TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES ON TEACHING LEARNERS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENT IN LESOTHO INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS

by

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BLOEMFONTEIN

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MARCH 2024

DECLARATION

I, Maliteboho Maseli, declare that the treatise dissertation Teachers' Experiences on Teaching Learners with Visual Impairment in Lesotho-inclusive Classrooms, submitted for the qualification of Master of Education with specialisation in the Psychology of Education at the University of the Free State, is my independent work.

Complete references have indicated and acknowledged all the references I have used.

A Turnitin Report on the work is included in the Annexure.

M.MASELI 29/01/2024
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GENERAL/HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (GHREC)

15-Mar-2023

Dear Mrs Maliteboho Maseli

Application Approved

Research Project Title:
Teachers' experiences on teaching learners with visual impairment in Lesotho inclusive classrooms.

Ethical Clearance number:
UFS-HSD2023/0046/23

We are pleased to inform you that your application for ethical clearance has been approved. Your ethical clearance is valid for twelve (12) months from the date of issue. We request that any changes that may take place during the course of your study/research project be submitted to the ethics office to ensure ethical transparency. furthermore, you are requested to submit the final report of your study/research project to the ethics office. Should you require more time to complete this research, please apply for an extension. Thank you for submitting your proposal for ethical clearance; we wish you the best of luck and success with your research.

Yours sincerely

Dr Adri Du Plessis
Chairperson: General/Human Research Ethics Committee

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ABSTRACT

The study explores teachers' experiences of teaching learners with visual impairment in Lesotho-inclusive classrooms. Despite all the efforts done by the Ministry of Education and Training in Lesotho to include learners with visual impairment, teachers seemed to experience challenges in teaching these learners. Although teachers are seen as the primary implementers of inclusive education, it is presumed that teachers' self-efficacy is critical in accepting inclusive education. Albert Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory (1977) was used as the framework to understand the objectives of the study. The qualitative research approach was used to determine teachers' experience who educate learners with visual impairment. A phenomenological research design was employed. Purposive sampling was used to select the participants with the intention that the people who will be interviewed will have experience teaching learners with visual impairment. Four teachers who teach learners with visual impairment were interviewed from two high schools in Maseru Lesotho, two from each school. Content analysis was used to analyse data.

The findings revealed a lack of braille textbooks and other assistive devices like voice recorders and Perkins Braillers that assist learners with visual impairment in learning effectively in the classroom. The study also showed that visual-impaired learners require extra time to understand the content. The study recommends that learners with visual impairment be provided with assistive devices because their learning becomes difficult without them, and the environment should accommodate learners with visual impairment.

Keywords: Inclusive classroom; Learners; Lesotho; Teachers; Visual impairment

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

MOET: Ministry of Education and Training

NAB: National Association for the Blind

LNFOD: Lesotho National Federation of the Disabled

DoE: Department of Education

NCS: National Curriculum Statement

RNCS: Revised National Curriculum Statement

CAPS: Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement

PWD: Persons with Disabilities

OBE: Outcomes Based Education

LTSM: Learning and Teaching Support Materials

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

Teaching learners, in general, has an impact on academic success. Teaching learners with visual impairment, in particular, is even more significant because this impairment can negatively affect learners' academic opportunities, career choices and social life (Atowa, Hansraj & Wanjuihian, 2019). Mboshi (2018) agrees that visual impairment can interfere with the learning process of learners with visual impairment, mobility and social growth. As a result, learners with visual impairment present unique educational needs. Teachers need to create inclusive-friendly classrooms and provide care and support (Mosia & Phasha, 2020). Despite all the efforts that the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) (2018) in Lesotho instituted, according to many national and international policies in ensuring the inclusion of people with disabilities (Mosola, 2020:1), teachers still experience challenges in teaching learners with visual impairment in inclusive classrooms. Therefore, this study explores teachers' experiences teaching learners with visual impairment.

Visual impairment is a significant loss of vision that cannot be corrected by using glasses and affects the learners functioning at school (Disability Fact Sheet No. 13, 2004). Mariga and Phachaka (2011) in Mosola (2020:13) also define visual impairment as "an educational context that encompasses learners ranging from those with limited vision and those who have total loss of vision and require modification of their environment, as well as the use of assistive devices". Students with visual impairment usually require tools such as eyeglasses, magnifiers, materials such as writing with large font sizes, and sometimes braille to enable such students to carry out their studies (Disability Fact Sheet No. 13, 2004). For this study, visual impairment is a condition whereby an individual is born without sight or has lost all sight. This impairment interferes with the normal functioning of an individual at school and in their day- to- day activities.

Previous studies on teachers' experiences who educate learners with visual impairments have revealed challenges (Sekanku,2018; Mosola,2020). For instance, the study by Sikanku (2018) showed that these include class size, unavailability of materials, and a lack of knowledge and skills for teaching learners with visual impairments. Another study by Mosola (2020) revealed that teachers have been inadequately trained to teach learners with various disabilities, including visual impairments and lack basic resources to teach these learners. Teachers experience challenges in their day-to-day activities; for example, specialised teachers spend a lot of time-sharing information and providing specialised support to regular teachers, which consumes a lot of time and affects the learning process of visually impaired learners (Sikanku, 2018).

Despite the abovementioned challenges, intervention measures have been implemented to address this issue. For example, in Cameroon, teachers were expected to observe the following in teaching learners with visual impairment in an inclusive classroom: the use of assistive technology devices necessary for classroom teaching and learning processes, ensuring adequate classroom organisation to allow for easy movement and classroom interaction, adopt effective use of the chalkboard by making sure that essential information is written boldly on the chalkboard for the partially sighted to see, and the teacher should use appropriate tactile diagrams or models (instructional materials) while teaching to concretise concepts (Mboshi, 2018). These are a few of the things that were implemented to address the challenges identified above.

In Lesotho, braille is used to teach learners with visual impairment. Support teachers are responsible for braille the teaching materials for all the subjects offered in the school and, simultaneously, teaching, which overloads them with work. The curriculum in Lesotho does not allow inclusive teaching strategies. The syllabus content is too much for slow learners and those with visual impairment. Teachers affirmed that learners with visual impairment often require a slow teaching pace since braille reading is comparatively slower (Ralejoe, 2019).

Teaching learners with visual impairment requires modification of curriculum and teaching strategies, allowing for using visual aids and assistive technology and creating a safe learning environment. In their study conducted in Zambia, Namusukwa and Penda (2019) reveal that “in

an inclusive setting, it is the school's responsibility to adjust and adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of learners with visual impairment." Considering the above discussion, this study aims to explore teachers' experiences on teaching learners with visual impairment in an inclusive classroom.

1.2 Theoretical Framework

The theory that guides this study is Albert Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory (1977). Self-efficacy denotes people's beliefs in their capabilities to accomplish something or an individual's belief in their capacity to execute behaviours necessary to produce specific performance attainments (Bandura, 1977, 1986, 1997). Efficacy beliefs influence how people think, feel, motivate themselves, and act. Self-efficacy reflects confidence in controlling one's motivation, behaviour and social environment. In this theory, self-efficacy is developed and influenced by mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion and emotional states (Lopez-Garrido, 2020).

The self-efficacy theory applies to this research because it emphasises the experience. This theory made it easier to comprehend how crucial teaching experience is when working with students who have visual impairments. With experience and strong self-efficacy, teachers are likelier to use various teaching strategies while instructing visually impaired students.

1.3 Statement of Research Problem

Since the introduction of inclusive education in inclusive schools, little research has been done on the experiences of teachers who educate learners with visual impairment. In Lesotho, due to too much syllabus content and limited time to cover it, learners with visual impairment were often left behind when teaching was done faster (Ralejoe, 2019). Mosola (2020) even noted that some teachers seem unaware or forget that these learners are present in their classrooms.

Some teachers neglect learners with visual impairment and are unwilling to assist them, at worst of times, not even allowing them to record or read what they write on the board (Mncube, Hadebe-Ndlovu & Uleanya, 2021). Learners with visual impairment need a lot of attention, and

some teachers are not ready to face this challenge (Sikanku, 2018). Teachers face enormous challenges in dealing with these learners and are unaware of their additional responsibilities and roles in the classroom.

1.4 Rational for the study

Through the researcher's experience and observation in working with pre- and in-service teachers, it has been discovered that teachers lack confidence in dealing with visuallyimpaired learners. They tend to be critical and reprimand learners with visual impairments because they do not understand the educational needs of these learners. In addition, there are very few schools in Lesotho that accommodate learners with visual impairment. This 4 raises the concern about the challenges faced by those learners who are unable to be enrolled in such schools.

