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¹ In-Service Teachers' Attitudes Towards the Inclusion of Learners ² with Additional Needs in Regular Classrooms in South Africa

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⁵

⁶ **Abstract**

⁷ Scan to know paper details and author's profile

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⁹ *Index terms—*

¹⁰ **1 I. INTRODUCTION**

¹¹ Providing in-service teachers with training in working with learners who have additional needs is one of the
¹² key factors in promoting the implementation of inclusive education. Thus, identifying factors affecting in-service
¹³ teachers' attitudes towards inclusion of learners with additional needs is critical for its success (Hong, Hoon Ryoo,
¹⁴ Noh & Shin, 2018). Teacher education is becoming more important for training in-service teachers to be positive
¹⁵ and receptive toward inclusive practices of learners with additional needs (De Boer, Jan Pijl, & Minnaert, 2011;
¹⁶ Wilkerson, 2012). Among other factors research (Beacham & Rouse, 2012) suggests that in-service teachers'
¹⁷ attitudes toward inclusion for learners with additional needs are negative.

¹⁸ Learners with additional needs are increasingly being placed in inclusive education settings to educate them
¹⁹ in the least restrictive environment (LRE), where they can improve social integration by interacting with peers
²⁰ (Boutot and ??ryant, 2005).

²¹ Previous research (Wilkerson, 2012) suggests that many teachers are still not prepared to teach learners with
²² additional needs in general education classes and they lack sufficient knowledge about learners with various
²³ learning difficulties. (Snyder, 1999). Given the importance of in-service teachers' beliefs, values and attitudes
²⁴ toward inclusion, conversely, some researchers (Bornman & Rose, 2010) have investigated potential factors that
²⁵ influence inclusivity. Studies (Shippen, Flores, Crites, Patterson, Ramsey, Houchins, & Jolivette, 2011; Park
²⁶ & Chitiyo, 2011; Wilkerson, 2012) that looked at what influences teachers' positive attitudes towards inclusive
²⁷ education found some factors to be: taking a special education course, teaching and working experience with
²⁸ learners with additional needs, frequency of contact with these learners, and formal training in inclusive education.
²⁹ However, relatively few studies specifically focused on in-service teachers' attitudes toward learners with additional
³⁰ needs. Thus, the purpose of this study was to add evidence-based information on the in-service teachers' attitudes
³¹ towards the inclusion of London Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Sciences learners with additional
³² needs to uniquely contribute to the literature in this field. Therefore, the present study focused on this important
³³ area.

³⁴ In this regard, it is important to consider first, the background to inclusive education in South Africa. Secondly,
³⁵ a brief literature review and theoretical frameworks on teacher attitudes, towards inclusion, and thirdly, the in-
³⁶ service teachers' field experience of inclusion in South African schools.

³⁷ The education system in South Africa has undergone a far-reaching policy change since the dawn of democracy
³⁸ more than two decades ago (Engelbrecht & Oswald, 2005). Before 1994, the South African education system was
³⁹ based on racial segregation as well as disability. Because of this, a great number of children with impairments were
⁴⁰ unable to access public education (Department of Education, 2014). In essence, such a practice was discriminatory
⁴¹ against people with disabilities and a violation of children's rights as enshrined in the charter of the United Nations
⁴² Organisation. On its formation, the new democratic dispensation sought to alter the situation by announcing
⁴³ major education policy changes by, among other things, making education accessible to all learners irrespective
⁴⁴ of impairments. In other words, education became inclusive for all learners in the country.

⁴⁵ In July 2001, the Education White Paper 6, titled Building an inclusive education and training system,
⁴⁶ was established (Department of ??ducation, 2002). The policy succinctly outlines the framework for inclusive

4 RESEARCH DESIGN AND SAMPLING

47 education in the country. Consequently, the policy on inclusive education became official within the South African
48 education landscape. The policy was to take effect in some schools on an initial basis as a pilot study. However,
49 it is now being adopted in all schools and teachers are being trained on the question of inclusivity for purposes
50 of thorough and successful implementation.

