. Ha ba tsebe ho kopitsa linoutsi ba fosa spelling sa ntho eo ba e shebileng. Ba ngola lintho tseo e seng tsona, mantsoe a sieo. Le ha ba bala, ba bala mantsoe a sieo. They are the learners I refer to as learners experiencing dyslexia according to how I have learned

[Learners with learning disabilities in my class are those who are struggling on reading and writing. They are unable to read a question paper. They are learners who cannot read at all, madam. They do not know how to copy notes; they misspell words that are right in front of them. They write words which do not exist, even when they read, they misread words. They are the learners I refer to as learners experiencing dyslexia according to how I have learned] (T1 SCH-1).

They have difficulties in understanding questions and following instructions, it is difficult to them to speak and write English. They do not manage to come up with their own vocabulary. So when learners are facing such problems, we believe that they have dyslexia (T1SCH-2).

In my classroom, I work with a variety of learners with learning disabilities, including dyslexia and dyscalculia (T3 SCH-2).

Since they are severely struggling with calculations I can associate their problem with dyscalculia (T4 SCH-2).

I don't know the type exactly, since they are severely struggling with reading and writing and English speaking as well, my colleague mentioned that these learners have dyslexia (T3 SCH-1).

However, other teachers acknowledged that while they were unable to identify the exact type of learning disabilities, they observed that certain learners consistently struggle with foundational academic skills such as reading, writing, and numeracy. In their responses, teachers mentioned that:

I don't know the type of learning disabilities they have but they are the learners who delay to understand or who do not understand the instructions totally. They are unable to use arithmetical operations (T2 SCH-1).

I just realized that they are learners who are unable to read and write, I'm not sure about the type (T4 SCH-1).

I have learners who are unable to follow instructions, they are struggling to write and read, and I also have learners who are low sighted. I understand that they have learning disabilities; I don't know the type really (T2 SCH-2).

Teachers' responses reveal differing levels of awareness and understanding regarding specific types of learning disabilities among their learners. Those who identified conditions such as dyslexia and dyscalculia demonstrate a foundational knowledge of learning disabilities and an ability to recognize patterns of difficulty related to language and mathematical processing. This suggests that some teachers possess a degree of familiarity with the terminology and characteristics associated with particular learning disabilities.

However, the fact that other teachers were unable to name specific types of learning disabilities but could describe observable academic struggles in reading, writing, and calculations indicates a reliance on surface level indicators rather than diagnostic understanding. This reflects a broader challenge with inclusive education, where teachers may lack the training accurately identify and respond to various learning needs.

4.4.3 General Teachers' Experiences

Teachers were asked about their experiences of teaching learners with learning disabilities in mainstream classroom. Within the broader context of teachers' experiences of teaching learners with learning disabilities in the mainstream classroom, their responses revealed two contrasting experience:

- *Difficulties on teaching learners with learning disabilities*
- *Rewarding experience.*

4.4.3.1 Difficulties on Teaching Learners with Learning Disabilities

Many teachers described learners with learning disabilities as individuals who experience difficulty in comprehending instructions. A prevailing perception among participants was that the majority of these learners exhibit characteristics associated with dyslexia and dyscalculia, as evidenced by their struggles with reading, writing, and mathematical calculations. Therefore, educators reported significant challenges in effectively teaching such learners within mainstream classroom environments.

According to participants' accounts, the presence of learning disabilities particularly dyslexia and dyscalculia pose a considerable barrier to instructional delivery. Teachers observed that these

learners frequently encountered difficulties in processing written and numerical information, thereby limiting their academic engagement and performance. Based on their professional experiences and understandings, the teachers elaborated as follows:

I experienced that such learners delay to start writing when they are given a classwork, they wait for others to submit and then copy from them, when they fail to copy they do not submit. I found it difficult for me to teach such learners (T2 SCH-1).

I experience that these type of learners are not easily taught, their educational needs are not met and they need a lot of time. I become impatient when I repeat one thing in several times. I fail to understand their different styles of learning (T3SCH-1).

I experience difficulties in teaching of such learners because I have observed that these learners are struggling to understand, they are well behaved, and they are listening attentively but the problem comes where they are assigned to do the work. They score little marks and I don't reach them. I find it difficult to teach them and I feel helpless really (T4 SCH-1).

I have experienced that most of learners with learning disabilities like school and obey school rules and regulations. The problem that they have is related to their learning, they do not understand anything (T2 SCH-2).

Based on the responses obtained from participants, teachers generally perceive learners with learning disabilities as individuals who encounter persistent difficulties in acquiring foundational academic skills, particularly in reading, writing, and numerical computation. Participants demonstrated awareness of specific learning difficulties, frequently referencing conditions such as dyslexia and dyscalculia. In addition to academic challenges, these learners

were described as having difficulties with memory retention, task completion, and note-taking skills that are critical to effective learning and academic development.

A substantial number of participants expressed that teaching learners with learning disabilities in mainstream classrooms posed considerable challenges. Teachers noted that the diverse needs of these learners were difficult to address within the structure of a mainstream setting. The standard instructional models employed in such environments were often perceived as inflexible, limiting the capacity to deliver tailored support that meets the individualized needs of learners with learning difficulties.

4.4.3.2 Teaching as a Rewarding Experience

Despite acknowledging the complexities and challenges associated with instructing learners with learning disabilities, some teachers expressed a sense of fulfilment in engaging with this learner population. A number of participants conveyed that, while demanding, the experience was ultimately rewarding. They highlighted personal satisfaction derived from witnessing learner progress and contributing to inclusive education practices. These sentiments are reflected in the following participant responses:

It is quite challenging to teaching such learners because I have learnt that these kids are struggling to learn and are also afraid to speak in the presence of their peers. They are afraid to give wrong answers so their performance is poor. Although it is not easy to meet their needs, having them in my class motivates me a lot because I give myself a plenty of time to prepare for their class and this helps me a lot because I familiarize myself with content to be delivered and the methods to be used, including different activities to be performed. I am also able to plan how to manage my time (T1 SCH-1).

At first I found it difficult to teaching them, I felt like they could be separated from others. But now I manage to help them understand some concepts. Their performance is still low, but to compare it with some previous years, I can say it is better (T1SCH-2).

I experienced that teaching students with learning disabilities can be challenging but rewarding experience. There are some challenges related to the need to adapt lesson plans and assessments to accommodate different learning styles. There is the need to managing the wide range of abilities and needs within the classroom, and addressing the emotional and behavioural needs of students with learning disabilities. On the other hand, I experienced the pleasure of seeing my students making progress and reaching their goals. I feel excited when I manage to form the unique relationships with my students (T3SCH-2).

It is not easy to work on such learners because they are struggling a lot but as a teacher, I have realized that I need to pay more attention to them, to be more willing to help them understand and encourage them to do practices on their difficulties to get more interest on the subject. I have also experienced that when I encourage them to do team work or work with others; they perform much better than working individually (T4 SCH-2).

The teachers' responses indicate that, rather than remaining immobilized by initial discomfort; they proactively sought support and guidance. The imperative to cater for a diverse student population appears to have motivated them to move beyond routine lesson preparation, fostering a commitment to continuous professional learning and the refinement of pedagogical skills. Many educators expressed that teaching learners with learning disabilities within mainstream classrooms is an inherently rewarding experience. Their positive attitudes suggest the

presence of an educational environment that values inclusion and diversity, ultimately benefitting both pupils and practitioners.

When discussing the fulfilling nature of teaching learners with learning difficulties, teachers frequently referred to the deep sense of purpose derived from contributing meaningfully to students' academic development. They articulated that observing even incremental progress among learners who face personal and academic challenges evokes a distinct sense of achievement and professional satisfaction.

Such experiences appear to strengthen teacher–student relationships and support the cultivation of qualities such as patience and empathy. In turn, this contributes to the enhancement of teaching practices and overall professional growth. For many educators, the opportunity to assist learners in reaching goals that may previously have seemed unattainable reinforces their dedication to the principles and practices of inclusive education.

4.5 Theme2: Challenges of Teaching Learners with Learning Disabilities in Mainstream Classrooms

Teachers were invited to share the challenges they face in supporting learners with learning disabilities in mainstream classrooms. Many teachers appeared to face a range of significant challenges in effectively teaching learners with learning disabilities within mainstream classroom settings. These challenges often included difficulties in addressing diverse learning needs and balancing the demands of inclusive education with curriculum requirement.

4.5.1 Lack of Time

The majority of participants indicated that they lack sufficient time to devote to learners with learning disabilities within mainstream classrooms. They explained that these learners often require individualized support, which presents a significant challenge to the effective implementation of inclusive teaching strategies. During the interviews, several participants remarked that:

The time I have is limited (T2 SCH-1).

The main challenge I am facing is that I do not have enough time to give them enough time that they need (T1 SCH-2).

I do not have enough time (T3 SCH-2).

Some of the teachers reported that certain students in their classrooms have severe learning disabilities that demand intensive individualized support. They emphasized that the 40 minutes lesson period is often insufficient to effectively address these students' unique academic and developmental needs. Giving the complexity and severity of some learning disabilities, meaningful progress frequently requires additional time for differentiated instruction, one-on-one engagement, and continuous monitoring. The limited instructional time therefore becomes a significant barrier, preventing teachers from fully implementing inclusive teaching strategies. This lack of adequate time ultimately hinders both the learning outcomes of students with learning disabilities and teachers' abilities to balance the needs of the entire class. In their response, they asserted that:

They need a lot of time, and that hinders progress on teaching and learning as each and every subject has scheduled time for it, 40 minutes is not the time that I can meet the needs of all learners in the classroom. They need special attention and that is very impossible to

offer because they are overcrowded. Among them, there are those who are hearing and sight loss, they don't report their problem and we delay to help them (T4 SCH-1).

They have difficulties in concepts, numeracy and reasoning since accounting involves abstract ideas. So, this challenges me because they take a long time to grasp foundational ideas which slow the overall pace and others end up disengaged. Walking in a slow pace, need a lot of time, so, I don't have enough time to help them individually because 40 minutes is the only scheduled time for my lessons (T4 SCH-2).

They are many in the class so, I don't have enough time to help them individually (T2 SCH-2).

Teachers' responses indicated that they are unable to give personalized attention to learners with learning disabilities because of time constraints. In the mainstream classrooms, teachers are responsible for all learners regardless of different learning needs they have. As a result, it becomes difficult to spend sufficient one-on-one time with learners who need extra support because teachers' schedule is too tight to accommodate individual support. Learners with learning disabilities do not get the attention and the help they require which can hinder their academic progress. This imposes guilt and frustration to teachers when they fail to meet the needs of all learners in the inclusive setting.

4.5.2 Lack of Resources

The teachers were frustrated and helpless when they mentioned that lack of resources challenges their teaching abilities. They wanted to provide the best learning experience for their students but, due to insufficient resources their teaching effectiveness is hindered. They mentioned that:

What challenges me further is that I don't have enough resources which may improve their writing and reading skills (T1 SCH-1).

What challenges me is that I don't have enough materials and lack of curriculum structure ... (T2 SCH-1).

And I do not have enough time and enough resources to provide individualized instruction (T3 SCH-2).

I do not have extra material suitable for their learning; I use only books prescribed (T3 SCH-1).

Teachers' responses revealed their personal challenges and a sense of frustration arising from the unavailability of essential support materials required for inclusive instruction. They pointed out that they lacked access to specialized teaching resources designed to assist learners with learning disabilities in mainstream classroom settings. Instead, they were confined to utilizing standard curriculum textbooks, which are often inappropriate for students who benefit from simplified content, visual aids, or alternative instructional formats. In the absence of diverse educational materials, teachers found it difficult to differentiate their teaching approaches and adequately support those learners who require more individualized and adaptive methods.

4.5.3 Lack of Teaching Skills

Teachers conveyed a sense of inadequacy regarding their instructional skills when working with learners with learning disabilities in mainstream classrooms. They expressed frustration stemming from the perceived ineffectiveness of their teaching methods and a sense of underachievement in fulfilling their professional responsibilities. With evident discouragement, they explained that:

Like I said, I don't have skills to help them understand, sometimes I feel like they do what they are doing on purpose. They are not cooperative and they used to be frequently absent from school. They are not listening and they are disruptive. I feel overwhelmed really (T3 SCH-1).

There are other learners who are totally struggling even if I am giving them extra classes. It seems as they have never been taught and in this case I realized that I do not have enough skills to meet their needs and even though I see that they are unique, I still treat them the same as their peers, I continuing using cognitive books prescribed. I give up (T1 SCH-2).

The findings reveal teachers' profound frustration, feelings of helplessness, and emotional fatigue when teaching learners with learning disabilities in mainstream classrooms. Many reported a lack of confidence and insufficient training in effectively supporting these students. They indicated that they do not possess the requisite skills to modify their instructional approaches to address the specific needs of learners with disabilities. Consequently, they often interpret learners' lack of engagement and disruptive behaviour as deliberate, which exacerbates their sense of frustration and misapprehension.

Despite attempts such as providing additional lessons, teachers frequently feel inadequately prepared to offer substantive support, particularly to those learners who continue to face significant challenges. This situation contributes to emotional exhaustion and, ultimately, a sense of professional defeat and demoralization.

4.5.4 Balancing the Needs of Learners

The study's findings indicated that several teachers struggle to manage the varied needs of learners within mainstream classrooms. Failure to adequately address this diversity can have

significant repercussions for both individual students and the broader learning environment. Pupils with learning disabilities may be deprived of the necessary support to fully comprehend essential concepts, resulting in knowledge gaps and suboptimal academic performance. Feelings of neglect or an inability to keep pace with peers can provoke frustration, diminished self-confidence, and reduced motivation to engage in classroom activities. When sharing their perspectives, participants remarked that:

One of the biggest challenges I encounter when teaching learners with learning disabilities in the mainstream classrooms is balancing the needs of all students (T2 SCH-2).