1.5 Research Aim

The study explores teachers' experiences in teaching learners with visual impairment.

Specific Objectives

- To understand what visual impairment means.
- To examine the effectiveness of teaching strategies for learners with visual impairment.
- To identify challenges that teachers encounter in teaching learners with visual impairment.
- To recommend strategies that can best be used to teach learners with visual impairment in an inclusive classroom.

1.6 Main Research Question

What are the teachers' experiences in teaching learners with visual impairment?

Subsidiary Questions

- What do teachers understand by visual impairment?
- How effective are the teaching strategies used to teach learners with visual impairment?
- What challenges do teachers encounter in teaching learners with visual impairment?

- What strategies can be recommended for teaching learners with visual impairment in an inclusive classroom?

1.7 Delimitation of the study

In its broad sense, this research study is specifically situated in Educational Psychology slant, which focuses on the development and learning of learners with visual impairment. From the perspective of this discipline, I explore teachers' experiences in teaching learners with visual impairment in Lesotho inclusive classrooms. This research project will be limited to some two selected high schools in Maseru district, hence; the findings may not be entirely representative of all the ten districts of Lesotho.

1.8 Research Methodology and Design

A phenomenological research design was used in this study. Phenomenological research is a qualitative research approach that seeks to understand and describe the universal essence of a phenomenon (Lester,1999). The phenomenological research aims to reveal, among other things, the experiences and meanings that individuals attribute to an event based on real experiences (Neubauer, Witkop & Varpio, 2019).

1.9 Sampling and Sample Size

In this study, the researcher interviewed teachers teaching visually impaired learners in two high schools in Maseru, Lesotho. Four teachers teaching learners with visual impairment from two different high schools in Maseru, Lesotho, were selected purposively with the belief that they have a reservoir of experience in that field. Palinkas, Horwitz and Hoagwood (2015) further state that purposive sampling involves identifying and selecting individuals who are experienced with and more knowledgeable about a phenomenon of interest.

1.10 Data Collection Instrument and Procedures

The researcher used semi-structured interviews and prepared open-ended questions that were used as a guide during the interviews. Semi-structured interviews involve a dialogue between the researcher and the participants. These are guided by open questions, further probing and clarification when needed, and even comments (Maree, 2016). The researcher arranged to interview the participants at their workplace or school. The interviews were recorded for better understanding, and the researcher also took notes of important information using a notebook. Semi-structured interviews allow the researcher to collect open-ended data and explore participants' feelings, thoughts and beliefs about a particular topic (Dejonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). During the interview, the researcher listened so that she would be in the position to establish new emerging lines of inquiry that are directly related to the phenomenon being studied, explore and probe more for clarification (Dejonkheere & Vaughn, 2019). This method allows the researcher to obtain more information about the opinions of teachers teaching visually impaired learners and the emotions attached during the interviews.

1.11 Data Analysis

Content analysis was used in this study to analyse data. "Content analysis is the analysis of what is being said, written or recorded through systematic classifications process of coding and identification of themes and patterns" (Parveen & Showkat, 2017). Maree (2016) further describes content analysis as a technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of the message. Content analysis study uses information that has been recorded during data collection. Therefore, it is suitable to analyse the data collected in this study. The tape-recorded interviews with the participants were listened to repeatedly to record all the facts clearly and then transcribed and appropriately organised into different categories. Content analysis is a method that gives a systematic and objective means to make valid inferences from verbal, visual or written data to describe and quantify specific phenomena (Bengtsson, 2016).

1.12 Value of the Research

The findings of the proposed study will probably shed light on the experiences of teachers who work with learners with visual impairment. Teachers working with visually impaired learners can use this study to learn how to manage these learners and how to use the best teaching methods suitable for them. MOET and other stakeholders can also use this study to improve or enhance the policies on inclusive education, especially for visually impaired learners.

1.13 Ethical Considerations

Before data collection, ethical clearance was obtained from the University of the Free State and the MOET in Lesotho to allow the researcher to collect data and ensure that the study is conducted responsibly and ethically. The researcher explained the purpose of the research to the participants, what is expected from them, the amount of time likely required for participation, and ensured the participants that the information provided would be confidential. The participants were also advised of the expected risks and benefits, both psychological and social, that could be encountered. The participants were informed that they voluntarily agreed to participate in the study and can withdraw anytime if they feel uncomfortable. The researcher respected the participants' privacy and ensured that their real names remained anonymous. The researcher prepared a written consent form that the participants were expected to sign as an agreement to participate in the research. According to Fleming and Zegwaard (2018), it is important to highlight the ethical considerations regarding the research. An essential ethical aspect is the issue of the protection of the participants' identities. This could include obtaining letters of consent. The informed consent process can be seen as a contract between the researcher and the participants.

1.14 Definition of Operational Concepts

Defining the operational concepts provides a proper understanding of what the study is all about. Therefore, concepts pertinent to teachers' experiences teaching learners with visual impairment in Lesotho-inclusive classrooms are defined. Such concepts are teaching, inclusive classroom and visual impairment.

1.14.1 Teaching

Teaching is the concerted sharing of knowledge and experience, which is usually organised within a discipline and, more generally, the provision of stimulus to a person's psychological and intellectual growth by another person or artefact. Teaching is an intimate contact between a more mature and less mature personality designed to further the latter's education (Rajagopalan, 2019). This implies that teaching is about giving someone knowledge or training someone.

1.14.2 Inclusive classroom

An inclusive classroom accommodates learners with various forms of disabilities and learners who are not impaired (Mubanga & Penda, 2019). In the context of this study, an inclusive classroom accepts both visually impaired students and those who can see. Inclusive classrooms are typically designed so that learners with special needs, disabilities or impairments can learn among peers who may or may not have certain needs.

1.14.3 Visual impairment

Visual impairment refers to a significant loss of vision, even though the person may wear corrective lenses. The nature and degree of visual impairment may vary significantly, so each student may require individual adaptations to instructional practices and materials to learn effectively (Mboshi, 2018).

1.15 0rganization of chapters

The study consists of five chapters:

Chapter 1 presented the orientation to the enquiry or study. This chapter gives the reader an introduction to the topic under study. This includes informing the reader of the background to the study, problem statement, research questions and objectives, methodology of the study, the delimitations of this research study and the key definitions.

Chapter 2 reviewed the relevant literature on the experiences of teachers who teach learners with visual impairment and unfolds the theoretical framework adopted to guide the study. The self-efficacy was used in this study to understand the experiences of teachers who teach learners with visual impairment.

Chapter 3 deals with research methodology and design guiding the study, thereby highlighting the location of the study, the selection of participants and the procedures of data collection and analysis. A detailed description of how trustworthiness is ensured is given by outlining ethical considerations.

Chapter 4 focuses on data analysis, presentation and interpretation of the research findings.

Chapter 5 concludes the study by presenting a summary of the research findings, the conclusions based on the findings, and the researcher's recommendations for future research.

1.16 Chapter summary

This chapter outlines the reasons behind this study through the presentation of the introduction, background and the problem statement of the study at hand. In highlighting the nature of the study, the theoretical framework was discussed. The main research question, aim and objectives of the study were brought into focus to illuminate the purpose of the study. The rationale for the study, research design, methodology, methods of data collection and analysis were also discussed. The chapter also discussed the value of the research, trustworthiness and the ethical considerations taken to protect participants during data collection. Finally, the chapter briefly presented the definition of concepts and a skeleton structure of the entire study. In the next chapter, the theoretical framework is elucidated.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides the theoretical framework which guides the study and how the theory is relevant to it. Again, in this chapter, operational terms or concepts will be defined. The literature review will be centred around the aim and objectives of the study. It will be discussed based on the following topics: the concept of visual impairment, causes of visual impairment, identification of visually impaired learners, placement of visually impaired learners in the classroom, teaching methods for learners with visual impairment, teaching and learning devices for learners with visual impairment, challenges faced by learners with visual impairment and successful indicators for teaching learners with visual impairment in an inclusive classroom. A summary of the chapter will also be provided.