51 Additionally, the policy is designed to help teachers to handle barriers to learning as well as enabling
52 them to respond to a range of learning needs in the classroom (Bornman & Rose, 2010). In 2014, the DBE
53 introduced a policy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS) for learners who experience
54 barriers to learning. The policy supports the implementation of the main principles of Education White Paper
55 6 (Department of Education, 2002). It provides a framework for the standardisation of the procedures to
56 identify, assess and provide programmes for all learners. In addition, to ensure that additional support to
57 enhance their participation and inclusion in schools is fostered in their learning. Again, the policy serves as a
58 key bedrock for the transformation of the education system. However, despite this strong evidence of the South
59 African government's commitment to the agenda of inclusive education, a large number of learners continue to
60 be excluded from mainstream schools (Dalton, Mackenzie, Kahande, 2012). Teachers seem to be either reluctant
61 or unwilling to address this desperate need of children who are dropout of school. The model avers that change
62 in explicit measures is greater than implicit measures when novel evaluative associations are developed and old
63 associations are disallowed. On the other hand, the implicit measures are greater than explicit when newly formed
64 evaluative associations are rejected (Petty, & Briñol, 2006). However, when the two evaluations clash, implicit
65 contradictions occur. In this way, attitudes are built or accepted toward a new initiative, such as accommodating
66 learners with additional needs. The model was useful in providing a framework for looking into the teachers'
67 attitudes towards the inclusion of learners with additional needs.

68 Without going into finer details into the operation of the model, we adopted it as a framework to describe how
69 teachers' implicit attitudes affect their acceptance of learners with additional needs. For example, the positive
70 evaluations in table 1 may be that teachers were in the automatic mode, which might have not considered the
71 external factors and thus did not consider the propositional evaluations. This was identified by their reactions in
72 figure 1, where they did not even know what resources were enablers of the implementation of inclusive education.
73). The APE model describes this neutrality as an ambivalent state; where there is a clash between the implicit
74 and the explicit attitudes.

75 To understand why teachers' attitudes appear positive to teachers when there is an outcry that its
76 implementation is slow needed an investigation, especially among in-service teachers who come from mainstream
77 schools. Our study regarded such knowledge as important to have because of the assertion that attitudes are the
78 best predictors of behavioural intentions (Ismailos, Gallher, Bennet & Li, 2019). In the next section, we turn our
79 attention to teachers' experiences of inclusive education.

80 2 III. IN-SERVICE TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES OF INCLU- 81 SIVE EDUCATION

82 Studies on in-service teachers' experiences of inclusive education abound (Malinen, Savolainen, & Xu, 2012; Yada
83 & Savolainen, 2017). These studies cover a wide range of issues, which include teachers' self-efficacy in teaching
84 within inclusive classrooms. For example, in Beijing about 400 in-service teachers were examined through a
85 questionnaire containing a Teacher Efficacy for Inclusion Practices (TEIP), to establish the relationship between
86 self-efficacy for inclusion practices, their background factors and attitude towards inclusion. The study found that
87 three factors, namely: teacher self-efficacy, collaboration and long experience in teaching learners with disabilities
88 were the strongest predictors of teachers' attitudes towards inclusive practices.

89 In Japan, a study by Yada and Savolainen (2017) on teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education and self-
90 efficacy was conducted. A total of 359 in-service teachers revealed that teachers' sentiments toward disabilities
91 were generally positive. However, the majority of teachers had some concerns about practicing inclusive education
92 in their classrooms due to several Therefore, it is important to investigate this area for at least two reasons. Firstly,
93 at an international level studies examining attitudes and similar constructs within an international framework
94 may shed light on the role of context-specific factors, which may be valuable for teacher trainers and policymakers.
95 Secondly, if it is found that in-service teachers hold positive attitudes towards inclusive education it may allow,
96 sustain and encourage practices that will guarantee, to a certain extent, successful inclusion of all learners
97 regardless of their diversity (Sharma, Forlin, Loreman, & Earle, 2006). To this end, we sought to answer the
98 following research question: What are the in-service teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of learners with
99 additional needs in mainstream schools in South Africa?