Although I have a little knowledge on how to deal with these learners, a biggest challenge is that I am unable to balance their needs. Kannete 'm'e ho batla ho le boimanyana ho ruta bana ba mofuta ona. Ha se bana ba fihlelehang ha bonolo hoba ke ee ke bone ke sena nako e lekaneng hore nka ba thusa ho bala. Leha ke re ke bua le bona ba itholela tu!

[Although I have a little knowledge on how to deal with these learners, a biggest challenge is that I am unable to balance their needs .Honestly, madam, I find it very difficult to teach learners of this kind. They are not easily reachable because I do not have enough time to help them. When I talk to them, they remain silent.] (T1 SCH-1).

Neglecting to accommodate the diverse needs of learners may lead to certain students being left behind, thereby exacerbating disparities in academic attainment and restricting the potential for all pupils to achieve success. Thus, when learners perceive that their individual requirements are overlooked, their motivation declines, often resulting in disengagement. They stressed that:

They seem to be absent minded and irresponsible at the same time, when they are given a piece of work, they don't do it. When you ask the reason why they did not do the work,

they say they have forgotten or they didn't hear that they were assigned to do something. Sometimes they just disappear. It is difficult to meet their needs or balance them with their peers (T1 SCH-1).

The findings underscored a misalignment between teachers' expectations and learners' behaviours, which complicates the challenge of addressing diverse needs within mainstream classrooms. Educators reported feeling frustrated when students fail to complete assigned tasks, often offering explanations such as forgetfulness or not having heard instructions. This points to a perceived lack of learner engagement and responsibility, which in turn hampers teachers' ability to maintain effective classroom management.

4.5.5 Overcrowded Classrooms

The majority of teachers identified the diverse range of learners in the classroom as a significant challenge when teaching students with learning disabilities within mainstream settings. They argued that a uniform, one-size-fits-all approach to instruction is inadequate for addressing the unique strengths and needs of each learner. For example, they highlighted that:

One of my classrooms is large and noisy, so it is difficult for students with learning disabilities to focus. Secondly, I think I lack classroom management on how to best support learners with learning disabilities... (T2 SCH-2).

The presence of numerous learners within a limited space often contributes to increased distractions and interruptions, complicating efforts to maintain classroom discipline. This frequently leads to a disorderly learning environment in which students struggle to concentrate, posing significant challenges for teachers in managing the class effectively. Teachers reported that:

They are many in the class so I don't have enough time to help them individually. Apart from that, when they try participating in class their peers are always laughing at them.

They ended losing their self- esteem and sometimes others become aggressive (T2 SCH-2).

They need special attention and that is very impossible to offer because they are overcrowded (T4 SCH-1).

The findings of this study underscore the difficulties associated with inclusive education in overcrowded classrooms, particularly in relation to peer interactions, the emotional well-being of learners with learning disabilities, and teachers' efforts to establish a safe and inclusive environment.

Teachers expressed significant concern regarding the adverse social climate that arises in densely populated classrooms. The sheer number of pupils often hinders effective behaviour monitoring and management. When learners with learning disabilities attempt to engage, their efforts are frequently subject to ridicule by classmates, resulting in emotional distress such as diminished self-esteem. In response to such mockery, these learners often experience embarrassment, which subsequently discourages their future participation. Additionally, some may exhibit aggressive behaviours, potentially as a form of defence or frustration.

4.5.6 Unauthorized Absenteeism

Several teachers identified unauthorized absenteeism among learners with learning disabilities as a further challenge. Missing scheduled lessons leads to gaps in understanding critical content and adversely affects academic achievement. During the interviews, teachers reported that:

Most of learners, who experience difficulties in the classroom, enjoy sporting. So when I give them remedial classes after school, they do not show up (T1 SCH-2).

Another challenge is related to behavioral issues of these learners. The day when they write my tests, they hide themselves or miss the school (T2 SCH-1).

When they are given a piece of work, they don't do it. When you ask the reason why they did not do the work, they say they have forgotten or they didn't hear that they were assigned to do something. Sometimes they just choose disappear (T1 SCH-1).

They are not cooperative and they used to be frequently absent from school (T3 SCH-1).

An analysis of the teachers' responses indicates that learners with learning disabilities often disengage either physically by leaving the classroom or mentally by withdrawing from lessons, which hinders teachers' ability to support and monitor them effectively. Educators observed that these learners frequently demonstrate limited cooperation during classroom activities and are often absent without legitimate justification. Such patterns of non-participation and irregular attendance disrupt their learning continuity, making it challenging for teachers to provide sustained support. As a result, their academic progress is frequently interrupted, making it difficult to remain aligned with the curriculum and thereby contributing to an ever-widening gap in educational achievement.

4.6 Theme3: Teacher Professional Help and Skills to Support Learners with Learning Disabilities.

During the interviews, teachers were asked to elaborate on the training they had received concerning inclusive education. This included their ability to recognize learners with learning disabilities, the forms of support available for such learners, and the nature of assistance provided by the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) in accommodating these learners within mainstream classrooms.

4.6.1 Training Received as Professional Preparation for Identifying Learners with Learning Disabilities

Teachers were invited to reflect on any professional training they had undertaken related to the identification of learners with learning disabilities. Their responses revealed a mixed picture. Some participants reported having received formal training, which they felt had equipped them with the necessary competencies to identify and support learners with learning disabilities in mainstream settings. In contrast, others indicated that they had not received any formal instruction in this area. These teachers noted that they had relied on personal initiative and self-acquired knowledge to recognize and assist learners with such needs.

4.6.1.1 Communication Skills

The majority of teachers emphasized that effective communication with learners is instrumental in identifying potential learning disabilities. In response to questions concerning training in this area, many teachers asserted that establishing strong communicative relationships with learners in mainstream classrooms plays a critical role in recognizing and understanding their learning challenges. They further explained that:

Communication skill was the training that I had received. This helps to immediately recognize learners with learning disabilities. Through these skills a learner will be easily identified. If they struggle to express themselves or unable to speak, listening, reading and writing, it is easy to find where the problem is via communication skills (T1 SCH-1).

Communication skill was a highly recommended skill since it helps teachers to easily identify learners with learning disabilities (T2 SCH-1).

Through communication skills, I also learned about how to recognize the signs of a potential learning disability, and how to manage standardized assessments to identify if a student has a disability (T3 SCH-2).

The responses quoted underscore the pivotal role of communication skills within inclusive education, particularly in the identification and support of learners with learning disabilities. These accounts suggest that effective communication is a vital professional competency for teachers. Proficient communication allows educators to engage meaningfully with learners, fostering a sense of comfort and mutual understanding. Teachers reported that they rely on both verbal and non-verbal indicators to detect potential learning difficulties, and they actively encourage learners to articulate their thoughts and experiences. This process enables the early identification of specific learning needs and facilitates more targeted support.

4.6.1.2 Demonstrate Patience in Challenging Situation

Patience was identified as a key professional skill that enables teachers to effectively support learners with learning disabilities in mainstream classrooms. Supporting these learners patiently involves a blend of empathy, thoughtful instructional strategies, and sustained assistance. During the interviews, teachers remarked that:

Working patiently with them, I have learned about their legal rights, and the importance of working with families and other professionals to support these learners. This training has been vital in helping me to identify and support learners with learning disabilities in my classroom (T3 SCH-2).

Teachers highlighted the importance of demonstrating patience in challenging situations. They stated that having such skills, they manage to control emotional reactions and understand the needs of their learners.

I have learned that as a teacher I should have to understand learners' difficulties, I have to help them patiently and I should have to be approachable so much that teaching and learning should be effective (T4 SCH-2).

I have also learnt about patience skills. Some learners are playful so, to be patient can help to distinguish between those who are severely struggling and those who are playing (T1 SCH-2).

Some of the skills I received include communication skills, patience and organizational skills. Talking frequently and patiently to them enables me to understand their uncountable problems including problems staying organized (T2 SCH-1).

Teachers expressed the view that demonstrating patience in demanding situations is fundamental when supporting learners with learning disabilities in mainstream classrooms. They noted that patience enables the creation of a calm and encouraging learning environment where pupils feel secure enough to make mistakes, ask questions, and attempt tasks repeatedly without fear of criticism. When teachers respond with composure to persistent errors or slow academic progress, learners are more likely to develop trust in their teacher and gradually build confidence in their own abilities.

Learners with learning disabilities often require extended time and repetition to fully grasp concepts. Patience allows teachers to adjust to the learners' pace, providing steady support without displaying frustration. Moreover, maintaining patience helps educators to manage their own stress and sustain a positive outlook, which is essential when faced with recurrent setbacks or behavioural difficulties. Responding calmly to disruptive or withdrawn behaviour also contributes to de-escalating tense situations and encourages learners to re-engage constructively over time. Therefore, patience emerges as an essential professional attribute that fosters both the emotional

and academic development of learners with learning disabilities, while also promoting effective classroom management and teacher resilience.

4.6.1.3 Becoming a Self-Taught Expert

Teachers holding degrees in education reported that they had not received formal training in identifying learners with learning disabilities. Consequently, some chose to develop their own expertise as a means of enhancing their professional capacity to work with such learners in mainstream classrooms. They believed that actively seeking knowledge from specialists and engaging in independent research on learning disability interventions would enable them to better support their students. Furthermore, they recognized that equipping themselves with such knowledge would allow them to address the needs of learners with learning disabilities more effectively. In response to the relevant interview question, teachers stated:

To be fair and frank, there is no training I received for the identification of learners with learning disabilities. The training I received was to deal with learners in the general classroom. However, furthering my studies in the field of inclusive education helped me a lot because I now understand how to handle them. For the sake of my learners, I have to make myself own expert, I do my own research and keep well-informed of new developments in learning disability programmes, therapist and educational techniques. I take charge when it comes to finding the tools they need in order to learn (T1 SCH-1).

The findings of this study reveal a strong sense of self-reliance and dedication among teachers, alongside a notable absence of institutional support in addressing the needs of learners with learning disabilities in mainstream classrooms. These findings highlight the commitment and ingenuity of teachers who, despite the lack of formal structures, strive to meet the diverse needs of their pupils. Participants reported that their professional training had focused primarily on general

pedagogical approaches, with little or no emphasis on the identification and support of learners with specific learning disabilities an omission that leaves them underprepared for inclusive education.

In response to these challenges, many teachers demonstrated initiative by developing their own expertise. They engaged in independent learning, consulted current literature on special educational needs, and explored assistive technologies to support learners experiencing reading difficulties. Teachers actively sought online materials and instructional strategies to enhance learning outcomes for students with disabilities. Notably, some educators collaborated informally with colleagues who offered voluntary assistance, reflecting a degree of collective effort and peer support within the teaching staff.

4.6.2 Support from the School Community

To gain further insight into teachers' experiences, participants were asked about the types of support available within the school community for addressing the needs of learners with learning disabilities. Their responses were varied. Some teachers reported having access to assistance from colleagues, friends, parents, and even the siblings of learners with disabilities. Others, however, indicated that they received minimal or no support. Among the support mechanisms identified, collaborative teaching practices and parental involvement emerged as key sources of assistance provided by the wider school community.

4.6.2.1 Team Teaching

During the interviews, most of the teachers mentioned that team teaching is part of professional help they receive from their colleagues and it helps to ease teaching of learners with learning disabilities in the mainstream classrooms. For instance, teachers responded that:

I have a lot of support from my colleague who has studied inclusive education. We give them extra classes, but not frequently because sometimes I become impatient to repeat one thing several time. So when I feel annoyed she takes over helping these kids. And apart from that she sometimes invites the parents or caregivers of such learners (T3 SCH-1).

In our department we practice team teaching and learners practice team learning. Learners present to their peers what they have received or understood (T1 SCH-2).

As I mentioned before, there is a lack of support from administrators and other staff members who are not familiar with the needs of learners with learning disabilities and there are limited services that support learners with learning disabilities. However, I have access to my friend, and a colleague who have inclusive education. She provides me with little resources, advice, and support for individual learners (T3 SCH-2).

Based on teachers' responses, it is evident that the teachers do not work in isolation but receive help, advice and encouragement from fellow teachers; which enhance their ability to manage the challenges of inclusive education. They work together as a way to support each other professionally. This collaboration helps them better manage and teach learners with learning disabilities. Team teaching makes it easier to share responsibilities, strategies and provide more focus attention to learners who need additional support.

Some teachers reported receiving voluntary support from their colleagues through after school sessions aimed at assisting learners with learning with learning disabilities. They highlighted the significant role of technology in easing the challenges associated with teaching these learners. During interview, they pointed out that:

Some of my colleagues volunteered to attend after-school sessions with me. However, technology plays a vital role to simplify this heavy task, we work together, we use different

apps like specialized Apps related to some ways in which we can use to support learners in reading and writing such as apps like Phonics and Ghotit Real Writer (T3 SCH-1).

The findings of this study underscore the critical role of collaborative support among teaching staff, particularly from those who voluntarily engage in after-school sessions, in meeting the needs of learners with learning disabilities. Such collegial cooperation fosters a collective sense of accountability and significantly enriches the quality of educational support offered. Furthermore, the integration of educational technology has emerged as a key enabler in navigating the complexities of inclusive pedagogy. Through the use of specialized digital tools such as Phonics applications and Ghotit Real Writer teachers are increasingly able to facilitate the development of core literacy competencies, including reading and writing, among learners with diverse needs. The synergy between team teaching and technological integration makes a substantial contribution to cultivating a more inclusive and supportive learning environment for all pupils.