2.2 Theoretical Framework- Self-efficacy Theory

Self-efficacy theory is positioned within a more comprehensive theoretical framework of Bandura's (1986, 1997) social cognitive theory. According to this theory, human functioning depends on three interacting sets of factors: personal, social, environmental, and behavioural (Schunk & Dibenedetto, 2020). This theory is a key motivational process in social cognitive theory (Schunk & Dibenedetto, 2020). It is an individual's ability to plan and execute the courses of action required to produce specific attainments (Graham, 2022). Efficacy beliefs influence how people think, feel, motivate themselves, and act. Self-efficacy is confidence in one's ability to carry out a task in a way that results in a successful outcome (Schunk & Dibenedetto, 2020). In other words, consistent disappointments reduce confidence, while excellent performances raise it. A teacher's innate capacity to successfully support students' learning is known as self-efficacy. Teacher self-efficacy is important in inclusive settings because it affects how teachers approach their lessons, what motivates them, and how much time and effort they devote to providing instruction to all students, including learners with visual impairment (Tseeke, 2021). Therefore,

teachers need to acquire skills and experience in combination with the self-efficacy belief that will assist them in carrying out their activities effectively and efficiently.

2.2.1 Application of self-efficacy theory

According to Bandura (1977), four sources of efficacy beliefs are most helpful in fostering a strong sense of self-efficacy, which drives people to complete activities and reach their goals. These are one's mastery of experience, vicarious experiences, social persuasion and emotional and physiological states (Lopez-Garrido, 2020). The most influential source of self-efficacy is the interpreted result of one's previous performance or mastery experience (Lopez-Garrido, 2020). When a teacher incorporates his or her experience in teaching learners with visual impairment and successfully fulfils their educational needs by implementing activities that involve them in a learning process, it shows that they can communicate effectively with these learners. Teachers who possess this attribute (mastery of experience) are eager to encourage and point learners toward success. They may, therefore, look for more creative ways to teach that will allow them to address the needs of visually impaired students (Tseeke, 2021). Bandura (1977) points out that failure in carrying out the task can also challenge one's perception of their capability to succeed.

The second source of efficacy belief mentioned by Bandura (1977) is a vicarious experience, also called social models or observation. Vicarious experiences involve observing others completing tasks (Lopez-Garrido, 2020). Teachers might observe other, more experienced individuals in order to master their activities and strengthen their self-efficacy in order to attain desired outcomes. They should have role models that they can observe to be motivated to perform well in teaching learners with visual impairment. Nevertheless, despite ongoing efforts, observing others struggle tends to make one less confident in their abilities (Mosola, 2020).

Another source of efficacy belief suggested by Bandura (1977) is social persuasion. Positive verbal feedback while undertaking a complex task persuades a person to believe they have the skills and capabilities to succeed (Lopez-Garrido, 2020). Teachers should be confident and believe they have the skills, experience, and abilities to handle challenging tasks and support learners with visual impairment. Tseeke (2021) found that learners' beliefs in their abilities and

accomplishments were considerably related to teachers' beliefs in their abilities to teach learners with visual impairment effectively.

The last source identified by Bandura (1977) is emotional and physiological states. A person's emotional, physical and psychological well-being can influence their feelings about their abilities in a particular situation (Lopez-Garrido, 2020). If teachers who teach learners with visual impairment are emotionally, physically and psychologically well, they will be motivated to teach, interact with, and support learners. Teachers who experience a high sense of self-efficacy express greater commitment to assisting and teaching learners with visual impairment, can manage the class successfully, have innovative teaching strategies and are committed to their work (Tseeke, 2021).

2.2.2 Relevance of Self-efficacy theory in this study

The self-efficacy theory applies to this research because it emphasises the experience. This theory made it easier for us to comprehend how crucial teaching experience is when working with students who have visual impairments. With experience and a strong sense of self-efficacy, teachers are likelier to use various teaching strategies while instructing visually impaired students (Graham, 2022). Teachers' experience and self-efficacy are significant because they affect how teachers approach their lessons, what motivates them, and how much effort they put into providing teaching to all students, including learners with visual impairment (Tseeke, 2021).

In the work context, the experience is previous work-related knowledge and skills learned over a period applied to the most recent (Msimango, 2019). Experience is a source of knowledge; when people know, they will feel confident in their ability to carry out their responsibilities properly.

Teachers who are confident and have a reservoir of experience are keen to support and direct learners towards positive accomplishments (Tseeke, 2021). Therefore, teachers with experience and high self-efficacy are likely to seek more innovative teaching avenues that could enable them to attend to the needs of learners with visual impairment.

2.3 The Concept of Visual Impairment

Visual impairment refers to the significant loss of vision even if the person uses the corrective lenses (Nanjwan & Igba, 2019). A person with visual impairment has vision that cannot be restored to normal vision (Fantaye, Nur, Kifle & Engida, 2022). The nature and the degree of visual impairment may vary from one individual to another. The terms partially sighted, low vision, legally blind, and blind are used in the educational context to describe students with visual impairments. According to Kirk, Gallagher, Coleman and Anatasiow (2009), cited in Nanjwan and Igba (2019), visual impairment is a generic term for visual loss (blindness and low vision) that impacts learning in a school context. These authors categorised visual impairment into two main groups: low vision and blindness. According to Fantaye et al. (2022), Nanjwan and Igba (2019) and Mosola (2020), learners with low vision are individuals whose ability to see clearly is permanently limited or decreased. They use a combination of vision and other senses to learn, although they may require adaptations in lighting, the size of the print, and, sometimes, braille. Learners who are blind are unable to see anything with their eyes. They learn by using braille and other non- visual media. Therefore, learners with visual impairment must be handled differently depending on their level of disability. Teachers must employ suitable teaching methods and strategies to accommodate learners with visual impairments.

2.3.1 Causes of visual impairment

Visual impairment is one of the most common challenges or problems our communities and society have experienced; it can affect individuals from birth or later in life (Atowa et al., 2019). Visual impairment can be caused by several common eye conditions (Mosola, 2020). According to Francis and Clark (2003), common eye conditions can include the following: albinism (lack of normal pigment in the eyes), amblyopia (lazy eye), cataract (cloudiness of the lens of the eyes), retinal detachment (a tear in a retina). These are some of the causes of visual impairment.

Figure 1. Eye with cataract (Francis & Clark, 2003)

Cataract is opacity, or cloudiness, in the normally clear lens of the eye that interferes with vision. Although regarded by many people as an unavoidable effect of advancing age, cataract may develop at any time in life, even before birth (Morelle, 2016).

Donaldson (2017) also emphasised that macular degeneration, cataracts, diabetic retinopathy, glaucoma, age-related eye illnesses, strokes, and accidents are just a few of the conditions that can impair vision. Causes of visual impairment in adolescents differ from that of elderly people. In children, visual impairment is caused by sickness and poor nutrition. Gonorrhoea, dry eyes, trachoma, measles, eye injuries, and brain damage are some conditions that might result in vision issues (Mosola, 2020). Landsberg, Kruger and Swart (2019) further indicate that visual impairment is caused by optic nerve disorders, retinal disorders, disorders of the brain that affect vision (cortical blindness), lens disorders (congenital cataracts), pressure disorders (glaucoma), colour vision disorders (achromatopsia) optic nerve hypoplasia, septo-optic dysplasia, nystagmus and others. These are some of the eye conditions that visually impaired learners may experience. These conditions also show how visual impairment varies from individual to individual, meaning a special education teacher is highly needed to guide and support visually impaired learners.

2.3.2 Identification of visually impaired learners

Identifying learners with visual impairment is challenging. Unlike learners who are blind, those with partial impairment have eyes that appear to be normal. This creates the afore mentioned challenge in identifying such students with visual impairment. Therefore, paying great attention

to the learner's behaviour and complaints about what they can and cannot see could be signs of vision impairment (Landsberg et al., 2019). Lewis and Doorlag (1995), Hallahan and Kauffman (1997), as cited by Landsberg (2005), Mboshi (2018) and Landsberg et al. (2019), indicate that the following types of behaviour may assist in identifying learners who are partially sighted. These visually impaired learners may;

- rub their eyes excessively
- shut or cover one eye, tilt head or thrust it forward
- find it difficult to read or do other work requiring close vision
- blink more than usual or be irritable when doing close work
- be unable to see distant objects clearly
- squint or frown
- be clumsy in movement, drag feet and appear to “feel” with their feet, and step too high or too low when walking in the shade or climbing stairs
- refuse to participate in ball games
- move their head when looking at pictures or when reading
- lose their place when reading
- confuse letters or numbers of similar shapes, such as B and D, R and P, 3 and 8, 5 and 6
- hold reading material unusually close to or far away from the eyes
- display poor spacing when writing – words are too far apart or too close together

It is, therefore, necessary for teachers to be in a position to identify learners with visual impairments so that they can employ teaching strategies that will accommodate learners with visual impairments.