100 3 IV.

101 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

102 4 Research Design and Sampling

103 We followed a mixed methods design with convergent and explanatory sequential components (Creswell, 2011).
104 In so doing, we hoped that the mixed design would give us an impetus to engage in an ongoing critical reflection,

105 negotiation and verification factors that underpin the teachers' attitudes. We felt that while a survey design
106 would give us a window to gaze into the teachers' views, qualitative data would enable us to produce a range of
107 complementary data and measurement that has the credibility and trustworthiness to capture the complexity of
108 the teachers' attitudes.

109 Sixty -three (63) teachers were randomly selected from a population of 100 in-service teachers from the
110 Limpopo Provincial Department of Education. The teachers were recruited from five districts: Capricorn,
111 Mopani, Sekhukhune, Vhembe and Waterberg) in the Province by the Department. They came from different
112 schools (full-service schools, piloting schools and special schools). The purpose was to train them for inclusive
113 education, through a Short Course in Inclusive Education at the University of Limpopo.

114 **5 Data Collection**

115 Data was collected through a closed-ended questionnaire (part one) and an open-ended questionnaire (part two),
116 which was adopted from the Teaching for All Evaluation and Monitoring Study (2019). In part one, the teachers
117 were expected to express their views on seven statements about attitudes on a four-point scale (strongly agree,
118 agree, disagree and strongly disagree).

119 The statements were as follows: a) I feel it is important to create inclusive classrooms, b) I feel London
120 Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Sciences that it is important to use diverse teaching methods to
121 accommodate learners who experience barriers to learning, c) I feel it is important to work with other teachers to
122 make my teaching more inclusive, d) Teaching learners with disabilities is rewarding, e) I have high expectations
123 and aspirations for all learners, f) In my teaching, I will deal with difficulties/ sensitive issues such as racism,
124 and g) I am familiar with the resources that learners with disabilities need in order to learn.

125 In part two, the teachers were expected to express their views on a scenario (by answering two questions)
126 reflecting inclusive education practices through writing on the questionnaire booklet provided. The scenario
127 presented a story of an 11-year-old girl (grade 4) whose parents were HIV positive and later divorced. Apparently,
128 their separation affected her schoolwork and as such, teachers shunned her. Consequently, she was distressed and
129 withdrawn and often neglected her hygiene.

130 The teachers were asked to respond to the following two questions: 1). which policies or a set of guidelines
131 would you turn to, to help the learner? 2). which approaches (in the classroom and the school at large) would
132 you use to address this problem to address her problems? Procedures of data collection Ethical clearance for
133 the research was obtained from the Turfloop Research Ethics Committee (TREC/84/2019: IR). The nature and
134 the purpose of the study were explained to teachers. Further, we also clarified that those who did not want to
135 participant in the study were free not to do so. Consent for participation was then obtained from teachers.

136 The questionnaire was administered before any teaching could commence. This was meant to establish where
137 they were before they could receive new information on inclusive education.

138 **6 Data Analysis**

139 Data was analysed through Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) V.22 for descriptive statistics (means
140 and standard deviation) for frequencies. The open-ended question was analysed through NViVo 12, where themes
141 and categories were generated.

142 **7 V. RESULTS**

143 **a) Results from closed-questionnaire**

144 **9 VI. RESULTS FROM THE OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONNAIRE**

146 We followed Huberman and Miles' (2013) advice in processing the answers from the open-ended questionnaire
147 by using two questions:

148 **10 How would you go about addressing a learner who experiences social problems at school and in answering the question show what legislative frameworks, policies and guidelines would you use to help her?**

152 This question was meant to evaluate the teachers' understanding of the legislative and policy framework that
153 underpin inclusive education. From the analysis of this question, we came up with themes: a) the use of a
154 legislative framework, b) the use of professionals in schools, c) awareness campaigns. Hereunder, we give a
155 synopsis of each of these themes.