4.6.2.2 Parental Involvement

Several teachers reported receiving meaningful support from parents in their efforts to accommodate learners with learning disabilities. Parents often provide critical background information that enables teachers to gain deeper insights into the specific needs of their children. Additionally, both parents and siblings contribute to learning at home by assisting with homework and reinforcing key concepts. This partnership strengthens the alignment between home and school, enabling educators to tailor instructional materials more effectively and extend academic support beyond the classroom setting. During the interviews, participants stated that:

I do have assistance from other people particularly my colleagues where we share instructional strategies, parents of learners with learning disabilities providing

background information, and the peers work together with learners with learning disabilities (T1 SCH-1).

The parents and siblings play a vital role in helping my students on assignments. This helps me to provide these learners with extra work, and provide them with materials that will help them understand the topics while they are at home (T2 SCH-1).

Teachers' accounts reflect a constructive and collaborative relationship with parents in supporting learners with learning disabilities. The provision of background information by parents enables educators to gain a more nuanced understanding of each learner's strengths, challenges, and specific educational needs. This insight allows teachers to adapt their instructional strategies and offer more individualized and effective support. Furthermore, the active involvement of parents and siblings in assisting with homework reinforces learning beyond the classroom and promotes continuity in academic development. As a result, teachers feel more confident in selecting appropriate learning materials, reassured that educational support is being extended at home. These findings underscore the pivotal role of family engagement in advancing inclusive educational practices and fostering positive learner outcomes.

Conversely, some teachers reported a lack of sufficient support in addressing the needs of learners with learning disabilities. They noted limited involvement from school leadership and minimal parental engagement, which contributed to feelings of professional isolation and frustration. In their reflections, participants stated that:

I do not have enough support only sharing the problems encounter when teaching this type of learners with my colleagues, but we come up with no solutions. When we seek help from the principal, he simply said that the learners are there to push time (T4 SCH-2).

No support available. Parents dot not help us. They think we do not want to do our work. And some of the staff said that we are swimming in the same boat (T2 SCH-2).

The responses reveal a pronounced lack of support from both school leadership and parents in addressing the educational needs of learners with learning disabilities. Efforts to obtain assistance from school management are frequently met with dismissive or indifferent attitudes, as evidenced by remarks made by some principals. Such responses suggest a fundamental misunderstanding of the principles of inclusive education and imply a belief that learners with disabilities are incapable of achieving meaningful academic progress. This perception not only undermines the efforts of teachers but also has a detrimental impact on their professional morale and motivation.

Moreover, the limited engagement of parents exacerbates these challenges. Teachers expressed frustration at being misinterpreted by parents, who often perceive their concerns as indicative of a lack of dedication rather than as genuine attempts to foster collaboration. This breakdown in communication significantly weakens the possibility of establishing constructive partnerships, which are essential for supporting learners with special educational needs. Collectively, these findings point to a wider systemic issue: in the absence of shared responsibility and a collaborative ethos among school leadership, educators, and parents, the effective realization of inclusive education remains profoundly constrained.

4.6.3 Nature of Support from the Ministry of Education and Training

Teachers were invited to describe the nature and extent of support provided by the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) in their efforts to accommodate learners with learning disabilities in mainstream classrooms. The majority of respondents reported receiving minimal to no direct assistance from the Ministry. During interviews, they testified that:

In my subject (Biology) I was once given the material visualizing content which did not work because questions from Ecol were different from what they knew. They just understood the pictures, but answering the questions was something else. I did not feel helped because after the report I made, they said they understand that the mode of communication is the problem. Nothing they did after that (T3 SCH-2).

No support available. They only tell us to read about inclusive education policy which we do not even understand. They do not even bother themselves by providing workshops on how to help learners struggling in classrooms (T4 SCH-1).

Teachers' responses highlight a clear disconnect between the support offered by the Ministry of Education and the practical needs of learners with learning disabilities in mainstream classrooms. One teacher, for instance, reported receiving visual learning materials intended to aid Biology instruction; however, these resources proved inadequate. Although learners were able to interpret the images, they struggled to respond to associated questions, rendering the materials largely ineffective. Upon raising these concerns, the Ministry attributed the issue to a breakdown in communication but failed to implement any corrective measures.

The responses convey a profound sense of frustration and perceived neglect, with teachers feeling unsupported in their efforts to implement inclusive pedagogical practices. Participants emphasized the inadequacy of the support received, noting that while they are often directed to consult policy documents on inclusive education, these are typically inaccessible without specialist training. The absence of follow-up support particularly in the form of targeted workshops leaves many teachers underprepared to meet the specific needs of learners with learning disabilities.

Moreover, some respondents reported a complete lack of engagement from the Ministry. They indicated that no guidance or meaningful intervention is offered in relation to inclusive

education. Instead, the Ministry is perceived to prioritize bureaucratic and administrative functions at the expense of addressing the day-to-day realities of teaching learners with diverse needs. During the interviews, several teachers affirmed that:

Nothing Moet is doing. We only feel AR42 forms. They do not do or say anything about learners experiencing difficulties including learners with outstanding disabilities like those who experience loss hearing and intellectual disabilities. I wonder whether they look at them (T1 SCH-1).

Not at all. I have never seen any education officer at our school whose concern is on learners with learning disabilities. When the DRTs visited our school they focused only on teachers whose subjects are badly performed, check the lesson plans and scheming and record of work and then depart in peace (T2 SCH-1).

Moet does not do anything about us and about learners with learning disabilities. We fill ER 42 every year but they do not do anything about them (T3 SCH-1).

Unfortunately not. I can say MOET still exists because in every year we fill ER 42 and in m every year there are learners with different disabilities but there is no support of such learners. DRTs come to check the lesson plans and scheme and record of work only (T1 SCH-2).

MOET doesn't do anything to show support to learners with learning disabilities (T4 SCH-2).

The responses convey a pronounced sense of dissatisfaction and perceived neglect on the part of the Ministry of Education and Training concerning support for learners with learning disabilities. Teachers reported that, aside from completing administrative documentation such as the AR42 form designed to gather data on learners with special educational needs there is a lack

of subsequent follow-up or tangible intervention from the ministry. The comment, “I wonder whether they look at them,” encapsulates a prevailing scepticism regarding the efficacy and intent of these forms, highlighting a disconnect between data collection and the implementation of meaningful support.

Moreover, educators observed that visits from District Resource Teams (DRTs) predominantly centre on academic outcomes, especially in subjects exhibiting low pass rates, rather than addressing the requirements of inclusive education. The focus on scrutinizing lesson plans and scheme books reveals an accountability-driven framework that marginalizes the specific needs of learners with learning disabilities. This suggests a systemic problem wherein inclusive education is deprioritized in favour of conventional performance metrics, thereby leaving teachers inadequately supported in their efforts to accommodate diverse learners within mainstream classrooms.

4.7 Theme 4: Mitigation Strategies Used in Mainstream Classrooms to Overcome the Challenges Teachers Encounter

This section of the study investigates the strategies employed by teachers within mainstream classrooms to support learners with learning disabilities. It further examines the competencies that educators deem essential to enhance their capacity to address the complexities inherent in inclusive teaching. The insights obtained from participants have informed the identification of several critical elements, offering a nuanced understanding of how teachers negotiate and respond to the demands of inclusive education.

4.7.1 Individualized Instruction

The research findings indicate that individualized instruction constitutes one of the most effective approaches for mitigating the challenges faced by teachers in mainstream settings. Participants emphasized that tailoring lessons to the specific needs of learners with learning disabilities can significantly enhance engagement and facilitate more meaningful learning experiences. Moreover, they recognized the importance of employing pedagogical methods that are inclusive of all learners, thereby fostering active participation and shared ownership of the learning process. As teachers elaborated, they reported that:

Giving them extra classes and looking for the teaching methods which help me meet their educational needs such as personalized instructions is the strategy I could employ. Here, I ensure that learners' different capabilities become centre of attraction and I focus on learners' responsibilities on how they master their learning (T3 SCH-1).

Knowing the needs of each learner, may help me ensure that in my lesson plan I use the methods catered them all. Personalized learning methods ratify that all learners participate and also help me as a teacher to modify my lesson plans and materials to suit their learning styles (T1 SCH-1).

Teachers articulated that possessing a clear understanding of their students' unique needs enables them to adapt their instructional approaches and provide targeted support, thereby promoting learners' development and academic achievement. This was reflected in their statement that:

Firstly, I focus on the strengths of each individual student, and find ways to capitalize on their unique abilities. I should have variety of resources available to help support learners with learning disabilities in my classroom (T3 SCH-2).

I also create extra time for provision of extra lessons where I talk to them one by one or by individual groups, and playing with them together to learn more about their abilities and give them opportunities to teach others (T4 SCH-1).

I believe that self-evaluation, seeking information on how to deal with learners with learning disabilities, improving the way I vary the instructions to meet their needs can help them to connect their interests with their learning (T1 SCH-2).

Group work, role play, interviews and question and answer methods are valuable strategies where learners are simply personalizing their learning. Giving them more simple practices on calculations arouse their interest in Mathematics and they carry on by succeeding along their learning. Using resources that bring reality to the classroom to make them understand the topics and help them not to forget what they have been taught (T4 SCH-2).

These findings underscore that teachers employ personalized instruction as a key strategy to support learners with learning disabilities within mainstream classrooms. Educators adapt their teaching approaches to address the distinct needs and strengths of each individual learner. By concentrating on students' unique capabilities, teachers strive to foster a sense of value and inclusion, which in turn enhances engagement and active participation. Accordingly, the emphasis is placed on learners' strengths rather than their deficits. Additionally, teachers allocate dedicated time to offer supplementary support, ensuring that learners with learning disabilities receive the necessary assistance to keep pace with their peers.

4.7.2 Safe and Supportive Environment

The majority of participants highlighted that providing a safe and supportive environment constitutes a crucial strategy in alleviating the challenges associated with teaching learners with learning disabilities in mainstream settings.

It is important to provide accommodations and support for students with disabilities, it is also important to ensure that the rest of the class is not neglected. I must be mindful of the pace of the lesson, and make sure that all students are able to participate (T2 SCH-2).

Comprehending the individual needs of learners is fundamental to delivering effective instruction and fostering an inclusive, supportive educational environment. This was acknowledged by teachers who noted that:

I create a safe and supportive learning environment, where all students feel comfortable to make mistakes and asking help (T3 SCH-2).

I create a supportive and positive learning environment for all learners. I think these kids need a tender loving care. I give them special attention, teaching and learning occur inside and outside the classroom; my teaching involves many activities where they are all participating (T1 SCH-1).

Teachers postulated that giving their learners attention could improve their outcomes and build positive relationships:

I give learners with learning disabilities my time to chat and share our problems and happiness. Provide full time special support to help those who feel out of place and give them enough time to learn and interact with peers who also have challenges (T2 SCH-1).

In my classroom, it is important to create a supportive and inclusive environment for all learners, including those with learning disabilities. We make jokes together (T1 SCH-1).

Team-teaching, giving them extra work, showing them care and love, giving them time to share their difficulties, inviting special education teachers or seeking information on how to handle learners with learning disabilities improves teaching and learning (T4 SCH-2).

Teachers' responses reveal concerted efforts to cultivate an inclusive, emotionally secure, and supportive learning environment for learners with learning disabilities. They prioritize creating spaces where learners feel free from judgment, fostering a sense of acceptance and belonging. Such environments encourage learners with disabilities to engage more confidently and willingly in classroom activities. Teachers implement necessary adaptations to ensure equitable and effective access to the curriculum. Moreover, they nurture positive relationships through informal interactions, enabling learners to feel valued, included, and emotionally connected.

4.7.3 Collaboration

The study further identified collaboration as a vital strategy to mitigate the challenges encountered when teaching learners with learning disabilities in mainstream classrooms. Teachers emphasized that effective communication and cooperative engagement among educators, allied professionals, learners, and their families including parents and siblings can significantly enhance instructional practices. During interviews, participants asserted that:

Collaborate with parents, administers, and other professionals like our lecturers in the field of psychology to help us create individualized plans for learners with learning disabilities to succeed. Share ideas with their parents and siblings on how to help these learners (T1 SCH-1).

Collaboration among us teachers, the principal and parents of learners with learning disabilities could improve my teaching (T2 SCH-1).

As teachers, we should work together as a team towards these learners and avoid saying that we don't want to waste our time with children who are sent to school just to push their time (T3 SCH-1).

Collaborating with special education teachers from other schools to ensure that all students are able to access the curriculum (T1SCH-2).

I work closely with life skills teachers to ensure that all students are receiving the best possible education (T3 SCH-2).

Raise awareness about disability. It is important to educate students and parents about the nature of learning disabilities, and dispel any myths that may exist... and collaborating with specialists to ensure that all students are able to access the curriculum (T2 SCH-2).

Communicating effectively with my colleagues, students and their parents concerning learners' different situations they encounter (T1 SCH-2).

Teachers' responses demonstrate a clear appreciation of the critical role collaboration plays in supporting learners with learning disabilities. By stressing the importance of close cooperation with parents, school leadership, and specialists such as educational psychologists, teachers reveal a sophisticated understanding that inclusive education necessitates a multidisciplinary approach. Their advocacy for joint efforts in devising individualized education plans reflects a commitment to tailoring pedagogical methods to address the unique needs of each learner, consistent with established inclusive education best practices.