2.3.3 Placement of visually impaired learners in the classroom

There are important issues that should be considered in arranging the classroom in order to accommodate visually impaired learners. Seating arrangements should be flexible enough to cater to visually impaired learners' needs (Mann, 2006). Visual-impaired learners need specific support in the classroom concerning the best seating places to use effectively to conduct their studies. Others will need to sit where there is enough light, where they can hear the sound

properly and in a darker place, depending on the nature of their visual impairment (Landsberg et al., 2019). Students with visual impairment should adapt to their classroom setting and move around it like their peers before teaching and learning (Msimango, 2019). Orientation and mobility are crucial for visually impaired learners; they should learn to walk safely and independently in any situation by utilising their visual residues, hearing, smelling, and touching senses (Kizilaslan, 2020). Teachers need to be aware of learners with visual impairments so that they will be placed accordingly in the classroom (Landsberg et al., 2019). For example, learners suffering from albinism should sit in a darker place in the classroom, away from the windows. Some learners will need to sit in the front seats of the classroom, near the board, so that they can see, which means the teachers should be able to identify the needs of learners with visual impairment and cater for them.

Other things that should be considered are providing ample space around the classroom. Leave extra space between the desks, tables, cabinets and other classroom objects. Keep classroom furniture in the same positions so that visually impaired learners become accustomed to the classroom layout and can easily move around without bumping into objects (Henkler, 2018). Learners with visual impairment should be orientated on the school's surroundings, including their classroom, where posters are placed, and where they can find materials used in the classroom like papers, pens and others that will make their daily routine harmonious (Mboshi, 2018).

2.3.4 Teaching methods for learners with visual impairment

Many inclusive teaching techniques can help all students learn, but several particular techniques are helpful when instructing a group that includes learners with visual impairments (Maurya, 2016). Visually impaired learners should be allowed to be as independent as possible, and teachers should refrain from regularly helping them to avoid falling into the trap of "learned helplessness" (Simon, Echeita, Sandoval & Lopez, 2010). The teachers should organise the classroom accordingly so that visually impaired learners can walk freely without any thing that can hinder their mobility. The learners should be orientated about their classroom and other school surroundings by their teachers or guides (Msimango, 2019). Blind learners should not be

overprotected so that they can do activities independently even though sometimes it may be challenging, and that will build on their independence. For students with visual impairments, part of developing independence is knowing when to ask for help (Baraka, 2013). The teachers should provide instruction enabling visually impaired learners to act independently. If students are not driven to learn and take ownership of their education, none of the teachers' teaching strategies will be effective (Landsberg et al., 2019).

The teachers should be creative and innovative and use suitable teaching methods to accommodate learners with special needs; for example, teachers should use group work and cooperative teaching to support visually challenged students in larger classes. This is supported by Matobako (2021) in his study that, teachers were using a variety of teaching methods, which include demonstration, groupwork and activities such as games/plays/drama to teach visually impaired learners. Smaller groups can be formed from the class, but they should not include more than one visually impaired student (Tseeke, 2021). Learners who are blind rely on their other senses, such as touch, taste, smell, and hearing, to learn. The sense of touch is the most effective teaching strategy for learners with visual impairment. Non-visual learners should be allowed to touch an object to "see" what their classmates see. Feeling an object is likely to support the student to create a picture in his or her mind of what an object looks like (Msimango, 2019). Using verbal cues can be an added advantage to learners who cannot see body movements or physical cues.

Blind learners depend mainly on their hearing and touching senses to learn. The teachers of blind learners need to gather teaching aids that will enable the learners to touch real objects or models (Kizilaslan, 2020). The teacher should explain the concepts thoroughly, allow learners to ask questions, and verbalise what is written on the blackboard. In that way, blind learners will gather some information (Maurya, 2016). The fact that visually challenged students "see" as far as they can extend their hands or as far as the object they can touch. As a result, individuals rarely have a complete impression of an object. It is important to teach them from known to unknown and from the smaller component to the greater whole (Landsberg et al., 2019). Visually impaired learners also acquire information about objects based on the sound of objects through their sense of hearing (Kizilaslan, 2020).

Friend (2008) stipulates that one of the crucial components in teaching learners with visual impairment is to provide instructional material in time with appropriate media. For example, learners with low vision should be provided with large print text use of optical devices or recorded media while in class. For students who are blind, it means braille and recorded media. If appropriate materials are provided timely learners with visual impairment will learn effectively. Teachers who teach learners with visual impairments should ensure that instructional materials are prepared according to the needs of special learners. Carmen (2014) also indicated that learners with visual impairment can read printed material if provided in an appropriate media such as braille, audio or enlarged print. Sometimes, it may be challenging for visually impaired learners to take notes in the classroom due to their disabilities. However, the recording devices will help them to record in the class and, during their spare time, listen to the recordings and make some notes.

2.3.5 Teaching and learning devices for learners with visual impairment

Depending on their impairments, visually impaired learners use different devices to conduct their studies. Therefore, teachers should know exactly each learner's needs so that appropriate devices can be provided to enhance the teaching and learning of visually impaired learners. Partially sighted learners learn best when using large print materials, so magnifying glasses can be used if large print books are unavailable (Msimango, 2019). Visually impaired learners can find it difficult to use ordinary classwork books, so they need to use A4 papers where they draw the lines by using the marker according to their special needs and use them for writing so that their writing will be between the lines (Landsberg et al., 2019).

According to Mboshi (2018) and Kizilaslan (2020), assistive devices or technologies such as handheld magnifiers, video systems which magnify printed materials, magnifiers that are attached to eyeglasses, Computer software which zooms in on texts on the screen as well as other telescopic devices are very helpful to assist learners who are partially sighted. Lewis goes on to say that, besides these assistive devices, teachers can make the most of students' eyesight by utilising contextual factors, including colour, contrast, timing, illumination, and space. Therefore, this requires trained teachers who can assess the needs of visually impaired learners;

some learners can easily see bright colours, while others can see dull colours (Landsberg et al., 2019). Printed material should be clear, attractive and meaningful with a large font size for partially sighted learners. Lewis (2002), as cited by Nasiforo and Ntawiha (2021), Merlin is one of the devices that can be used to enlarge print materials for visually impaired learners and an opaque projector. Lewis (2002), as quoted by Nasiforo and Ntawiha (2021), indicates that "in a study conducted in the UK, it was found that learners with partial sight benefitted much from increased letter spacing. The study further adds that this helps teachers save time to assist such learners". Unlike sighted learners, learners who are blind use braille as a medium of communication and learning. Braille writing uses a braille machine, slate, and stylus (Landsberg et al., 2019).

Due to technological advances, people who are blind can use Braille-'n-Speak for note-taking. Braille Note and Braille Lite are portable electronic devices that blind people can use for taking notes, writing and making small calculations but do not have enough memory. As a result, the information obtained should be transferred to the computer for later use (Landsberg et al., 2019). For Keller (2005), as cited by Nasiforo and Ntawiha (2021), in contrast to their sighted peers, low vision students take one and a half times longer to read or finish assignments, whereas braille students require twice as much time. Therefore, teachers must be aware of this and provide learners with visual impairments extra time if needed. Keller (2005) also adds that learners with visual impairment may get tired visually. Therefore, teachers should give them short breaks between subjects or tasks they need to perform. Keller (2005) says that learners with visual impairments may use two or more approaches to perform a task, for example, reading notes and listening to audio tapes. Changing positions in the classroom is an additional strategy to help students with visual impairment. For a learner with poor distance vision, for example, it would be preferable to sit at the front of the class to study and perform well.

Furthermore, it is beneficial for learners with visual field loss to sit in a seat favouring other fields. For instance, it is advantageous for students who have lost their visual fields to take a seat, favouring other areas. For example, students should sit on the left side of the classroom to see their peers if they have lost their left field of vision. Similarly, a student who has lost their field of

vision in the middle can use eccentric viewing (Keller, 2005, cited by Nasiforo and Ntawiha, 2021). Visually impaired learners can learn effectively and efficiently if they are accorded teaching and learning devices that suit their special needs and given the necessary attention by their trained teachers.