156 **11 Finding 1: The utilisation of policies, guidelines, and policy
157 frameworks**

158 The results show that in general the teachers were aware of the availability of policies, guidelines and policy
159 frameworks that could be used by the government. Of all the policies, the SIAS was the most cited. One
160 respondent had the following to say: "According to White Paper No.6, all learners are able to learn irrespective
161 of any barrier. SIAS is there to assist in the screening, identify, assess and support. if we can apply all the
162 policies as prescribed all learners will achieve their best.

163 **12 ISP-Individual support programme should be in place and
164 be recorded to follow up an individual progress of the learner
165 by all stakeholders including parents." Another said the
166 following: "According to White Paper No.6 all learners are
167 able to learn irrespective of any barrier. SIAS is there to
168 assist in the screening, identify, assess and support. If we can
169 apply all the policies as prescribed all learners will achieve
170 their best. ISP-Individual Support Programme should be in
171 place and be recorded to follow up an individual progress of
172 the learner by all stakeholders including parents".**

173 **13 Finding 2: The use of professionals in schools**

174 The teachers showed acumen in partnerships and collaborations between and among teachers in the implementa-
175 tion of inclusive education in schools. They indicated that inclusion could be strengthened by having professionals
176 such as social workers, and psychologists within the schooling environment. They hinted that such professionals
177 could be useful in a situation where a learner experiences social problems. For example, they could offer mental
178 health support and help deal with issues such her HIV/AIDS. On this, one teacher had the following comment
179 to say about the scenario of Buliswa:

180 **14 "Her only conclude that she has intellectual problems with-
181 out trying to look at the strategies that can assist her to
182 become a fully-fledged, responsible, acceptable adult in the
183 society. Buliswa's problem of being stressful and loneliness
184 needs intervention by her teachers, social workers, psycholo-
185 gists, specialists, health practitioners" Finding 3: Awareness
186 campaign about personal hygiene**

187 Teachers across primary schools often give concern about the lack of hygiene in their learners (Specht, 2016.). In
188 this case, Buliswa's is one of them. In this regard, the respondent noted that she often neglects her hygiene and,
189 as teachers is their duty to educate learners of both genders about the need to take care of themselves and their
190 well-being, they said that: "Buliswa's needs to be guided and molded to appropriate path in life. Moreover, the
191 problem of neglecting personal hygiene, her parents are solely responsible to teach her the good hygiene practices
192 from childhood, her teachers are responsible to show her that, she needs to be clean at all times."

193 From the analysis of the second question: How would you go about trying to address this situation in your
194 classroom? In your response please include any teaching materials or teaching approaches you would use in your
195 lesson for this, we came up with three themes as well: a) the use of teaching aids in the class, b) curriculum
196 differentiation and c) the use of group work.

197 **15 Finding 4: The use of teaching aids in the class**

198 Research has shown that the use of teaching aids such as videos and pictures have a positive effect on the cognitive
199 development in young kids, as Buliswa's is still in Grade4 her teachers advocate for more usage of visual media
200 especially when tackling social issues within the curriculum content. They alluded to that by saying:

201 **16 "Learners like television a lot, I will bring in a television**
202 **set in class with more interesting visuals that include social**
203 **activities." Finding 5: Curriculum differentiation**

204 Curriculum differentiation is a strategy that is used by teachers in inclusive education to teach in a diverse
205 classroom that consists of even learners with additional learning need so that they don't get left behind, with the
206 view that Buliswa's has reading and writing difficulties. Such a strategy can be beneficial to her and the whole
207 class a, teachers perpetuated this by saying:

208 **17 "Regarding her Intellectual challenges (reading and writing)**
209 **-teachers to need differentiation in our teaching and assess-**
210 **ing that learner" Finding 6: Using group work learning**

211 Group work is an educational model that promotes learning and socialization among learners. Studies have shown
212 that learners also benefit from working together in group activities as it fosters peer learning. Teachers have used
213 group work to get students to actively participate and engage in their groups as within that group work they are
214 allocated roles to fulfil. The allocation of roles makes learners take charge of the activity and feel responsible for
215 their role within the group. Teachers alluded to this by saying: "Introduce group discussions where every learner
216 has a role to play in a group and let them rotate on their roles." London

217 **18 LIMITATIONS AND DIRECTION FOR FUTURE RE-**
218 **SEARCH**

219 The study had its own limitation such as being conducted in one province (Limpopo), which could be addressed
220 in future research. Another example of the study limitation, we have currently not varied the teachers according
221 to the types of schools from which they came from Some in-service teachers came from full-service schools, others
222 from special schools, others from regular schools). Varying the schoolteachers according to type could provide
223 a better understanding of their self-efficacy. Future research could investigate attitudes toward other groups of
224 teachers from full-service schools, to see to what extent they could responded to the questions asked.

225 Furthermore, although the theoretical frameworks underlying this research specifies attitude-behaviour links,
226 (intended) behaviour was not assessed in this study. The recruitment of participants by the government officials
227 might have introduced bias because these teachers were recruited on the basis that they were responsible for the
228 inclusive education programme in their schools. This may have led to a relatively high-conscientious group about
229 inclusive education. This might have affected the results.

230 Another factor that might have contributed to results is involving participants from both the Foundation,
231 Intermediate and Further Education Training Phases. This might have led to the mixed feelings that we see in
232 the results. In addition, future research could also include other demographic characteristics gender, age and
233 place to gain a better understanding of the role of socio-demographic characteristics play on beliefs and attitudes.

234 Furthermore, in future it might be interesting to consider both the quantity and quality of interactions with
235 learners with varied barriers to learning, such as those with hearing and visual impairment to provide a new
236 vista in the developmental of differential attitudes. Finally, variances between attitudes toward inclusion and
237 attitudes toward learners who experience barriers to learning raise the question; or as to what extent social norms
238 concerning inclusion are actively transferred to different areas of society. While research has been uniform in
239 reporting people's acceptance of the mission to create equitable and inclusive communities. There have been far
240 fewer publications that document the active production of such communities (Linehan and ??cCarthy, 2001).
241 Only when people actively engage with the practical implications of inclusion, an educational system and a
242 society for all can be created. In this regard, future research could explore the different ways in which people's
243 understanding of inclusion affects their attitudes.

244 **19 VIII. DISCUSSION**

245 We examined the in-service teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of learners with additional needs in
246 mainstream schools. The use of a mixed methods research approach provided us with a reasonable evaluation of
247 their attitudes on the inclusion of these learners in mainstream schools.

248 Although we were cognisant of the limitations as we highlighted in the previous section, we were nevertheless
249 convinced that the two methods we used to collect data provided us with a compelling snapshot of the attitudes
250 that these teachers might hold concerning educating learners with exceptionalities. We used the APE to describe
251 and interpret. Our overall finding is that teachers were both willing and ready to include and support with
252 additional needs in their classrooms.

253 However, similar to previous findings (Burke and Sutherland, 2004), these teachers tended to hold idealistic
254 positive beliefs and attitudes which were not based on practical experience. Our assertion is based on the fact
255 that in figure 1 they seemed uncertain about the resources that learners with disabilities need to learn. According

20 IX. CONCLUSION

256 to the APE model, there was a split between the implicit evaluations and explicit evaluations on the support
257 that these learners should receive.