Furthermore, the emphasis on engaging parents and siblings in the educational process underscores the value teachers attribute to robust home school partnerships. This recognition highlights an awareness that effective support for learners with learning disabilities must extend beyond the classroom into the familial context. The focus on exchanging ideas and sharing

strategies suggests that teachers regard collaboration as essential to enhancing instructional quality and improving learner outcomes.

4.7.4 Remedial Classes

The study also identified remedial classes as a potential strategy to bolster learners' comprehension of instructional material and core concepts, thereby assisting them to bridge gaps and keep pace with their peers.

Activities including games, remedial instructions, and personalized instructional methods, pre- and post-remedial would improve their understanding. Giving them after school classes could help them recover their reading and writing skills (T1 SCH-1).

I have established after-school sessions for them to help them cover what they did not understand in the classroom (T1 SCH-2).

Giving them remedial including extra exercises, group work discussions, and frequent activities in and outside the classroom and giving them written and verbal question improves their participation when they are with their peers (T4 SCH-1).

The quotations above illustrate that remedial classes constitute a vital support mechanism for learners with learning disabilities. Such classes enhance learners' comprehension and alleviate both academic and behavioural difficulties commonly experienced within inclusive classroom settings. By providing tailored attention, additional practice opportunities, and clarification of concepts introduced during mainstream lessons, remedial sessions improve learners' grasp of instructional content. From this perspective, afternoon classes offer educators the flexibility to address specific learning gaps without the constraints of the regular classroom's pace, thereby facilitating learners' academic progress and enabling them to catch up with their peers.

4.8 Summary

This chapter has presented the findings pertaining to teachers' experiences of educating learners with learning disabilities in mainstream classrooms across two selected secondary schools in Qacha's Nek. The data were organized into four principal themes: teachers' experiences of instructing learners with learning disabilities within mainstream settings; the challenges faced in this context; the professional support and competencies teachers possess to meet learners' needs; and the strategies employed to overcome these challenges.

The findings reveal a shared set of experiences among teachers regarding the education of learners with learning disabilities, highlighting considerable difficulties encountered in practice. Additionally, the chapter delineated specific challenges, explored the professional resources available to teachers, and examined the approaches utilized to mitigate obstacles.

The subsequent chapter (Chapter 5) will offer a detailed discussion, draw conclusions, and propose recommendations grounded in these findings.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter detailed the empirical findings relating to secondary school teachers' experiences instructing learners with learning disabilities within mainstream classrooms. These findings illuminated a spectrum of teacher experiences, revealing both positive and negative influences on pedagogical practice. This chapter undertakes a critical reflection on the suitability of the chosen methodology, theoretical underpinnings, and data collection methods employed throughout the study. Subsequently, it presents a comprehensive discussion of the principal findings, structured around the four core thematic areas underpinning the research: teachers' lived experiences with learners with learning disabilities; pedagogical challenges within inclusive settings; professional competencies and support available to educators; and the strategic

approaches adopted to surmount these challenges. Each principal theme is examined in conjunction with its associated subthemes. The chapter culminates in an overarching conclusion, an acknowledgement of the study's limitations, and a series of informed recommendations.

5.2 Theoretical Framework: Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory

The theoretical lens for this inquiry was Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1979), a comprehensive model elucidating how multiple environmental layers influence individual development. This framework proves particularly pertinent in exploring the dynamic and multifaceted experiences of secondary teachers working with learners with learning disabilities within mainstream classrooms.

At the **microsystem** level the immediate milieu of direct interaction the study reveals that both learners and teachers are profoundly affected by the classroom environment. Teachers who possess adequate resources, demonstrate patience, and employ personalized instructional strategies facilitate meaningful learner progress and engagement. Conversely, when educators are constrained by limited training, insufficient materials, and time pressures, learners' risk marginalization within these ostensibly inclusive settings. These observations resonate with Mosia and Pasha's (2017) findings, which highlight the adverse impact of overcrowded classrooms and scarce resources on the provision of individualized support.

The **mesosystem**, which comprises the interrelations among microsystems such as family, school, and peers, emerged as a critical determinant of both teacher and learner experiences. Positive collaboration among these spheres particularly effective engagement between teachers and parents was shown to enhance consistency in expectations and reinforce learning strategies across contexts. Such integrative support systems contribute to improved teaching efficacy and

learner outcomes. Conversely, fractured or insufficient mesosystem connections exacerbate challenges in meeting diverse learner needs.

The **exosystem** encompasses indirect environmental influences, such as administrative policies and external support agencies. Findings indicate that the Ministry of Education and Training's limited direct involvement significantly constrains the support available for inclusive education, a problem compounded by educational administrators' insufficient grasp of policy mandates. This systemic deficiency mirrors concerns documented in previous literature (Mntambo, 2011; Mosia & Kotelo, 2024), where inconsistent implementation undermines teachers' efforts and learner inclusion.

At the broadest level, the **macrosystem** comprises cultural values, societal norms, and educational ideologies that shape systemic attitudes toward disability and inclusion. This study's findings suggest that prevailing cultural and policy environments in Lesotho inadequately prioritize inclusive education, resulting in teachers' limited understanding of policy frameworks and consequently impacting learner access and educator effectiveness.

Finally, the **chronosystem** accounts for temporal dimensions, including evolving policies, societal shifts, and technological advancements. The study demonstrates that teachers' adaptation to emerging technologies such as Phonics and Ghotit Real Writer applications can enhance instructional efficacy. However, lack of ongoing training and resource provision in response to these changes can hinder teachers' capacity to effectively support learners with learning disabilities.

5.3 Discussion of Key Findings

5.3.1 Teachers' Experiences of Teaching Learners with Learning Disabilities

Consistent with Mutanga (2022), this study found that teachers predominantly conceptualize learners with learning disabilities as individuals who exhibit persistent academic difficulties, particularly in literacy and numeracy domains. This understanding is largely grounded in observable classroom behaviours rather than an informed appreciation of underlying neurological factors, as outlined in the American Psychiatric Association's (2022) diagnostic criteria. Such perspectives tend to reflect a deficit-oriented paradigm, emphasizing limitations over strengths, thereby potentially perpetuating low expectations (Motitswe, 2025).

Despite this, teachers acknowledge the necessity for specialized instructional adjustments, including individualized support and assistive technologies, albeit often without the formal training or resources to implement these effectively (Maebane & Themane, 2019). This gap between policy endorsement of inclusion and practical classroom realities echoes findings from broader research contexts (Mutanga, 2022).

5.3.2 Learners' Learning Disabilities

The study highlights considerable variability in teachers' familiarity with specific learning disabilities. While some educators could identify conditions such as dyslexia and dyscalculia, many admitted to a more superficial awareness limited to recognizing academic struggles without the capacity to differentiate diagnoses or implement targeted interventions. This deficiency is especially pronounced among experienced teachers lacking specialized training (Ngubane & Mkhize, 2021).

This knowledge gap has significant implications for early identification and referral, placing learners at risk of misdiagnosis or neglect, thereby impeding timely and appropriate educational support (Alquraini & Gut, 2022). Addressing this through targeted professional development is imperative to bridge the divide between policy and practice.

5.3.3 General Teachers' Experiences

This section elucidates two contrasting facets of teachers' experiences: the considerable challenges encountered in instructing learners with learning disabilities and the deeply rewarding aspects of this professional endeavour.

5.3.3.1 Difficulties in Teaching Learners with Learning Disabilities within Mainstream Settings

The follow-up interviews revealed that educators frequently confront formidable difficulties when teaching learners with learning disabilities in inclusive classrooms. A majority of participants identified dyslexia and dyscalculia as the predominant conditions affecting their students, noting persistent struggles with fundamental skills such as reading, writing, and numeracy. These cognitive barriers complicate the acquisition of vocabulary and literacy, as many learners experience speech articulation challenges and phonological difficulties.

Teachers reported significant impediments in delivering the personalized attention indispensable for these learners' progress. Consequently, lessons often remain incomplete, and the requisite academic support is insufficient, thereby compromising the overall educational experience. This aligns with recent scholarship emphasizing the critical need for extended time and specialized attention to meet the distinctive requirements of learners with learning disabilities (Hove & Pasha, 2024; Jacob et al., 2021).

Furthermore, many learners exhibited profound difficulties in comprehending core academic concepts, leading to frustration and disengagement. This hindered their capacity to follow instructions during classroom activities and complete assigned tasks effectively. Several educators remarked upon learners' frequent forgetfulness, challenges in copying from the board, difficulties decoding examination papers, and frequent orthographic errors—including the invention of non-existent words. Such behaviours often precipitate reliance on peers for copying or complete avoidance of writing tasks, thereby obstructing the achievement of curricular objectives.

In sum, these findings underscore the consensus among teachers that instructing learners with learning disabilities in mainstream classrooms is an inherently demanding task, predominantly due to these learners' struggles to attain expected literacy and numeracy competencies. The data unequivocally point to an urgent imperative for targeted, systematic support to empower educators in effectively meeting these learners' academic needs within an inclusive framework.

5.3.3.2 Rewarding Dimensions of Teaching Learners with Learning Disabilities

Notwithstanding the aforementioned challenges, a significant subset of teachers conveyed that their engagement with learners with learning disabilities can yield profoundly fulfilling experiences. They articulated a palpable sense of personal and professional growth derived from positively influencing these learners' academic trajectories.

These educators emphasized the pivotal role of meticulous lesson planning and proactive preparation, which not only alleviate instructional difficulties but also bolster their confidence and pedagogical efficacy in addressing heterogeneous learning needs. Their commitment was further evidenced by persistent research efforts and the continuous acquisition of pedagogical resources

and methodologies aimed at enhancing inclusivity and learner engagement. Such dedication reflects an intrinsic motivation to cultivate equitable learning environments conducive to all students' flourishing. Comparable findings from Australia demonstrate that educators who embrace inclusive preparation report greater creativity and derive satisfaction from fostering positive, flexible classroom climates (Dally et al., 2019).

Moreover, participants endorsed the value of reflective practice, regularly evaluating and refining instructional approaches in response to learners' progress. Teachers also took pride in celebrating learners' milestones, experiencing joy and gratification upon observing tangible academic and personal advancement moments frequently described as the most rewarding facets of their professional vocation. This accords with Sanchez, Chua, and Melgar's (2021) research, wherein educators identified learner transformation and collaborative teaching as significant sources of professional fulfilment.

The formation of strong interpersonal bonds with learners was also highlighted as a source of emotional reward, fostering a nurturing and motivating classroom ethos. Teachers expressed that these relationships not only reinforced student confidence and motivation but also reinforced their own resolve to persist in inclusive educational practice (Hove & Pasha, 2023).

In the present study, educators acknowledged the inherent difficulties yet emphasized their perseverance and resourcefulness in seeking assistance and utilizing available support mechanisms. They proudly reported observable improvements in learners' academic performance, underscoring the transformative potential of inclusive education. Parallel research in South Africa corroborates the efficacy of support services in mainstream settings, affirming the substantial benefits of inclusion for learners with disabilities (Smith & Mokoena, 2023).

In conclusion, despite numerous obstacles, teachers exhibit unwavering dedication to supporting learners with learning disabilities. Their experiences reflect not only the challenges inherent in inclusive education but also the profound personal and professional rewards gained from fostering learner progress and equity.

5.4 Challenges Encountered in Teaching Learners with Learning Disabilities in

Mainstream Classrooms

The findings unmistakably highlight a constellation of persistent and multifaceted challenges faced by teachers endeavouring to educate learners with learning disabilities within inclusive mainstream environments. Prominent among these are constraints of time, paucity of resources, limited specialized pedagogical skills, the demands of heterogeneous learner needs, overcrowded classrooms, and irregular attendance.

5.4.1 Temporal Constraints

Time scarcity emerged as a critical impediment to the effective enactment of inclusive education. While teachers recognized the pedagogical imperative of integrating learners with learning disabilities alongside their peers, many lamented that the brevity of lesson periods curtailed their capacity to deliver tailored support. These findings corroborate those of Lebona, Monyane, and Mukuna (2024), who identified time deficits, alongside insufficient training and resources, as principal barriers.

Inclusive pedagogy inherently requires differentiated instruction, continuous learner assessment, and individualized scaffolding—practices challenging to realize within conventional 40-minute sessions. Similar concerns have been raised in Namibia (Nghipondoka-Lukolo, 2021), South Africa (Hove & Pasha, 2023; Mavuso & Mavuso, 2023), and Ireland (ASTI, 2023), where

time limitations, coupled with large class sizes and administrative burdens, significantly constrain educators' responsiveness to diverse learning needs.

The correlation between increasing numbers of learners with disabilities and diminishing instructional time per pupil further exacerbates these challenges (Strauss, 2017). Teachers frequently report feeling overwhelmed and susceptible to burnout owing to inadequate preparation time and the extensive demands of heterogeneous classrooms (Honkasilta & Koutsoklenis, 2023). These findings underscore the necessity for systemic reforms, including extended teaching periods, reduced pupil-teacher ratios, and augmented support staffing.

In summation, insufficient instructional time represents a profound challenge to realizing equitable and effective inclusive education, warranting urgent structural and policy interventions.

5.4.2 Deficiency of Resources

The study also identified a pronounced shortage of appropriate teaching and learning resources as a formidable constraint. Participants consistently noted that the absence of specialized materials critically undermines their capacity to foster literacy and numeracy development among learners with learning disabilities. This aligns with broader literature highlighting infrastructure deficits, lack of psychosocial and expert support, and scarce instructional materials as impediments to quality inclusive education (Chataika, 2023; Seliane & Kgothule, 2022; Priya, 2022).