2.3.6 Challenges faced by learners with visual impairment

Visually impaired learners experience problems in reading and understanding braille (Msimango, 2019). Despite being advantageous to those who are blind, learning to read and write in braille has some challenges. For example, when one is visually impaired from childhood, their fingertip sense of touch is easily developed, unlike if they become blind at an adult age (Mboshi, 2018). Teachers also need to know how to read and write braille in order to teach learners who are blind. Reading braille involves going down each line from left to right. It is not sufficient to read braille texts and have cognitive abilities and basic concepts; one has to possess fine motor coordination and finger sensitivity to maintain continuous touching and follow up on the paper (Kizilaslan, 2020). Visually impaired learners use assistive technology for their learning process, and sometimes it is difficult for them to learn how to use the devices due to lack of training, occasionally complicated computer software and even unavailability of the devices (Mboshi, 2018). Inadequate materials or equipment used by visually impaired learners is a serious challenge that hinders them from effectively learning since they cannot function without them (Andrew, 2015). In some schools, the building is inaccessible for visually impaired learners due to high steps, curved staircases and narrow walkways. Thus, the school environment does not allow visually impaired learners to move freely in the school with less assistance. Also, some teachers have a negative attitude towards visually impaired learners (Andrew, 2015). Teachers with negative perceptions towards blind and visually impaired learners usually lack confidence in their ability to teach these children. Consequently, such teachers with a pessimistic attitude and inadequate experience will beget more negative attitudes in such learners. Blind and visually-impaired learners, like any other disabled learner, have their unique needs (Morelle,2016). Furthermore, according to Mosia and Phasha (2017), learners with disabilities still face challenges such as inaccessible buildings, rigid curricula and negative attitudes of staff and teachers who

lack information on disability issues and allow only minor accommodations which constrain access to education for students with disabilities.

2.3.7. Adapting curriculum development and flexibility

Flexibility in a curriculum means that all aspects of the curriculum need to be developed to ensure that the diverse needs of the learners are addressed (Morelle,2016). Nkoane (2006) in Mosia & Phasha (2017) argues that each student requires a curriculum that speaks to his or her own issues and taps into his or her areas of creativity and strength. Access to education requires that 'every aspect of schooling, from policy to curriculum to pedagogical elements, to leadership, to ethos and culture change in order to educate learners within a common framework' (Mutia, 2020). With specific reference to individuals with disabilities, there should be adaptations in terms of teaching approaches as well as the modification of the physical arrangement of the classroom, if required. For the curriculum to be flexible in its true sense, the following aspects must be adjusted according to learners' needs (White Paper 66 DoE, 2001);

- The content
- Medium of instruction
- Class-room organization
- Teaching methods
- The pace of teaching and the time available to complete the curriculum
- Learning materials and equipment that is used
- How learning is assessed

The curriculum should be more flexible to accommodate learners with special needs. Curriculum is defined as a set of plans that are prepared and adapted depending on the existing learning situations as well as demands that may arise in future (Mutia,2020). A flexible curriculum responds to diverse needs of all learners, it requires change or modification in structures, content, and teaching/learning strategies to respond to the needs of all learners including learners with visually impaired (Nasiforo & Ntawiha,2021). A rigid and inflexible curriculum will disadvantage learners with special educational needs. The curriculum must therefore be made

more flexible across all bands of education be accessible to all learners, irrespective of learners' learning needs (White Paper 6 DoE, 2001).

Maghuve (2003:85) in Morelle (2016) indicates the following alternative approaches to curriculum adaptation and delivery which have been applied to the teaching of blind and visually-impaired learners;

- Setting substitute tasks of familiar scope and demand
- Replacing one impossible or unfriendly task with a task of a different kind
- Allowing the learner to undertake the task at a later date
- Using another planned task to assess more outcomes than originally intended
- Giving learners extra time to complete the given tasks
- Using technology, aids or other special arrangements to undertake assessment tasks
- Using an estimate based on other assessment or work completed by the learner (where the above provisions are not feasible or reasonable).

Teachers of visually impaired learners must be able to know their eye conditions and the effect of such conditions on learners visual functioning and learning ability. That knowledge will enable the teacher to know what specific teaching methods to use that will accommodate all learners (Landsberg et al., 2019). According to White Paper 66 (DoE, 2001), every child has unique characteristics, interests, abilities and learning needs. The education system and educational programmes should be designed and implemented to take the diversity of these characteristics and needs into account (Morelle & Tabane, 2019). Teachers should use various techniques to help learners with visual impairments to learn effectively and be independent. Evidence from past literature suggests that the needs of learners with particular disabilities such as visual incapacities, is crucial for achieving the targeted levels of academic progress. Such measures include not only the curricula being designed appropriately, but also that the teaching methods used are appropriate and inclusiveness is promoted (Bandara, Jayathilaka & Wickramarachchi, 2022).

2.3.8 Knowledge and skills that teachers have to have in teaching learners with visual impairment.

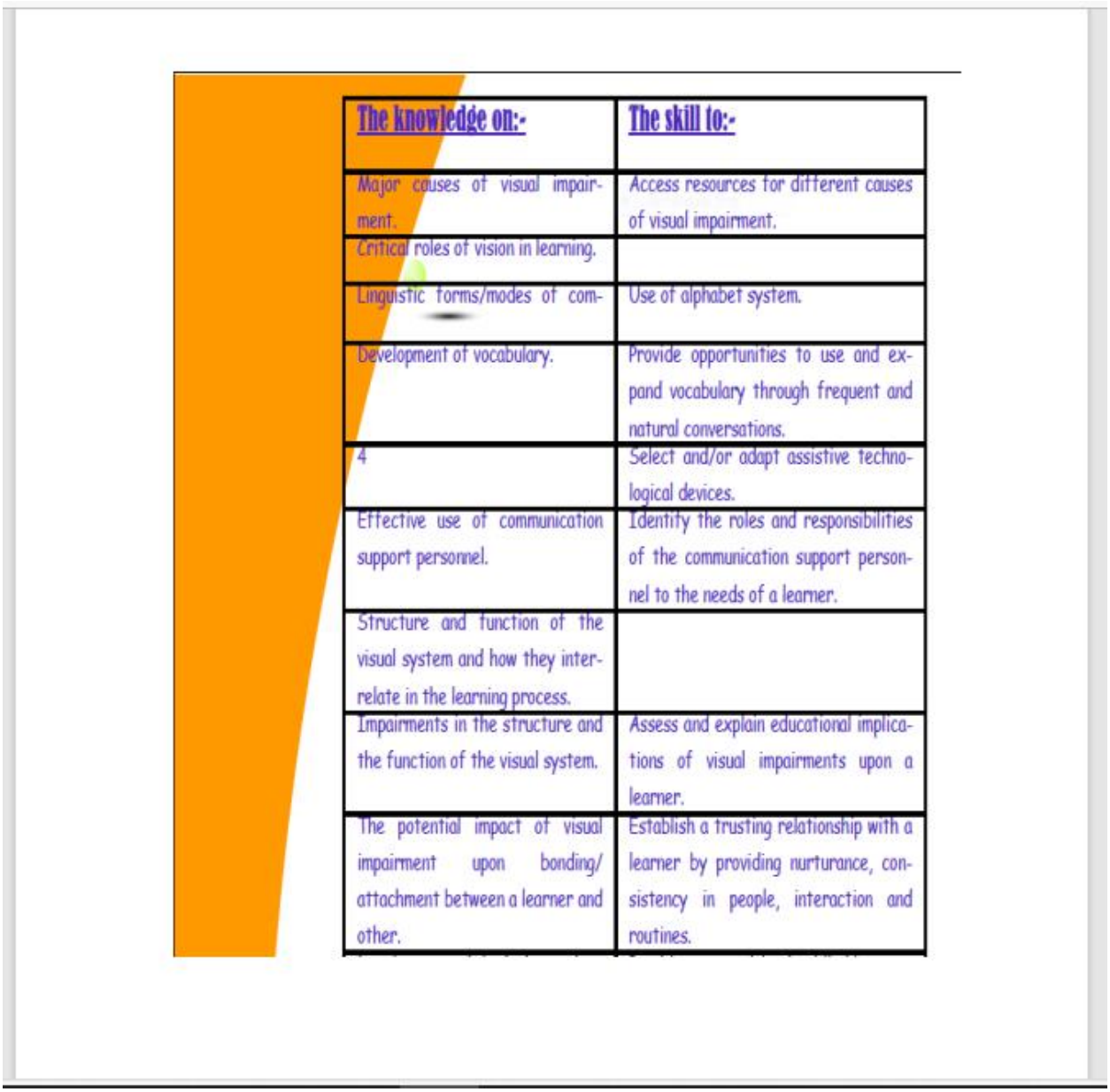
The success of teaching learners with visual impairment depends largely on the teachers' training, the quality of support such teachers receive, and how confident teachers feel about teaching learners with special learning needs (Morelle and Tabane ,2019). The teachers must look for approaches that will accommodate these learners and at times develops learning materials for them (Msimango, 2019). Different strategies can be used to teach learners with visual impairments based on their needs and these are some of the strategies suggested by Inclusive Education South Africa (DoE, 2001):

- Most importantly Learning and Teaching Support Materials (LTSM), must be made accessible to the learner. For learners with low vision, this may simply involve enlarging text. Learners who are blind will require a higher level of support, including materials in braille and access to various supportive technologies.
- Assistive devices ranging from a simple magnification sheet to an iPad or tablet can offer print-enlargement to support reading, as well as voice-recognition software as an alternative form of reading. For children with low vision, contrast is an important factor in seeing text. For example, yellow chalk on a blackboard offers the best contrast.
- Check with the child where and how they can see best so that they can be seated in the optimal place in terms of light, dark, movement and peripheral vision.
- It may be tempting to do things for the learner because it's quicker that way. It's also tempting for the learner to allow this, but it is not helpful in the long run. Let the learner do things for herself. This encourages independence, learning and self-esteem.
- Identify yourself by name in case the student does not recognise your voice.
- Indicate verbally when you are entering or leaving the person's presence.
- Convey orally whatever you have written on the board or shown on overheads, particularly charts and diagrams.
- Try to minimise noise and disturbances in the classroom, as the learner with visual impairment relies on verbal instruction and information.