258 But, the positive attitudes could be attributed to two explicit factors. One, the fact that they were recruited
259 based on them being responsible for inclusive education in the schools or by working in special or full-service
260 schools might have influenced their evaluation of the statements on London Journal of Research in Humanities and
261 Social Sciences attitudes. For example, teachers who might have had positive experiences at special schools could
262 have influenced the results. These formed a big section of the teachers (Specht, 2016). Also, it is important to
263 observe that positive attitudes towards inclusion seem to have fuelled them to a willingness to adapt programming
264 and work more flexibly with learners to meet their needs. Finding one could also be explained by this implicit
265 factor.

266 In addition, our findings suggest that the teachers' positive attitudes might be linked to their profile, such
267 as their teaching qualifications (elementary and secondary) and accordingly, the ages/grades of learners whom
268 they taught. In our data, we had only two teachers who taught at secondary schools. The rest were based at
269 the primary school level. Of interest also is the fact that of the 63 teachers only 12 were males. We think that
270 this profile of the sample might explain the positive attitudes of teachers toward the inclusion of learners with
271 additional needs. Notably, the survey results, on item (d) reflected (57.1%) on strongly agreed that teaching
272 learners with disabilities was a rewarding experience. Here the teachers expressed an implicit positive evaluation,
273 but this was mitigated by the realities of the unavailability of resources. Others studies ??Wilson, 2014; ??auerwas
274 & Mahon, 2018) have identified this gap between positive attitudes and practices.

275 Finally, on findings 4, 5, and 6 indicate that in-service teachers were implicitly positive about the ability to
276 provide differentiated instruction to accommodate diversity in their classrooms. Remarkably, as supported by
277 our findings, earlier studies (Burke & Sutherland 2004; Wilson, 2014) also elucidate that when teachers' attitudes
278 are positive they become resilient and become agents of change.

279 These findings have at least three implications. One, these positive attitudes, although there have been drawn
280 from a small sample that cannot be generalised to a wider population should serve as motivation to those of
281 us who are campaigning for the inclusive education agenda. Two, since implicit measures of change are greater
282 than the explicit measures when a new initiative is rejected, teacher education institutions intensify their training
283 programmes for both pre-service and in-service teachers. Three, traditional models of attitude change should
284 be replaced by approaches that promote sustained engagement with the teachers if the change is to happen.
285 Therefore, hit-and-run approaches such as weekend workshops are unlikely to equip teachers with the requisite
286 skills to implement new initiatives.

287 20 IX. CONCLUSION

288 In this study, we argued that providing in-service teachers with training in inclusive education is critical for
289 its successful implementation. However, such training may not be successful if teachers' attitudes are negative
290 toward the inclusion of learners with additional needs. It was, therefore, important to investigate in-service
291 teachers' attitudes toward the inclusion of learners with additional needs. We have argued that while such
292 information is important for the successful implementation of inclusive education, in South Africa few studies
293 that have looked into in-service teachers' attitudes towards learners with additional needs exist. The gap becomes
294 even wider when it comes to rural areas like Limpopo Province. Our finding is that while there is a popular
295 belief that teachers are generally negative toward the inclusion of these learners, it was not so. ^{1 2 3}



Figure 1:

Figure 2:



Figure 3: Figure 1 :