Without access to differentiated reading texts, assistive technologies, and tailored pedagogical aids, teachers find themselves ill-equipped to meet learners' diverse needs, impeding engagement and progress. This resource inadequacy not only restricts pedagogical effectiveness but also undermines the overarching goals of inclusion by perpetuating educational inequities.

In conclusion, addressing resource scarcity is imperative for enabling teachers to implement inclusive practices effectively and to enhance academic outcomes for learners with learning disabilities.

5.4.3 Lack of Teaching Skills

Ali and Hamza (2018) characterize training as a deliberate process through which individuals are equipped with specialized competencies to perform their duties with proficiency and confidence. In the present study, participants expressed profound concern regarding their own inadequacies in pedagogical skill, identifying this as a significant impediment to effective instructional delivery within mainstream classrooms. A prevailing sentiment among the respondents was one of disillusionment, as they recounted considerable difficulties associated with deploying teaching strategies such as group discussions that failed to cater to the learning profiles of students with disabilities. Such methods while generally conducive to peer learning, were described as marginalizing learners with cognitive impairments, thereby diminishing their active engagement and rendering educators ineffective in their instructional roles.

Corroborating this observation, Kgothule and Seliane (2022) contend that learners with learning disabilities are frequently subjected to instructional practices that are misaligned with their cognitive development. This pedagogical mismatch, they argue, stems from teachers' insufficient knowledge of differentiated instructional techniques an outcome of inadequate pre-service and in-service training. The result is a persistent cycle of instructional inefficacy, where educators, lacking in both confidence and competence, fail to address the nuanced needs of their learners.

Participants further lamented that certain pupils continued to exhibit significant learning challenges despite being afforded remedial interventions such as extra tuition. These learners, in

the teachers' view, appeared as though they had never received meaningful instruction, a revelation that laid bare the limitations of the teachers' own skill sets. The sense of helplessness was palpable, with some educators admitting to relinquishing efforts due to the overwhelming nature of the task. Nevertheless, Kgothule and Seliane (2022) maintain that when teachers are equipped with the requisite skills and pedagogical tools, they are far better positioned to foster inclusive learning environments that are both equitable and effective.

Teachers participating in this study consistently voiced concerns regarding their peers' limited professional capabilities, particularly in relation to identifying and supporting learners with learning disabilities. These students are often mischaracterized as inattentive, unmotivated, or irresponsible labels that arise not from wilful misconduct but from undiagnosed and misunderstood cognitive difficulties. Supporting this perspective, Shilongo's (2021) research in Namibia's Oshana region revealed that, despite broadly positive dispositions towards inclusive education, teachers frequently lacked the foundational knowledge and pedagogical acumen necessary to meet the learning needs of pupils with disabilities. The study thus advocates for robust, continuous professional development initiatives aimed at bridging this persistent knowledge gap.

Participants in the current study also reported that learners with learning disabilities often failed to complete assigned tasks, frequently claiming either ignorance of the assignment or forgetfulness. Such responses further underscore the need for teachers to possess specialized training that enables them to discern the manifestations of learning disabilities rather than interpret such behaviours as symptomatic of apathy or defiance. A parallel study conducted within Cameroon's English education subsystem (Tah, 2025) similarly concluded that teachers predominantly understand inclusion through a special education lens, often constrained by

inadequate policy structures, limited material resources, and insufficient professional expertise—factors that collectively hinder the successful implementation of inclusive pedagogies.

In the South African context, Mokoelle (2016) found that even where teachers had received some training in inclusive education, many expressed a lack of confidence in supporting learners requiring moderate to intensive interventions. Consequently, such learners were frequently referred to special schools, not necessarily due to the severity of their needs, but rather because teachers perceived themselves as ill-equipped to manage their support within a mainstream setting. This trend reveals a deeper systemic issue: insufficient investment in the professional development and resourcing of mainstream educators, which ultimately compromises the realization of inclusive education principles.

In summation, the findings of this study unequivocally affirm that a dearth of pedagogical expertise among teachers represents a formidable obstacle to the effective implementation of inclusive education. Such limitations not only restrict teachers' capacity to respond to learner diversity but also impede the development of reciprocal understanding between teachers and learners. This underscores the imperative for comprehensive, inclusive teaching strategies that prioritize clarity of instruction, repetition of key concepts, and differentiation tailored to address the cognitive, attentional, and memory-related challenges experienced by learners with learning disabilities.

5.4.4 Balancing the Needs of Learners

The challenge of equitably addressing the heterogeneous needs of learners emerged as a prominent theme among participants in the current study. Teachers reported considerable difficulty in maintaining an instructional equilibrium within mainstream classrooms, wherein both typically developing pupils and those with learning disabilities are taught concurrently. Although inclusive

education is widely endorsed in global policy frameworks, its practical realization remains constrained by enduring deficits in teacher training, material resources, and institutional support. As Armstrong and Barton (2024) assert, the success of inclusive pedagogies is fundamentally predicated upon collaborative practice among educators, coupled with sustained professional support.

The inability to effectively attend to learners' diverse needs risks entrenching educational inequalities. Some pupils inevitably fall behind, resulting in academic disparities that undermine the principle of equal educational opportunity. The data revealed that when learners perceive that their needs are neither recognized nor addressed, they often disengage, leading to diminished motivation and a weakening of their scholastic identity. Enelbrecht et al. (2017) highlight that teacher preparedness and disposition are crucial determinants of inclusive success and that robust professional development is indispensable in equipping educators for the complexities of diverse learning environments.

Moreover, participants conceded that they possessed limited expertise in supporting learners with learning disabilities, thereby compounding the challenge of catering to such learners' specific cognitive and emotional profiles. Several teachers noted that they frequently resorted to grouping learners according to perceived ability levels in an attempt to manage classroom diversity. However, this practice, as discussed by Mphahlele and Maringe (2020), risks reinforcing educational stratification and may inadvertently inhibit inclusion. Their research advocates for the adoption of differentiated and equity-focused pedagogical approaches that are responsive to learner variability.

A further impediment to balancing diverse needs, as identified by several teachers, was learner avoidance particularly evident during assessment periods. Some learners with learning

disabilities were reported to withdraw from classroom activities or absent themselves altogether, behaviour attributed to anxiety, low self-efficacy, and fear of academic failure. Such patterns of disengagement contribute to cumulative learning deficits and exacerbate challenges in delivering inclusive instruction. Additionally, this places undue pressure on teachers, who must simultaneously manage curriculum delivery, behavioural dynamics, and emotional support within a constrained instructional framework.

In sum, the findings underscore the inherent complexity of balancing the educational needs of learners with learning disabilities alongside those of their typically developing peers in mainstream settings. The study foregrounds the necessity for targeted interventions, systemic support, and ongoing professional development to empower educators to meet the demands of an increasingly diverse learner population.

5.4.5 Overcrowded Classrooms

The phenomenon of overcrowded classrooms emerged as a critical impediment to the effective inclusion of learners with learning disabilities in mainstream educational settings. Participants consistently identified large class sizes as a principal obstacle to inclusive pedagogy. This is corroborated by findings from Hove and Pasha (2023), who concluded that excessive learner numbers severely constrain teachers' capacity to provide differentiated support. The majority of teachers in the present study lamented the overwhelming number of pupils per class, noting that such conditions generate excessive noise, hinder concentration, and compromise the emotional wellbeing of both learners and educators.

Teaching in overcrowded settings frequently necessitates the adoption of a one-size-fits-all approach, which is antithetical to the ethos of inclusive education. The high learner-to-teacher ratio restricts individual attention, exacerbates classroom management difficulties, and cultivates

an environment in which learners with disabilities are particularly disadvantaged. Participants recounted that the sheer density of learners often led to disruptive behaviours and logistical constraints such as inadequate ventilation and insufficient physical space, thus compromising both instructional quality and learner comfort. At Ketlane Primary School in Limpopo, for instance, teachers cited the inability to manage class dynamics or offer individualized attention due to spatial limitations and excessive enrolment (Siaga, 2025).

Furthermore, educators described how the social dynamics within overcrowded classrooms undermined inclusion. Learners with learning disabilities attempting to engage in class activities were frequently ridiculed by their peers, resulting in diminished self-esteem, reluctance to participate, and, in some instances, aggression as a defence mechanism. Such incidents not only inhibit academic engagement but also erode the foundational tenets of inclusivity and respect. The absence of adequate classroom management strategies and peer sensitization was cited as a significant contributor to these challenges.

The findings highlight the structural barriers to effective inclusive education in mainstream contexts, with overcrowding acting as a critical constraint on pedagogical flexibility and learner engagement. To mitigate these challenges, the study recommends urgent structural reforms including the reduction of learner-to-teacher ratios, the provision of classroom assistants, and the institution of ongoing training in inclusive strategies and behaviour management. Such interventions are essential to fostering a learning environment in which all pupils regardless of ability can thrive.

5.4.6 Unauthorized Learners Absenteeism

The current study revealed that unauthorized absenteeism constitutes a major impediment to inclusive education within mainstream classrooms, particularly for learners with learning

disabilities. Participants consistently reported that such learners frequently and deliberately absented themselves from specific lessons often those perceived as cognitively demanding or anxiety-inducing. This pattern of avoidance has deleterious implications for academic attainment, resulting in missed instructional time, uncompleted assessments, and superficial engagement with core concepts.

These findings resonate with those of Kgothule and Seliane (2022), who assert that learners are more likely to participate meaningfully when pedagogical resources are varied, accessible, and engaging. In contrast, when instructional content is perceived as monotonous, inaccessible, or inadequately supported, students especially those with learning difficulties are prone to disengagement and non-attendance. The data suggest that some learners selectively avoid lessons that do not accommodate their learning profiles, thereby contributing to widening achievement gaps.

Teachers also noted that academically underperforming pupils often gravitate towards extra-curricular domains such as sports and recreational activities which offer alternative avenues for validation and success. Even when offered remedial interventions, these learners frequently failed to attend, thereby undermining efforts to provide differentiated support. This behaviour aligns with findings from Sasso and Sansour (2024), whose systematic review identified similar absenteeism patterns among learners on the autism spectrum, attributing them to heightened anxiety, emotional dysregulation, and difficulties with peer interaction.

Avoidance of assessments and other academic milestones often signifies more than mere indifference; it reflects deep-seated issues such as fear of failure, diminished self-efficacy, and lack of motivation. These tendencies necessitate deliberate, individualized interventions aimed at building learner confidence and ensuring emotional safety within the classroom.

In conclusion, unauthorized absenteeism and academic withdrawal among learners with learning disabilities emerge as significant concerns within mainstream education. These behaviours are often exacerbated by insufficiently differentiated instruction and lack of meaningful learner engagement. Consequently, this study underscores the imperative for inclusive pedagogical approaches, the systematic integration of engaging instructional materials, and the establishment of whole-school monitoring frameworks to identify and support at-risk learners proactively.

5.5 Professional Support and Skills for Teachers of Learners with Learning Disabilities

This section explores the forms of professional assistance and pedagogical competencies available to teachers in supporting learners with learning disabilities. Three principal sub-themes emerged from the data: (1) training received in the identification of learning disabilities, (2) support provided by the school community, and (3) the nature of institutional support from the Ministry of Education and Training.

5.5.1 Training for the Identification of Learning Disabilities

Teachers were invited to reflect upon the nature and extent of professional development they had received with regard to identifying learners with learning disabilities. Their responses reflected significant variance. While some respondents indicated they had undertaken formal training that enhanced their diagnostic and pedagogical competence, others reported a complete absence of structured support in this domain. Those without formal training stated that they had, out of necessity, developed their own methods and intuitive expertise through experiential learning.

Participants noted that key skills cultivated through formal or informal means included the ability to communicate effectively, exercise patience under challenging circumstances, and adaptively develop one's own pedagogical strategies in the absence of institutional guidance.

5.5.1.1 Communication Skills

The findings underscore the fundamental importance of communication in the early identification and sustained support of learners with learning disabilities. Effective communication encompassing both verbal and non-verbal modalities enables teachers to discern subtle indicators of cognitive or emotional distress, which might otherwise go unnoticed. In this regard, the findings echo those of Nordin and Mat Rabi (2020), who emphasized the importance of teacher sensitivity to social communication difficulties in learners with disabilities.

Respondents demonstrated a clear understanding of the centrality of communication skills in the diagnostic process. They described how such skills enable them to detect signs of struggle in learners' speech, comprehension, written expression, or listening behaviours. These observations often serve as early indicators of potential learning barriers, prompting timely intervention.

Khasawneh (2021) similarly found that educators' self-perceived competence in communication directly influenced their efficacy in identifying and supporting students with special educational needs. Teachers participating in this study affirmed that communication skills were frequently foregrounded during training sessions as essential to inclusive pedagogy, with particular relevance to interpreting learner responses and conducting assessments.

Moreover, strong communication skills were cited as pivotal not only in classroom interactions but also in collaborating with parents, therapists, and educational psychologists.

Teachers reported that such competencies enabled them to articulate learner needs with clarity, advocate for appropriate interventions, and foster partnerships that support holistic learning.

In summary, the study affirms that effective communication is an indispensable component of inclusive educational practice. Teachers equipped with refined communicative abilities are better positioned to detect learning difficulties, respond sensitively, and collaborate meaningfully with stakeholders. These findings advocate for sustained professional development initiatives that prioritize communication as a cornerstone of inclusive teaching and learner support.