- Encourage the learner to take responsibility for reminding his teacher when support is needed.
- Let different classmates take turns in pairing for assistance if necessary.
- Allow extra time and/or break tasks into smaller chunks where needed.
- Encourage participation in extra-mural activities where adaptations can be made to create opportunities to acquire skills and confidence

Mosola (2020) stipulates that the teacher must possess the following competencies and knowledge in order to successfully educate learners with visual impairment. Table 2.1 below outlines the knowledge and skills needed to facilitate learners who are visually impaired.

Table 2.1: Knowledge and skills needed to teach VI learners (Graphics by: L. Halafu,2020)



The knowledge on:-	The skill to:-
Major causes of visual impairment.	Access resources for different causes of visual impairment.
Critical roles of vision in learning.	
Linguistic forms/modes of com-	Use of alphabet system.
Development of vocabulary.	Provide opportunities to use and expand vocabulary through frequent and natural conversations.
4	Select and/or adapt assistive technological devices.
Effective use of communication support personnel.	Identify the roles and responsibilities of the communication support personnel to the needs of a learner.
Structure and function of the visual system and how they interrelate in the learning process.	
Impairments in the structure and the function of the visual system.	Assess and explain educational implications of visual impairments upon a learner.
The potential impact of visual impairment upon bonding/ attachment between a learner and other.	Establish a trusting relationship with a learner by providing nurturance, consistency in people, interaction and routines.

Development of body image in a learner.	Provide opportunities for blind learners to learn their body parts through sense of touch.
Development of positive self-esteem.	Provide opportunities for a learner to develop confidence by making choices.
The potential impact of vision loss development of concrete and abstract concepts.	Provide a learner with opportunities to explore and develop basic concepts through participation in meaningful as well as motivating real life experiences.
Development of communication partnership between a learner and others.	Assess and adapt to learner's pace/ timing of communication.
Auditory and tactile adaptations that enhance social interactions.	Use cues to initiate and terminate interaction. enquire
The influence of vision on motor development.	
The basic principles of orientation and mobility.	Assess, describe and explain the effects of vision loss upon learner's movements.
Resources that provide technical assistance at local, state and national level related to the blind persons.	
Curricula specific to or adapted for visually impaired learners.	

Teachers needs to understand the impacts that visual impairments have on learning. When learners' vision is impaired then a number of skills are affected such as language skills, problem solving and reasoning and abstract thinking (Mutia, 2020). Therefore, the existence of competencies is essential for teachers to deliver quality education for learners with visual impairment. Lack of necessary skills in dealing with learners with visual impairment makes

teachers endure a lot of stress including being negative in terms of following teaching-learning principles in the classroom when teaching (Bornman and Rose, 2017).

In addition, the Renaissance Group (2004) in Mosola (2020) states that teachers working with diversity in the classroom have to develop the capability to:

- provide quality education access for every learner on a daily basis
- establish how to modify learners' assignments
- make use of learners' internal motivation for developing required skills
- take advantage of learners' interests
- solve problems and assess skills and behaviour
- value different kinds of skills that the learners bring to class
- plan classroom activities that accommodate all the learners
- establish high expectations for each learner despite their uniqueness

It is imperative that educators possess these abilities in order to effectively accommodate students with visual impairments and provide high quality education to all students, including those with visual impairments.

2.3.9 Successful indicators for teaching leaners with visual impairment in an inclusive classroom

Successful indicators for teaching learners with visual impairment in inclusive classrooms will be discussed in countries like India, South Africa and Lesotho.

2.3.9.1 India

India has joined other countries in providing equal access to education to all citizens regardless of their disability (Kumar, Kumar & Rawat, 2017). India is one of the countries with the most people who are visually impaired, and malnutrition, trachoma and cataracts are the major causes of visual impairment (Tripathi, 2018). The Indian government passed a law protecting the rights of those with disabilities (The Persons with Disabilities (PWD) Act, 1995). The PWD Act (1995)

stressed the need to provide free education to all children in an appropriate environment till they are 18 years old and further emphasised their right to measures like transport facilities to students with disabilities, supply of books, uniforms, grants of scholarship to the students with disability (Das & Ghosh, 2018). The government of India also established an association charged with advocating for the rights of people with visual impairment called the National Association for the Blind (NAB). The NAB (India) provides school and college-going blind children support through scholarships, free distribution of braille scripts and other assistive devices and volunteer reading services (Tripathi, 2018).

The NAB facilitates integrated programmes such as integrated camps for visually impaired learners and their sighted peers to give them a chance to learn from each other, and special skills enrichment camps for the visually impaired are organised during vacations to give them rigorous and intensive training in plus curriculum (Tripathi, 2018). Teachers are also trained in special education to guide, support and provide quality education to visually impaired learners (Kumar et al., 2017). India, like other countries, still experience challenges in identifying learners with learning disability; they are often termed as “lazy, dull and inattentive”. The problems of these learners remain unnoticed by the teachers due to a lack of awareness about learning disabilities (Tripathi, 2018).

2.3.9.2 South Africa

The education system in South Africa significantly changed after the 1994 democratic elections; before then, education was organised according to two segregating criteria: race and disability. Schools that accommodated white disabled learners had adequate teaching and learning resources, while schools for black disabled learners were systematically under-resourced (RSA DOE Education White Paper 6, 2001). Apartheid and segregation ended in South Africa after the 1994 democratic elections (Hoogeveen & Ozler, 2005). The South African Department of Education (DoE) developed a policy to guide the implementation of inclusive education that will accommodate all learners, including learners with special needs or those with disabilities (RSA DOE Education White Paper 6, 2001). Among others, the policy will highlight how learners with disabilities will be identified, assessed and placed in schools and introduce strategies and

interventions that will assist educators in coping with the diversity of learning and teaching needs to ensure that transitory learning difficulties are ameliorated (Msimango, 2019). Inclusive education policy in South Africa requires all the teachers to be able to cater for diversity in their respective classes since, of all the professions that focus on the development of learners, teaching is regarded as one of the most complex (Morelle & Tabane, 2019). Teachers will be trained so that they will be able to develop good teaching strategies that will accommodate all learners. In the quest to address education quality, curriculums underwent various changes (DoE, 2001). New policies were introduced, such as Outcomes Based Education (OBE), introduced in 1997 and implemented in 1998 in Grades 1 and 7; National Curriculum Statement (NCS), introduced in 2000; Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS), introduced in 2002 and reviewed in 2009, and the newly implemented Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) introduced in 2012 (Morelle, 2016).

2.3.9.3 Lesotho

Lesotho's first legal framework for educating children with disabilities was formulated in 1989. The Special Education Unit was established in the MOET in 1991. Other important legal tools that followed included the Education Act of 2010, the Child Protection and Welfare Act of 2011, and the Education Sector Strategic Plan 2005–2015 (Mosola, 2020). Nonetheless, it is worth highlighting that these legal tools do not address specific needs based on different types of disabilities. Instead, they adopt a one-size-fits-all approach. This could be problematic because people with disabilities are a heterogeneous group with differing abilities and needs (Ralejoe, 2019).