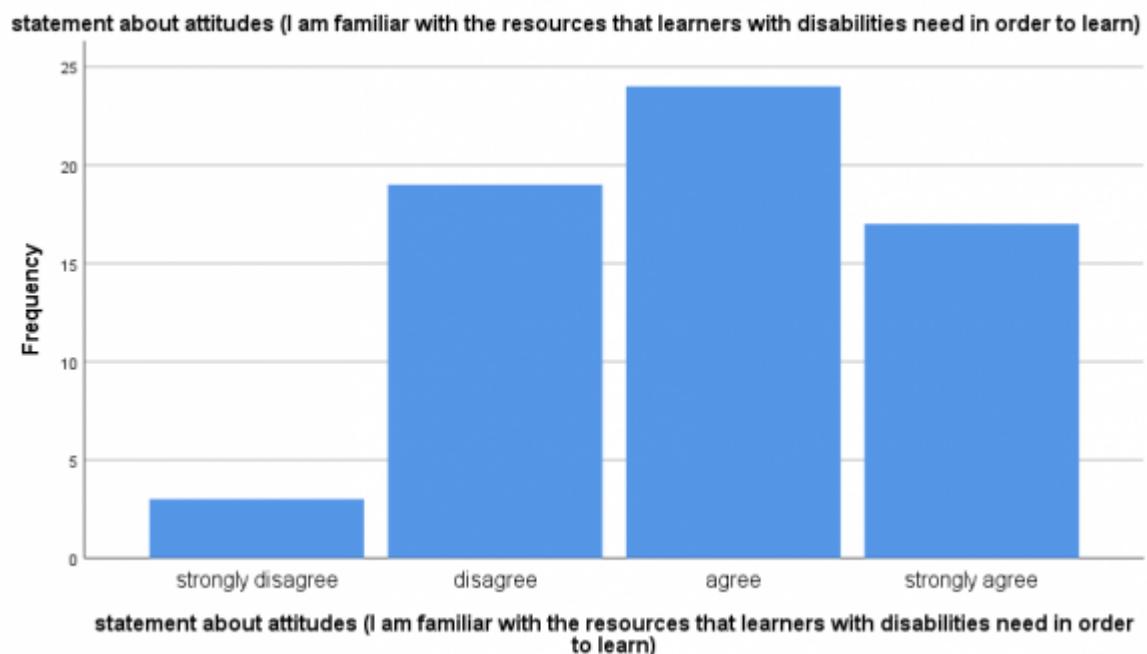


Figure 4:

In South Africa, not much is known about the teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education (Prinsloo 2001; Nel, Müller, Hugo, Helldin, Bäckmann, Dwyer, & Skarlind, 2011; Swart, Engelbrecht, Elof, & Pettipher, 2002, Savolainen, Engelbrecht, Nel, & Malinen, 2012). A few studies that exist in this area are old and scattered, thus unable to provide useful insights in developing teacher education. However, more critically is that these studies did not focus on the teachers' attitudes. The only study in South Africa that looked at this topic is that of Savolainen et.al (2012). However, this was a comparative study of in-service teachers' attitudes and self-efficacy in implementing inclusive practices in South Africa and Finland. Therefore, this study is for policymakers, education planners and researchers in the field.

Although this is such an important area, especially for South Africa given its obnoxious past policies of exclusion, limited studies have been conducted on teachers' attitudes. To date, most empirical studies on inclusive education have not thoroughly investigated this topic. Most have been conducted on other topics such as the readiness of in-service in full-service schools to implement inclusive education (Themane & Thobejane, 2019), teachers' understanding of inclusive education (Machie, 2018), understanding of the interaction between policy and implementation of inclusive education (Harmuth, 2012) and assisting Foundation Phase teachers to implement inclusive education (Neethling, 2015).

(Machie, 2018)

Figure 5:

1

Statement	Frequencies %			
	SA	A	D	SD
a) I feel it is important to create inclusive classrooms	68.3	28.6	1.6	1.6
b) I feel that it is important to use diverse teaching methods to accommodate learners who experience barriers to learning	69.8	30.2	00	00
c) I feel it is important to work with other teachers to make my teaching more inclusive	68.3	30.2	00	1.6
d) Teaching learners with disabilities is rewarding	57.1	38.1	4.8	00
e) I have high expectations and aspirations for all learners	55.6	44.4	00	00
f) In my teaching, I will deal with difficulties/ sensitive issues such as racism	44.4	39.7	12.7	00
g) I am familiar with the resources that learners with disabilities need in order to learn.	27.0	38.1	30.2	4.8

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Figure 6: Table 1 :

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