5.5.1.2 Demonstrate Patience in Challenging Situation

The present study underscores the pivotal role of teacher patience in identifying and supporting learners with learning disabilities within the mainstream classrooms. Demonstrating patience not only fosters a conducive learning environment but also enables teachers to recognize subtle indicators of learning challenges.

The study revealed that teachers identified patience not simply as a personal virtue but as a professional skill vital for successfully managing diverse learning needs. This reflects a shift from viewing patience as passive tolerance to seeing it as an active strategy for inclusive teaching. Patience allows teachers to withhold snap judgments about learners' behavior, create a calmer learning environment conducive to differentiated instruction, and foster stronger, trust-based relationships with learners. The study conducted by Mzanwa and Moloi (2021) examined teachers' perceptions when supporting learners with dysgraphia and dyslexia in rural schools. The findings indicated that teachers' attitudes towards inclusion significantly influence their effectiveness in identifying and supporting learners with learning disabilities. Positive attitudes, often associated with patience and empathy, were linked to more successful implementation of inclusive practices.

The findings underscore that patience is most effective when paired with empathy, strategic teaching methods, and consistent support. This combination supports the idea that inclusive teaching is not only about content delivery but also about emotional and relational responsiveness. A study by Mosia (2014) focused on Lesotho secondary teachers emphasized the necessity of patience, tolerance, and positive attitudes when working with learners with disabilities. Teachers noted that impatience could lead to neglecting students who struggle to understand, thereby impeding their identification and support. This sentiment reflects the broader understanding that patience enables teachers to recognize and address the unique needs of each learner, facilitating early identification of learning difficulties.

Mavuso and Tanyanyiwa (2020) conducted a study examining teachers' experiences with dyslexic learners in mainstream classrooms highlighted that insufficient training and support structures hinder effective teaching. Teachers expressed the need for better preparation to address the unique challenges posed by learners with LDs. The study suggests that fostering patience and understanding is essential for successful inclusion. Teachers in this study reported that working with learners with learning disabilities patiently increased their awareness of learners' legal rights, the need for collaborative efforts with families and professionals. This suggests that patient engagement can lead teachers to become more proactive advocates for their learners, moving beyond the classroom toward systemic support.

Teachers noted that patience helps them regulate their emotional responses and better interpret student behaviors. In mainstream settings where distractions and behavioral issues may be common, such emotional regulation is essential to maintain a positive, inclusive classroom climate.

The teachers observed that some learners are simply “playful” while others are “struggling” illustrates the diagnostic value of patience. By taking time to observe behaviors without immediate judgment, teachers can avoid mislabeling or punishing learners unnecessarily. They can tailor interventions based on more accurate assessments of need. An investigation into teachers’ experiences in rural primary mainstream schools in Kwazulu-Natal revealed that, despite challenges such as overcrowded classrooms and lack of training, teachers remained committed to supporting learners with LDs (Mkhize, 2021). This dedication underscores the importance of patience and resilience in overcoming systemic barriers to inclusive education.

Teachers emphasized the importance of being approachable and understanding, linking this directly to teaching effectiveness. Learners who feel safe and understood are more likely to express their challenges, engaged with tasks, and respond positively to support mechanism. This shows that patience enhances not only academic outcomes but also student well-being and classroom relationships.

In closing, this study illustrates that patience is more than a soft skill; it is a critical professional competency in inclusive education. It enables teachers to better understand, support, and advocate for learners with learning disabilities. When combined with empathy, strategic teaching, and collaboration, patience forms the cornerstone teaching practices in diverse classrooms. Further, the findings affirm that patience is not merely a virtue but a professional skill essential for teachers. By exercising patience, teachers can create supportive environments that facilitate the early identification and effective support of learners with learning disabilities in the mainstream classrooms.

5.6 Professional Competence and Institutional Support for Educators of Learners with Learning Disabilities

This section addresses the nature and scope of professional competencies and institutional mechanisms designed to equip educators in effectively supporting learners with learning disabilities. Thematic analysis revealed three principal domains of concern: (1) professional training in the identification of learning disabilities, (2) collaborative support from the immediate school community, and (3) structural assistance provided by the Ministry of Education and Training.

5.6.1 Pedagogical Training for the Early Identification of Learning Disabilities

Educators participating in this inquiry were asked to reflect upon the training they had received to support their ability to identify and respond to learning disabilities within mainstream educational environments. Their testimonies revealed a highly heterogeneous landscape. While some teachers reported having undertaken formalized professional development that enhanced their diagnostic and pedagogical acumen, others indicated they had received no structured training. In the absence of institutional guidance, these educators often relied on intuitive judgement and experiential knowledge to inform their practices.

Participants identified several competencies that had proven valuable, whether acquired through formal training or self-initiated learning. These included effective communication, emotional patience under pedagogical strain, and a willingness to develop bespoke strategies in contexts lacking systemic support.

5.6.1.1 The Centrality of Communication in Inclusive Pedagogy

The findings of the study unequivocally illustrate the foundational role of communication in the effective identification and support of learners with learning disabilities. The ability to perceive and interpret both verbal and non-verbal cues was viewed as essential for recognizing early manifestations of cognitive or emotional difficulties. In this respect, the findings echo those of Nordin and Mat Rabi (2020), who underscore the necessity of teacher attunement to communicative nuances in learners exhibiting learning challenges.

Educators in the current study articulated a nuanced awareness of how adept communication enhances their capacity to detect underperformance in areas such as speech, comprehension, written expression, and listening. Such observations frequently serve as preliminary indicators of underlying learning difficulties and thereby enable early pedagogical intervention.

Corroborating these findings, Khasawneh (2021) observed that educators' self-evaluated competence in communication significantly influences their effectiveness in both identifying and supporting learners with diverse needs. Participants in this study reported that their professional development frequently highlighted communication as a core skill in inclusive education, particularly with regard to interpreting learner feedback and administering assessments appropriately.

Moreover, robust communication skills were viewed as instrumental not only in facilitating effective teacher–learner interactions but also in building collaborative relationships with caregivers, allied professionals, and educational psychologists. Teachers emphasized that such competencies allowed them to articulate learner-specific concerns with clarity and advocate for

tailored support strategies, thus enabling more coordinated and responsive educational interventions.

In conclusion, the study affirms the central role of communicative competence in inclusive teaching. Teachers with well-developed communication skills are demonstrably better positioned to recognize and respond to the multifaceted needs of learners with learning disabilities. These findings advocate for sustained investment in professional development programmes that prioritize communication as a critical dimension of effective, inclusive pedagogy.

5.6.1.2 Parental Involvement

The findings of this study revealed varied experiences among teachers concerning the extent of support received from the broader school community, particularly from parents, in their efforts to teach learners with learning disabilities within mainstream classrooms. Several participants reported constructive and proactive parental involvement. In such cases, parents contributed valuable contextual information about their child's learning needs, offered assistance with assignments, and maintained regular communication with the school. This form of engagement was considered instrumental in shaping targeted instructional strategies and fostering continuity of support between home and school environments.

Conversely, other teachers expressed significant concern regarding the absence of parental engagement. These respondents described instances where parents appeared disengaged or indifferent to their children's educational progress, often perceiving the responsibility for learning solely as the school's remit. The lack of familial support, they explained, posed substantial barriers to the successful implementation of interventions and impeded efforts to gain a holistic understanding of learners' needs beyond the classroom context.

These divergent experiences resonate with the work of Mutanga (2022), who observed that parental involvement in supporting children with learning disabilities is frequently mediated by socio-economic conditions, educational backgrounds, and prevailing cultural attitudes. In remote districts such as Qacha's Nek, parental understanding of learning disabilities may be limited, further complicating the efforts of educators, as was evidenced in one of the participating schools in this study.

Moreover, Shani and Hebel (2023) highlight the importance of cultivating collaborative parent–teacher relationships in inclusive education. Their research affirms that learners with additional support needs tend to thrive academically and socially when robust partnerships between schools and families are established. Teachers similarly benefit from this collaboration, as parental insights offer deeper awareness of learners' behavioural patterns, strengths, and support requirements—critical components in the planning and delivery of differentiated instruction.

However, the recurrent absence of such engagement, as noted by several participants, underscores broader structural challenges in embedding inclusive education. Maebane and Themane (2019) argue that in the absence of parental support, educators are likely to experience professional isolation and emotional fatigue, which in turn may erode the effectiveness of inclusive teaching.

Motitswe (2025) emphasizes that schools must assume an active role in educating and mobilizing parents around the principles and practices of inclusive education. Where parents possess a clearer understanding of the nature of learning disabilities and the significance of their participation, they are more inclined to engage meaningfully in their children's educational journeys.

In conclusion, the study underscores a critical need to strengthen the interface between families and schools in the pursuit of inclusive education. While some educators benefit from consistent and meaningful parental collaboration, others are left to navigate significant challenges alone. Bridging this divide requires strategic efforts by schools to cultivate open lines of communication, foster mutual trust, and develop inclusive platforms where parents feel empowered and valued as co-educators. Enhancing parental involvement is essential not only to the success of learners with learning disabilities but also to alleviating the burden on teachers working within complex and diverse learning environments.

5.6.2 Institutional Support from the Ministry of Education and Training

The study's findings suggest a significant deficiency in the level of meaningful and practical support provided by the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) in relation to the inclusion of learners with learning disabilities. Participants reported that while ministry officials conducted occasional school visits, their focus remained largely administrative centred on inspecting lesson planning documents, schemes of work, and assessment outcomes rather than offering pedagogical support or contextually appropriate guidance. While some instructional materials were distributed, teachers frequently found these resources ineffective, particularly for learners who experienced difficulties interpreting abstract or text-heavy visual aids.

Participants further expressed frustration over the lack of follow-up or feedback from ministry representatives, even after raising concerns regarding the limitations of current resources or pedagogical approaches. This absence of responsive engagement contributed to a pervasive sense of neglect and professional abandonment among teachers.

This disconnect between policy rhetoric and classroom reality reflects broader systemic challenges. As Alquraini and Gut (2022) argue, effective inclusive education requires more than

legislative frameworks; it demands sustained, context-sensitive engagement with teachers on the ground. Without regular in-service training, direct professional support, and appropriately differentiated teaching materials, ministry initiatives risk remaining superficial and ineffective in addressing the practical complexities of inclusive teaching.

In summary, the data point to a critical shortfall in institutional support from the Ministry of Education and Training. This inadequacy compromises not only teachers' ability to implement inclusive pedagogies but also the educational experience of learners with disabilities. There is an urgent need for the Ministry to enhance its engagement with schools through sustained professional development, resource allocation tailored to diverse needs, and robust monitoring mechanisms that prioritize inclusivity at both policy and practice levels.

5.7 Mitigation Strategies in Mainstream Classrooms

An in-depth thematic analysis of the data revealed that teachers employ a range of strategies to mitigate the challenges associated with teaching learners with learning disabilities within mainstream classrooms. Four principal strategies emerged: (1) personalized instruction, (2) the creation of a safe and supportive environment, (3) collaborative practices, and (4) the implementation of remedial classes. Each theme is discussed in detail below, beginning with personalized instruction.

5.7.1 Personalized Instruction

The study identified personalized instruction as one of the most valued and frequently employed strategies among teachers striving to meet the diverse needs of learners with learning disabilities. Participants articulated a clear understanding that adapting lessons to suit the individual learning profiles, interests, and capacities of their students enhanced engagement and

promoted inclusion. Teachers reported that when lessons were tailored, learners demonstrated greater participation and enthusiasm, contributing to improved academic outcomes.

According to Graham et al. (2019), personalized instruction entails adjusting the pace, content, and method of delivery to align with each learner's unique needs. Instructional objectives and materials are thus differentiated, enabling learners to access and process content more effectively. This is consistent with the findings of Tetzlaff et al. (2021), who advocate for dynamic personalization frameworks that respond flexibly to learners' changing needs over time.

Teachers in the current study reported that their capacity to personalize instruction was rooted in their ongoing observation of learner behaviour and informal assessments. These practices allowed them to construct differentiated lesson plans grounded in real-time learner data. Saha and Adhikari (2023) underscore the importance of recognizing children as active agents in their learning, influenced by internal, adaptive, and self-regulatory developmental processes. Personalized learning, therefore, requires a holistic approach that includes selecting appropriate learning environments and content delivery mechanisms for each learner.

Many participants indicated that they provided supplementary lessons and individualized attention outside of regular teaching hours to support learners with additional needs. These efforts mirror findings by Ramaila (2025), whose review confirmed that differentiated instruction enhances both learner engagement and educational equity. Similarly, Barrera Castro et al. (2025) emphasize that effective personalized learning necessitates continuous instructional adjustment to overcome psychological and pedagogical barriers.

The study also revealed that teachers adapted lesson plans and resources to accommodate different learning styles, often incorporating tangible, real-life examples to reinforce abstract

concepts. This approach aligns with Vorobyeva et al. (2025), who advocate for contextually grounded and technologically-supported personalized learning strategies.

Participants noted that they engaged in ongoing self-reflection and professional development to improve their ability to deliver personalized instruction. This finding supports the work of Barrera Castro et al. (2025), who argue for the ethical imperative of sustained teacher training in personalization strategies. Group-based pedagogies, such as role play and collaborative tasks, were also cited as effective in allowing all learners to personalize their learning experience in socially inclusive ways. Ramaila (2025) highlights the benefits of such strategies for fostering equity, inclusion, and interpersonal development.

However, while teachers expressed strong support for personalized instruction, they acknowledged significant obstacles, including limited resources, rigid curricula, and bureaucratic inefficiencies. Lake and Hill (2023) argue that the successful implementation of such approaches depends heavily on supportive school leadership and opportunities for continued professional learning.