Lesotho, as a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities and of other different United Nations policies, is bound to turn them into practical policies at a national level for implementation (Srivastava, Boer & Pijl, 2015). For a long time, there was no inclusive education policy within the MOET to gear up for implementing inclusive education and accommodating learners with different disabilities into mainstream schools as per international demands. The policy was launched only on 7th August 2019 in Lesotho (Mosola, 2020). MOET is mandated to ensure quality education to all learners, including learners with visual impairments;

hence, the policy on inclusive education was formulated to address this issue (Ralejoe,2021). Among other objectives of the policy is to improve the teaching and learning environment of learners with special needs and to strengthen education providers' capacity to support these learners (Lesotho Inclusive Education Policy, 2018). The ministry will collaborate with several associations of people with disabilities to promote inclusion in all spheres of life, primarily with the Lesotho National Federation of the Disabled (LNFOD) as an umbrella body (Lesotho Inclusive Education Policy, 2018).

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter presented self-efficacy as a theoretical framework and related literature. The first part of the chapter presented the self-efficacy theory, its application, and its relevance to the study. Teaching, inclusive classrooms and visual impairment as operational concepts were also discussed. The researcher discussed literature on the concept of visual impairment, causes of visual impairment, identification of visually impaired learners, placement of visually impaired learners in the classroom, teaching methods for learners with visual impairment, teaching and learning devices for learners with visual impairment, challenges faced by learners with visual impairment and successful indicators for teaching leaners with visual impairment in an inclusive classroom.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The study explores teachers' experiences teaching learners with visual impairment in Lesotho-inclusive classrooms. In order to achieve this aim, this chapter discusses the research methodology and design which will be suitable for this study. In this section, the methodology that will be used will be highlighted, including the research paradigm and approach used, design to be employed, sampling procedure, data collection and analysis techniques. This section will also present credibility, trustworthiness, and ethical considerations. This section will further justify the selection of the methodology chosen.

3.2 Research Paradigm

Paradigm is a researcher's thinking or philosophical orientation or perspective that influences what should be studied, how it should be studied, and how the study results should be interpreted (Ugwu, Ekere & Onoh, 2021). A paradigm is a researcher's world view or assumptions that guide their research. In addition, Okesina (2020) define a paradigm as a set of assumptions, concepts, values and practices that constitute a way of viewing reality. Ugwu et al. (2021) assert that the choice of paradigm sets down the intent, motivation, and expectations for research. A paradigm is a set of ideas or perspectives. A paradigm is away of looking at something.

Interpretivism, also known as the constructivist paradigm, aims to understand people and social phenomena (Okesina, 2020). The interpretive paradigm makes an effort to get into the head of the subjects being studied, so to speak and to understand and interpret what the subject is thinking or the meaning they make of the context (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). Interpretivist researchers aim to explore and understand phenomena inductively and believe that the social event is understood from the point of view of the individuals involved in the ongoing action being investigated (Okesina, 2020). In this paradigm, every effort is made to understand the viewpoint of the observed subject rather than the observers. Emphasis is placed on understanding the

individual and their interpretation of the world around them. Hence, the key tenet of the Interpretivist paradigm is that reality is socially constructed (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017).

The study intends to explore teachers' experiences in teaching learners with visual impairment in Lesotho-inclusive classrooms. This study aims to ascertain teachers' perspectives and experiences working with students with visual impairment. The challenges they encounter in teaching these learners. This study will benefit from an interpretive approach since it will allow the researcher to investigate the participants' perspectives and ideas on the phenomena being investigated. It will also allow the researcher to examine what the participants in this study have to say about their experiences teaching learners with visual impairment.

3.3 Research Approach

This study investigates teachers' experiences teaching learners with visual impairment in inclusive classrooms. This study employed a qualitative approach. According to Mohajan (2018), qualitative research looks for interpretations and perceptions in a circumstance by its inductive nature. Mohajan (2018) further characterises qualitative research as a constructive model that occurs in a realistic environment and aids the researcher in learning a great deal from the experience. It is an effective model that occurs in a realistic environment and enables the researcher to learn a great deal from the experience. The researcher will learn more from the experiences of teachers who teach learners with visual impairments. In addition, Daniel (2016) also asserts that this research approach helps clarify what needs to be explored when there are no theories on the topic and factors are unknown. Wide- and deep-angle lenses are used in qualitative research to examine human behaviour and decisions in all of its natural detail. Qualitative research aims to observe behaviour naturally (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). Researchers who focus on quality examine behaviour holistically and naturally. Qualitative research aims to generate new ideas and hypotheses by methodically describing and analysing subjects or occurrences from the perspective of the studied individual or population (Daniel, 2016). Therefore, this approach would be suitable for this study as the aim is to explore and present the voices of teachers who educate learners with visual impairments.

3.4 Research Design

A phenomenological research design will be used in this study. Phenomenological research is a qualitative research approach that seeks to understand and describe the universal essence of a phenomenon (Manen & Manen, 2021). The phenomenological research aims to reveal the experiences and meanings that individuals attribute to an event based on real experiences (Neubauer et al., 2019). Phenomenology is an endeavour that involves sober contemplation of the reality of human existence. By sober, we mean that our reflection on experience must be deliberate and, to the greatest extent, free from theoretical, prejudiced, and suppositional intoxications (Manen, 2007). In this case, the phenomenon being studied is teachers' experience teaching learners with visual impairment in Lesotho-inclusive classrooms. Additionally, Barrow (2017) argues that phenomenological research allows for deep exploration of research questions, which also provides a way to obtain the data needed to document the essence of individual lived experiences and the phenomena that underlie those experiences. Therefore, the researcher aims to look into teachers' experiences and how they affect the teaching of learners with vision impairment.

The phenomenological approach aims to illuminate the specific to identify phenomena through how the actors perceive them in a situation. In the human sphere, this normally translates into gathering ‘deep’ information and perceptions through inductive, qualitative methods such as interviews, discussions and participant observation and representing it from the perspective of the research participants (Manen & Manen, 2021). Teachers of learners who are visually impaired will be interviewed to gather rich information as they are actors in this situation. An important concept in phenomenological research is bracketing, an investigator’s attempt to remove preconceptions about the phenomena under investigation (Barrow,2017). Phenomenological research is relevant to this study as the researcher wants to investigate teachers' experiences teaching learners with visual impairments. The phenomenological research method is good at bringing up important issues and giving people a voice (Greening, 2019). Teachers can voice their opinions, experiences and views on teaching learners with visual impairments.

Phenomenological research aims to understand people's memories of their past experiences (Williams, 2021).

3.4.1 The origin of phenomenological research

Phenomenology is both a philosophy and a research paradigm. As a philosophy, phenomenology can be divided into two major branches: descriptive and interpretive. The German philosopher Edmund Husserl founded descriptive phenomenology (1954/1970a, 1900–1901/1970b, 1913/1983) (Manen & Manen, 2021). According to Husserl, individuals are meaningfully connected to everything else in the world (Barrow,2017). Husserl's descriptive phenomenology sought to understand the significance of one's lived experiences or to derive significance from daily life (Williams, 2021). In contrast to the descriptive phenomenology school, Husserl's disciple Martin Heidegger (1889–1966) advanced interpretive phenomenology, an ontological theory that tackles the nature of what is being experienced (Barrow,2017). Heidegger proposed that our understanding of the everyday world is linked to our interpretation (Barrow, 2017).

3.4.2 Justification for the choice of phenomenological research

This qualitative study employs a phenomenological approach to develop an in-depth understanding of the lived experiences of teachers who teach learners with visual impairment. The term "phenomenology" refers to a theoretical paradigm emphasising personal experience rather than objective reality (Lee, 2020). The study's use of phenomenological research is pertinent since it focuses on teachers' experiences working with students with visual impairments, who are thought to have first-hand knowledge given their everyday interactions with these students. Phenomenology is a qualitative research design in which the researcher attempts to explain how one or more participants experience a phenomenon; it can be an event, situation or concept (Balıkçı, 2019). Phenomenologists study phenomena from the perspective of research participants who are "there" in the occurrence, that is, who experience it directly and consciously interpret it (Lee, 2020). In this study, phenomenology was chosen as a methodology due to a particular lifestyle experienced in teaching the visually impaired. In order to comprehend the motivations and meanings behind people's behaviours related to the goal of survival, phenomenology researchers strive to understand the structure of consciousness of those in a

specific circumstance in greater depth (Umanailo, 2019). The main goal of phenomenology is to get to the bottom of the experience by asking detailed questions about the experiences related to the phenomenon (Balıkçı, 2019). This study explores teachers' experiences teaching learners with visual impairment. Phenomenological design would be relevant to this study as it will allow the researcher to gather information from experienced teachers teaching learners with visual impairment for years. Phenomenology's main goal is to examine phenomena in great detail to investigate the complex world of lived experiences from the actors' (those who encounter it) point of view (Qutoshi, 2018).