In conclusion, personalized instruction constitutes a pivotal element in inclusive education, facilitating differentiated learning experiences and enhancing engagement among all students. By tailoring pedagogical approaches to individual strengths and needs, teachers can create responsive classroom environments that promote motivation, autonomy, and deeper understanding. This strategy not only supports learners with disabilities but also contributes to a more inclusive and academically enriching experience for the entire class.

5.7.2 Safe and Supportive Environment

The present study highlighted the critical role of cultivating a safe and supportive learning environment as a core strategy employed by teachers to address the complex challenges of

educating learners with learning disabilities within mainstream settings. A substantial majority of participants emphasized that such an environment not only facilitates academic achievement but also contributes significantly to learners' emotional regulation and social integration.

Teachers consistently underscored the importance of nurturing emotionally secure spaces wherein learners feel respected, affirmed, and empowered to express themselves without fear of ridicule or judgement. These sentiments are echoed in the work of Ahmed et al. (2025), who contend that emotionally responsive educational environments bolster learner resilience, engagement, and overall well-being particularly for pupils requiring additional support. Similarly, McCormick et al. (2024) found that emotionally supportive classroom climates are associated with reduced behavioural disruptions, indicating that respectful, trust-based teacher-learner relationships can serve as a protective buffer against external stressors. A climate of psychological safety, the participants explained, is indispensable for fostering trust, reciprocal respect, and meaningful classroom interactions. The adoption of approaches that promote peer collaboration, student agency, teacher sensitivity, and positive reinforcement was frequently linked to enhanced classroom inclusivity (Kidger et al., 2022).

The responses gathered also illuminated teachers' deep-rooted commitment to relational pedagogy the view that enduring and empathetic teacher-student relationships underpin effective teaching and inclusive learning. Teachers described offering individualized attention, space for emotional expression, and frequent interpersonal engagement, which they believed helped to affirm learners' sense of belonging and self-worth. These reflections resonate with the findings of Ramaila (2025), who asserts that teacher empathy and attentiveness are central to building classrooms grounded in equity and inclusivity. Participants in this study noted that even minor

gestures, such as patient listening, personalized encouragement, or subtle pedagogical adjustments often yielded considerable positive effects on learners' self-perceptions and academic confidence.

Moreover, the notion of a supportive environment extended beyond formal instructional time. Informal interactions such as participating in playful classroom moments, sharing light-hearted exchanges, and offering guidance outside scheduled lessons were viewed as essential in building trust and enhancing learners' social-emotional development. Teachers regarded such moments as integral to the inclusive ethos they sought to cultivate.

A further insight emerging from the data relates to the importance of recognizing the individuality of each learner. Teachers noted that learners with learning disabilities present with distinct profiles of strengths, challenges, and learning preferences. Understanding these differences, they argued, was central to designing appropriate accommodations including extended time, modified assessments, and the integration of assistive technologies that facilitated equitable curriculum access. Such adaptations, far from singling out learners, were viewed as promoting classroom-wide engagement and enabling all students to thrive within a unified learning community.

Participants also stressed the importance of striking a pedagogical balance: while it is imperative to provide tailored support to learners with learning disabilities, this must not come at the expense of other pupils. Consequently, teachers advocated for inclusive instructional approaches that could be flexibly adapted to accommodate diverse learner needs. Methods such as differentiated instruction, fluid grouping arrangements, and multimodal assessment formats were cited as effective means of achieving this balance. Liu et al. (2021) similarly found that when feedback is constructive and affirming, learners experience a greater sense of school connectedness, which in turn fosters academic motivation and reduces behavioural concerns.

A consistent theme in the findings was the cultivation of a non-judgemental and empathetic classroom culture one in which learners felt safe to make mistakes, ask for assistance, and take intellectual risks. Teachers noted that such environments were particularly beneficial for learners with learning disabilities, who often grapple with feelings of inadequacy or fear of embarrassment in academic contexts. This view is supported by Mokhele and Motsamai (2023), whose study demonstrated that respectful, inclusive, and emotionally secure learning spaces significantly enhance the confidence and academic success of marginalized learners.

Importantly, teachers articulated that the emotional and psychological well-being of learners constituted the foundation upon which academic progress must be built. They recognized that learners with learning disabilities are more susceptible to low self-esteem, bullying, and social alienation. In response, they reported implementing deliberate strategies to foster a culture of inclusion, empathy, and mutual respect. These efforts not only benefitted learners with specific needs but also strengthened peer relationships and promoted a collective classroom identity. A systematic review by Mashburn and Pianta (2020), published in the *Early Childhood Education Journal*, similarly found that classrooms characterized by warmth, structure, and inclusivity experienced fewer behavioural issues and greater academic cohesion. Practices such as personal familiarity with students, clearly articulated expectations, and the cultivation of respectful interpersonal norms were identified as hallmarks of effective classroom management.

Teachers further described offering what they termed “tender, loving care” a holistic, human-centred approach to teaching that prioritized emotional presence and compassionate engagement. They emphasized the importance of attending closely to their learners’ emotional states, actively involving them in both formal and informal learning, and ensuring that all pupils had opportunities to participate meaningfully. Teachers also supported learners with simplified

content delivery and accessible tasks to ignite curiosity and re-engage them in their educational journeys.

Another key strategy involved creating time and space for learners with learning disabilities to articulate their experiences whether of frustration, joy, or academic difficulty. Teachers reported that these opportunities enabled them to better understand learner perspectives, build relational trust, and address social-emotional barriers to learning. In many instances, special education teachers were invited to collaborate in providing more targeted support, ensuring a wraparound approach to inclusion.

In summation, the findings underscore the paramount importance of establishing a safe, inclusive, and emotionally nurturing learning environment as a fundamental condition for the successful inclusion of learners with learning disabilities in mainstream classrooms. Such environments do more than accommodate academic difference; they promote psychological safety, social connectedness, and emotional resilience. For inclusive education to be realized in practice, teachers must act with intentionality seeking to understand, support, and engage each learner while fostering a classroom culture where all students are empowered to participate, grow, and flourish.

5.7.3 Collaboration

The findings of the present study underscore the centrality of collaborative practice in addressing the multifaceted challenges encountered by teachers when educating learners with learning disabilities in mainstream settings. Participants consistently expressed the belief that collaboration represents a pivotal mechanism for alleviating the pressures of inclusive pedagogy. They noted that teaching learners with diverse educational needs in isolation can be overwhelming; however, when support is shared among stakeholders, the burden is significantly reduced and instructional efficacy is markedly enhanced.

This view aligns with Eisenschmidt et al. (2024), who highlight that the cultivation of a collaborative culture is most effective when underpinned by clear objectives, external support, and reflective leadership. In institutions where distributed leadership models are embraced and where collective reflection is embedded into school culture, collaboration was found to yield more sustainable improvements.

Participants reported that sustained communication and joint efforts among classroom teachers, specialists, learners, and families particularly parents and siblings are critical components of effective inclusive education. Teachers noted that such collaboration facilitates a shared understanding of learners' individual needs, and supports the development of tailored pedagogical strategies. Involving parents and families in the learning process was viewed as instrumental in reinforcing the continuity of support between home and school, which ultimately contributes to improved academic achievement and the holistic well-being of the learners.

Moreover, participants detailed their frequent collaboration with special education professionals including remedial educators, life skills teachers, and counsellors in developing and adapting pedagogical interventions that are attuned to the particular needs of learners with learning disabilities. This interdisciplinary engagement enables the integration of specialized knowledge into the mainstream classroom, fostering a more inclusive and supportive learning environment. Teachers welcomed the expertise of such professionals, emphasizing that this input enriched their own understanding of learner profiles and strengthened their ability to adapt instruction accordingly.

Teachers also described proactive efforts to involve parents and guardians in the educational journey, particularly through regular communication and strategy-sharing. They remarked that such engagement contributes to greater consistency between school-based

interventions and home-based support. This alignment, they argued, is particularly beneficial for learners who thrive on routine and predictability. Parental involvement was also identified as crucial for the development of Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), which are tailored to learners' unique capabilities and challenges.

Support from school leadership emerged as another vital facet of effective collaboration. Participants noted that head-teachers and principals who demonstrate a commitment to inclusion create a school culture conducive to professional cooperation. Administrative leaders, who provide resources approve time for planning, and support staff participation in professional development empower teachers to pursue inclusive strategies with greater confidence.

Importantly, teachers highlighted the value of collegial collaboration among themselves. Shared planning, co-teaching opportunities, and mutual professional support were regarded as mechanisms for promoting best practice, reducing isolation, and fostering a sense of collective responsibility for inclusive education. Teachers shared that such collaboration allowed them to exchange teaching materials, strategies, and emotional encouragement, particularly when navigating the demands of differentiated instruction.

However, participants also acknowledged persistent challenges within the profession, including negative attitudes from some colleagues who perceived learners with learning disabilities as burdens or as academically disengaged. In response, teachers called for a cultural shift that embraces inclusive education as a collective professional responsibility. They emphasized that fostering empathy, professionalism, and a sense of shared purpose is essential to dismantling stigma and ensuring no learner is marginalized. Tachie (2022), in his study of foundation-phase mathematics teachers in South Africa's Motheo District, similarly found that

peer collaboration during lesson planning improved pedagogical approaches and reignited learner interest, underscoring the value of co-constructive teaching practices.

Another salient theme emerging from the data was the need for broad-based awareness-raising initiatives about learning disabilities. Teachers argued that informed stakeholders including fellow educators, parents, and the wider school community are more likely to exhibit empathy and cooperate in supporting learners with additional needs. Enhanced public understanding, they suggested, would also serve to challenge prevailing misconceptions and reduce stigma.

Finally, participants reaffirmed the necessity of collaborating with external professionals such as psychologists, therapists, and special needs educators. Drawing upon their expertise enables classroom teachers to implement more effective adaptations, thereby making curricula accessible to all learners.

In conclusion, the study illustrates that teachers perceive collaboration as an indispensable pillar of inclusive education. It strengthens professional capacity, improves learner outcomes, and fosters a school culture rooted in equity, shared responsibility, and mutual support. Systematic, cross-stakeholder collaboration must therefore be embedded in inclusive education policy and practice to ensure all learners regardless of ability are given equitable opportunities to succeed.

5.7.4 Remedial Instruction as a Support Mechanism

Remedial instruction emerged from the study as a highly valued strategy for supporting learners with learning disabilities in mainstream classrooms. The findings indicate that incorporating remedial interventions whether integrated within the school timetable or provided as supplementary sessions can play a pivotal role in narrowing academic gaps and enhancing teaching effectiveness.

Teachers articulated that remedial classes offer learners the opportunity to revisit foundational concepts in a structured, low-pressure setting. By re-engaging with core content at a manageable pace, students are better able to consolidate understanding, rectify misconceptions, and rebuild confidence in their academic abilities. This approach is particularly beneficial for learners with learning disabilities, who often require repetition, multisensory input, and differentiated pacing to access and master the curriculum. Duflo et al. (2024), in a study conducted in Odisha, India, demonstrated that customized remedial instruction not only improved learner outcomes but also enabled teachers to recalibrate their instructional expectations and address disparities more effectively than strategies centred solely on increased autonomy.

The teachers in this study reported that the most effective remedial sessions incorporated interactive, learner-centred methodologies. Personalized instruction, educational games, and collaborative problem-solving activities were frequently employed to maintain engagement and cater to diverse learning preferences. These practices align with Osei and Boateng (2023), who found that struggling students in Ghana made measurable academic gains following targeted remedial support. Teachers expressed a desire for the establishment of dedicated remedial learning centres, where learners could access focused academic support beyond the constraints of the regular classroom.

Furthermore, teachers stressed the importance of assessment in guiding remedial practice. Pre-assessments were used to identify specific learning needs, while post-intervention evaluations allowed teachers to monitor progress and tailor future instruction. This cyclical, evidence-based approach to remedial planning supports the argument made by Evsen and Cetin (2024) that teachers require specific pedagogical training to design and deliver effective interventions.

Teachers also cited examples of effective remedial strategies drawn from international contexts. In Australia, schools implementing explicit instruction characterized by clear explanations, guided practice, and cumulative review achieved notable improvements in literacy and numeracy among disadvantaged learners (Cook, 2023). These approaches were particularly effective in equipping struggling students with the foundational skills necessary for broader curriculum engagement.

Participants in the current study affirmed the utility of after-school remedial sessions in supporting learners who had not grasped key concepts during regular instruction. These sessions, they explained, offered extended learning time and provided space for one-on-one or small group interaction. Teachers utilized a variety of modalities including verbal reinforcement, simplified written exercises, and informal discussions to promote learner engagement and peer collaboration. The inclusion of these strategies was reported to foster learners' participation and improve their sense of academic belonging.

Nevertheless, teachers acknowledged that many face limitations in delivering effective remedial instruction due to insufficient training and inadequate resourcing. The findings of Shivute (2023) corroborate this view, noting that Namibian teachers often lack the requisite support to implement inclusive interventions. The study advocates for enhanced in-service training and more robust policy implementation to ensure remedial education is integrated within broader inclusive education frameworks.

In conclusion, the integration of remedial instruction into mainstream teaching represents a vital support mechanism for addressing academic disparities and promoting inclusivity. When delivered through engaging, learner-centred approaches and supported by informed assessment practices, remedial classes enable learners with learning disabilities to build foundational

competencies and participate more fully in academic life. For such initiatives to be sustainable and impactful, however, they must be underpinned by strategic planning, adequate resourcing, and targeted teacher development.

5.8 Conclusions

This study set out to examine the experiences of secondary school teachers in teaching learners with learning disabilities within mainstream classrooms. The conclusions presented herein are drawn from the research objectives that guided the investigation and the interpretation of the findings.

Objective One: Teachers' Experiences of Teaching Learners with Learning Disabilities

The study concludes that teachers experience both challenges and positive encounters in educating learners with learning disabilities in mainstream settings. In both SCH-1 and SCH-2, learners were reported to struggle significantly with foundational academic skills, including reading, writing, speaking, listening, and mathematical operations. These challenges suggest the presence of specific learning disabilities, particularly dyslexia and dyscalculia.

It is further concluded that, despite holding Bachelor of Education degrees and possessing over a decade of teaching experience, many teachers lacked the requisite training to accurately identify and address these disabilities. Conversely, some teachers, particularly in SCH-1, reported that they derived professional satisfaction from teaching learners with learning disabilities. These individuals expressed positive beliefs about inclusion and emphasized the value of educational equity and diversity. Such experiences reflect a belief in the transformative potential of inclusive education, especially when learners demonstrate progress, resilience, or increased confidence.

Objective Two: Challenges Faced by Teachers

The study concludes that teachers in mainstream classrooms contend with multiple obstacles when supporting learners with learning disabilities. The most commonly cited challenges include limited instructional time, insufficient resources, inadequate specialized training, large class sizes, and frequent unauthorized absenteeism. These constraints hinder teachers' ability to offer the differentiated support required to meet the unique educational needs of these learners. As a result, the academic performance and engagement of learners with learning disabilities are adversely affected.

Moreover, the cumulative effect of these challenges detracts from teachers' capacity to address individual learning needs, contributing to disengagement and educational underachievement among affected learners.

Objective Three: Support and Training for Teachers

With regard to professional preparation, the study concludes that there exists a disparity in training between teachers holding B.Ed. degrees and those with Diplomas in Secondary Education. While the latter group reported some exposure to inclusive education methodologies, the former frequently indicated a lack of formal training in identifying and supporting learners with learning disabilities.

Nonetheless, the findings suggest that in the absence of formal institutional support, many teachers have taken it upon themselves to develop personal strategies to facilitate inclusive teaching. This self-directed professional growth reflects a commitment to inclusive education and evidences teacher resilience. Such adaptive practices ranging from sourcing independent materials to implementing learner-centred strategies demonstrate the critical role teachers play in translating inclusive policy into classroom reality.

The study also concludes that systemic deficiencies in parental involvement persist, particularly in rural contexts such as SCH-2, where families often lack awareness of learning disabilities. Moreover, the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) was found to offer predominantly administrative oversight, with little to no targeted pedagogical support.

The study highlights that effective communication, patience, and collaborative engagement such as team teaching are essential competencies for managing inclusive classrooms. These attributes are critical for cultivating responsive, learner-centred environments that support academic and socio-emotional development.

Objective Four: Mitigation Strategies in Inclusive Classrooms

The study concludes that several mitigation strategies are effectively employed by teachers to address the barriers associated with inclusive education. Personalized instruction emerged as a key approach, enabling educators to tailor content and pacing to individual learner profiles, thereby enhancing engagement and understanding.

Additionally, the establishment of emotionally and physically safe learning environments was found to be vital in fostering learner participation and self-confidence. Teachers further reported that collaborative teaching practices, including partnerships with special education specialists and the use of team teaching, significantly improved the quality of support provided to learners.

Furthermore, remedial classes were identified as a valuable intervention for learners requiring additional time and reinforcement. These sessions allow for consolidation of foundational skills and help bridge learning gaps. Collectively, these strategies contribute to easing the instructional burden on teachers while enhancing the inclusivity and effectiveness of mainstream education.

5.9 Limitations of the Study

The scope of this study was limited in several respects. Firstly, it was conducted in only two secondary schools within the Qacha's Nek district, thereby limiting the generalizability of the findings. The small number of participating teachers further constrains the extent to which the results may be considered representative of the broader teaching population in the district or the nation at large.

Additionally, even within the selected schools, not all staff members participated, and thus the findings reflect only a partial account of teacher experiences. Consequently, this study cannot claim to reflect the full spectrum of experiences across all secondary schools in Lesotho.

Furthermore, the study employed a single data collection method semi-structured interviews—which may have limited the depth and variety of data obtained. The inclusion of additional qualitative or quantitative methods (such as classroom observations, focus groups, or surveys) may have yielded more comprehensive insights.

5.10 Recommendations

In light of the study's findings, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance inclusive education practice and support teachers in mainstream classrooms:

- **Professional Development:** It is recommended that continuous, structured professional development programmes be established to equip teachers with the knowledge and skills necessary for identifying and supporting learners with various learning disabilities. Emphasis should be placed on inclusive pedagogies, diagnostic strategies, and adaptive instructional methods.

- **Resource Provision:** The Ministry of Education and Training should prioritize the provision of teaching and learning resources specifically tailored to the needs of learners with learning disabilities. Such materials should support differentiated instruction and include assistive technologies where possible.
- **Staffing and Class Sizes:** The government should recruit additional qualified teachers to address overcrowding in mainstream schools. Reducing the learner-teacher ratio will allow for more individualized support and effective classroom management.
- **Parental Involvement:** Further research is recommended to investigate the role of parental engagement in the education of children with learning disabilities, particularly in rural contexts. Awareness-raising initiatives targeting families should be integrated into national inclusive education strategies.
- **Attitudes Towards Inclusion:** Future studies could explore the attitudes of both teachers and learners without disabilities towards the inclusion of learners with learning disabilities. Such research would contribute to understanding how school culture and peer perceptions influence inclusive education outcomes.

In conclusion, while significant strides have been made towards inclusive education, the findings of this study reveal that considerable challenges remain. Addressing these issues requires coordinated efforts from policymakers, educators, families, and communities to ensure that all learners, regardless of ability, have equitable access to quality education.

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2.0 Objective 1:

Teachers' experiences of teaching learners with learning disabilities in mainstream classrooms.

1. What is your understanding of learners with learning disabilities in your classroom?
2. What type of learning disabilities do you work with in your classroom?
3. What are your experiences of teaching learners with learning disabilities in the mainstream classrooms?

3.0 Objective 2:

Challenges of teaching learners with learning disabilities in mainstream classrooms.

1. What challenges do you encounter when teaching learners with learning disabilities?

4.0 Objective 3:

Teacher professional help and skills to support learners with learning disabilities.

1. What pre-service training did you receive as the skills in identifying learners with learning disabilities?
2. What assistance do you have available to help support learners with learning disabilities?
3. What kind of support do you get from MOET to accommodate learners with learning disabilities in the mainstream classrooms?

5.0 Objective 4:

Mitigation strategies used in mainstream classrooms to overcome the challenges teachers encounter.

1. What strategies do you use to support learners with learning disabilities in mainstream classrooms?

Appendix: 2 Permission Letter (District Education Manager)

Telephone: +266
22340601/3631

Fax: +266 **22340000**



The National University of Lesotho

P.O. Roma 180

Lesotho

24 march 2025

The District Education Manager

Qacha's Nek

Lesotho

Dear Madam/Sir

Re: Request to collect data from Secondary schools in Qacha's Nek

NTSOAKI LEKENA (200502207) TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN TWO SCHOOLS

Nsoaki Lekena is a Master's student in the Faculty of Education, at the National University of Lesotho. One of the requirements of this programme is to conduct a study on topical issues in education. It is because of this requirement that she is conducting a study on **SECONDARY TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES OF TEACHING LEARNERS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES IN MAINSTREAM CLASSROOMS IN QACHA'S NEK**. You are therefore requested to allow her to collect data from sampled schools. The sampled schools are attached therein for ease of reference.

Thank You in advance.

Regards,



Nthama Matsie (PhD) Supervisor

Appendix: 3 Permission Letter (The Principal)

National University of Lesotho

P.O. Roma 180

Lesotho

The Principal

School 1

Qacha's Nek District

Re: Permission to collect data from Secondary schools in Qacha'sNek

NTSOAKI LEKENA (200502207) TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN YOUR SCHOOL

Ntsoaki Lekena is a Master's student in the Faculty of Education, at the National University of Lesotho. One of the requirements of this programme is to conduct a study on topical issues in education. It is because of this requirement that she is conducting a study on **Secondary Teachers' Experiences of Teaching Learners with Learning Disabilities in Mainstream Classrooms in Qacha' Nek**. You are therefore requested to allow her to collect data in your school.

To achieve the objective of the study, she will conduct interviews with teachers in semi-structured. The findings of the study will help the Ministry of Education and Training, Schools, Teachers to be aware of the challenges teachers encounter in inclusive settings and the strategies that could be employed to overcome the challenges.

Thank You in advance.

Regards,



Nthama Matsie (PhD) Supervisor

Appendix: 4 The letter from the researcher to the principal

National University of Lesotho

P.O. Roma 180

Lesotho

Cell: 58090424

maemamamaema@gmail.com

The Principal

School

Qacha's Nek District

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: REQUEST TO COLLECT DATA FROM YOUR SCHOOL

My name is Ntsoaki Lekena (200502207). I am undertaking a Masters Research Study with Dr Matsie, in the department of Educational Foundation at the National University of Lesotho. I therefore request the participation of your school teachers in the study entitled: Secondary Teachers' Experiences of Teaching Learners with Learning Disabilities in Mainstream Classrooms in Qacha's Nek.

The researcher is well aware that teachers who teach learners with learning disabilities are faced by deeper challenges which need to be addressed. This study will help them to understand the different learning disabilities and learning styles of their students in the mainstream classrooms. Through understanding of learning disabilities, they may be able to develop the strategies that could be used to overcome the challenges.

Therefore, I request your support to grant me permission to conduct interviews in your school.

Yours sincerely

Ntsoaki Lekena

Appendix: 5 Informed Consent Teachers (Semi-structured Interviews)

National University of Lesotho

P.O. Roma 18

Lesotho

Cell: 58090424

Email address: maemamamaema@gmail.com

Dear Participant

My name is Ntsoaki Lekena (200502207). I am undertaking a Masters Research Study with Dr Matsie, in the department of Educational Foundation at the National University of Lesotho. This is a self-sponsored study. You are cordially invited to participate in this study entitled: Secondary Teachers' Experiences of Teaching Learners with Learning Disabilities in the Mainstream Classrooms in Qacha's Nek.

I am undertaking this study to investigate teachers experiences of teaching learners with learning disabilities in the mainstream classrooms; the challenges they face when teaching learners with learning disabilities; the professional help and skills to deal with learners with learning disabilities in the mainstream classrooms, and the mitigating strategies that could be used in the mainstream classrooms to overcome the challenges teachers encounter.

The focal point of the study is on four teachers who teach different subjects with different teaching experiences. The participants are chosen under the assumption that they would cooperate with the research and provide information that would be useful to the study. The semi-structured interviews questions will be answered verbally and the researcher will note down every answer provided.

In this study, the participation is voluntary. If answering a question makes you uncomfortable, you are not required to. Declining at any point is absolutely free of consequences. If you agree to take part, you will be given a consent form to sign. The researcher pledges to reserve your identity in this study to ensure that you are not put at risk in any way. The information you will provide will be confidential.

Should you need further clarification on issues regarding my study, you are free to contact my supervisor Dr. Matsie at +266 58099351.

Yours Sincerely

Ntsoaki Lkena

Appendix: 6 Teacher's Consent form

DATE.....

I.....a teacher teaching learners with learning disabilities in the mainstream classrooms, I have been approached by Ntsoaki Lkena, a Master's candidate at the National University of Lesotho to participate, and I agree to be interviewed on the study entitled

“Secondary Teachers’ Experiences of Teaching Learners with Learning Disabilities in the Mainstream Classrooms in Qacha’s Nek”.

I understand that any information collected will be used uniquely for research purposes. I know that my name and identity will remain anonymous in the final research report. I acknowledge that my participation in this research is voluntary. I understand that I have the right to decline participation or withdraw from the study at any time without facing any undesirable penalties. I have read and understood the information provided in this consent form. I voluntarily agree to participate in the research study described above. I understand that I can withdraw my consent at any time without punishment.

Full name of the teacher.....

Signature.....

Cell Number.....

Appendix: 7 Confidentiality Agreements

I _____ hereby willingly without compulsion volunteer to participate in the research study entitled Secondary Teachers' Experiences of Teaching Learners with Learning Disabilities in Mainstream Classrooms in Qacha's Nek.

Singed _____ date _____

Appendix: 8 Similarity Index

Ntsoaki Lekena

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Postgraduate Studies 2024_25



National University of Lesotho

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Appendix: 9 Editing Certificate



A: CPUT, Education Campus, Room 2.45, Highbury Road, Mowbray, Cape Town, 7700

Global Institute for Teacher Education and Society (GITES)

EDITING CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the manuscript titled **Secondary School Teachers' Experiences of Teaching Learners with Learning Disabilities in Mainstream Classroom in Qacha's Nek**

by

Ntsoaki Lekena (200502207)

has been thoroughly edited for language, grammar, structure, and coherence by **Dr. Tawanda Wallace Mataka**.

The editing process focused on ensuring clarity of ideas, correctness of grammar and punctuation, appropriate academic tone, and consistency in style and formatting.

Dr. Mataka holds extensive experience in academic editing and English Language Teaching, and the revisions made are aimed at enhancing the overall readability and scholarly quality of the manuscript.

Should you require any further information, please feel free to contact me at **0027713144978** or via email at **tawandamataka@gmail.com**.

Yours

sincerely,

Dr.

Tawanda

Wallace

Mataka