3.4.3 The principles of phenomenological research

Phenomenological research design has four characteristics: descriptive, reduction, essence and intentionality (Qutoshi, 2018). Descriptive phenomenology aims to describe a phenomenon by looking at emerging emotions, ideas and behaviours of human beings (Umanailo, 2019). The second characteristic is reduction, which calls for bracketing or phenomenological epoché, where one discards all prejudices and presumptions regarding a phenomenon (Cal & Tehmarn, 2016). The epoché involves suspending the natural attitude favouring transcendental reduction (Manen & Manen, 2021). Reduction is a process in which preconceptions and biases regarding a phenomenon are postponed to guarantee that they do not taint the description of the observations and that the description's format reflects the reality of the observed phenomena (Umanailo, 2019). German philosopher Edmund Husserl thought that maintaining such distance may rise above the normal course of daily existence and describe a reality objectively from a pure awareness unclouded by prejudice or presumptions (Cal & Tehmarn, 2016). Through reduction, Husserl believed that one can distance oneself from the world. One can be consciously aware and bracket all biases and assumptions about understanding a particular phenomenon. The third characteristic is essence. The essence is the central idea behind each person's unique experience of a phenomenon. It entails investigating the phenomenon of employing the mind's unrestricted imagination, intuition, and introspection to decide whether a specific quality is an essential essence (Umanailo, 2019). Essence is about peeling back each layer of life experiences until one reaches the centre or core of the onion (Cal & Tehmarn, 2016). The last characteristic is

intentionality. Intentionality is the human consciousness; one can describe a phenomenon (Manen & Manen, 2021). Intentionality is "the power of minds to be about, represent, or stand for things, properties and states affairs" (Cal & Tehmarn, 2016).

3.4.4 Epistemology of phenomenological research

Epistemology originates from the Greek word episteme, which means knowledge (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). Epistemology studies how we know something, including the truth, reality, and what constitutes knowledge in the world (Ugwu et al., 2021). Epistemology is the philosophy of knowledge or how we come to know (Khatri, 2020). Similarly, Blaikie (1993), as quoted by Khatri (2020), describes epistemology as "the theory or science of the method or grounds of knowledge' expanding this into a set of claims or assumptions about how it is possible to gain knowledge of reality". It can be defined as how the researcher learns about knowledge (Cal & Tehmarn, 2016). It is concerned with the very foundations of knowledge, including its nature, forms, modes of acquisition, and methods for disseminating it to others (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). It concentrates on the types of human knowledge and comprehension that you, as a researcher or knower, may be able to gain to extend, broaden, and deepen understanding in your field of research (Qutoshi, 2018). Epistemology is the theory of knowledge and deals with how knowledge is gathered from which sources (Khatri, 2020). Epistemology is the branch of philosophy that deals with knowledge's varieties, grounds, and validity. In other words, epistemology studies what constitutes knowledge, how knowledge develops, and where knowledge is found (Urcia, 2021). Epistemology examines the nature of knowledge and its acquisition.

Phenomenological epistemology focuses on how individuals perceive the world through a lived body of experiences and consciousness (Cal & Tehmarn, 2016). He goes on to say that the major distinction between Husserl's phenomenological epistemology and other phenomenological epistemologies is the nature of how the understanding of a phenomenon is processed. Husserl's phenomenology is called descriptive phenomenology because he believes one can set aside one's assumptions to derive an understanding or description of a specific phenomenon (Cal & Tehmarn, 2016). In this study, the researcher personally engaged with participants as the

stepping stone and a vehicle through which their unique perspectives on reality were unearthed. For the purpose of this study, gaining knowledge is very important because I would like to discover the truth about the experiences of teachers who teach learners with visual impairment and how they teach these learners.

3.4.5 Ontology of phenomenological research

Ontology is a subfield of philosophy that examines our presumptions to accept something as true or real and the nature or substance of the social phenomenon we are examining (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). "Ontology" refers to a worldview regarding the nature or form of existence, truth, and reality (Urcia, 2021). It is called the theory of reality (Khatri, 2020). In Heidegger's terms, an ontological approach studies the coming-into-being type of 'existence' enhanced by our interactions with these phenomena (Cal & Tehmarn, 2016). Ontology is the philosophical study of the nature of existence or reality, being or becoming, and the basic categories of things that exist and their relations (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). According to Heidegger, a person is a part of the world and cannot completely bracket or put aside their biases, values, and assumptions (Cal & Tehmarn, 2016). Ontology examines the underlying belief system of the researcher about the nature of being and existence (Khatri, 2020). It concerns our assumptions to believe something makes sense or is real or the nature or essence of the social phenomenon we are investigating (Ugwu et al., 2021). Heidegger's phenomenology is interpretative; that is, a human encounter with a phenomenon requires an interpretation that can be influenced by an individual's environment, culture or background (Urcia, 2021). Understanding how you interpret the information you acquire depends on your beliefs about the nature of reality (Ugwu et al., 2021). Ontology is concerned with the degree of reality in some events and objects; it is also crucially concerned with the systems that affect how we perceive these events and objects (Khatri, 2020). The ontological assumptions of this study are my interpretations of the qualities of my study and include

my viewpoint on the world and knowledge pertaining to the topic. There are four ontological positions based on research paradigms: realism or single reality, relativist ontology, historical realism and non-singular reality (Okesina, 2020).

3.5 Participants Selection

In this study, the researcher interviewed teachers teaching visually impaired learners in two high schools in Maseru, Lesotho. Four teachers teaching learners with visual impairment from two different high schools in Maseru, Lesotho, were selected purposively with the belief that they have a reservoir of experience in that field. Palinkas et al. (2015) further stated that purposive sampling involves identifying and selecting experienced and more knowledgeable individuals about a phenomenon of interest. According to Johnson and Christensen (2014), purposive sampling enables the researcher to select respondents depending on particular characteristics. Additionally, Creswell and Creswell (2018) emphasise the significance of purposeful sampling when choosing participants and study locations that contribute to comprehending the phenomenon and giving rich information by bringing out the voices of the voiceless. Therefore, the researcher uses purposeful sampling in order to obtain rich data.

3.6 Research Site

The study took place in Lesotho, in the Maseru district. Maseru is the capital town of Lesotho. The researcher purposively selected two high schools as the learning sites for the current study. The schools are within the township of Maseru and are reachable. For the convenience of both participants and the researcher, Mhlongo (2017) asserts that the school location must be close by because there may be logistical and financial repercussions. The first high school is a church-run school founded in 1978 by the Anglican Church of Lesotho. It provides secondary education for visually impaired learners, and although it is a girls' school, it is unique in that it also accepts visually impaired male learners. The second high school was established in 1965 and is a roman catholic church school that offers secondary education to both boys and girls. More recently, it has begun to accommodate learners with visual impairment. The researcher has chosen these schools because they accommodate learners with visual impairment and their non-disabled

peers in the same classrooms. Due to the purpose of the study, the researcher considered the schools ideal because teachers interact with visually impaired learners daily.

3.7 Data Collection Instrument and procedures

The researcher used semi-structured interviews and prepared some open-ended questions that were used as a guide during the interviews. Semi-structured interviews involve a dialogue between the researcher and the participants. These are guided by open questions, further probing, and clarification when needed, and even comments (Maree, 2016). In this study, the researcher interviewed four teachers who teach learners with visual impairment who were selected purposively and were willing to take part in this study. The researcher arranged to interview the participants at their workplace or school. The interviews were recorded for better understanding, and the researcher would also take notes of important information using a notebook. Semi-structured interviews allow the researcher to collect open-ended data and explore participants' feelings, thoughts and beliefs about a particular topic (Dejonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). During the interviews, the researcher listened so that they would be in the position to establish new emerging lines of inquiry that are directly related to the phenomenon being studied, explore and probe more, for clarification (Dejonkheere & Vaughn, 2019). This method allows the researcher to obtain more information about the opinions of teachers teaching visually impaired learners and the emotions attached during the interviews.

3.8 Data Analysis

Content analysis was used in this study to analyse data. "Content analysis is the analysis of what is being said, written or recorded through systematic classifications process of coding and identification of themes and patterns" (Parveen & Showkat, 2017). Maree (2016) further describes content analysis as a technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of the message. Content analysis study uses information that has been recorded during data collection. Therefore, it is suitable to analyse the data collected in this study. The tape-recorded interviews with the participants were listened to repeatedly to record all the facts clearly and then transcribed and appropriately organised into different

categories. Content analysis is a method that gives a systematic and objective means to make valid inferences from verbal, visual or written data to describe and quantify specific phenomena (Bengtsson, 2016).

3.9 Value of the Research

The findings of the proposed study will probably shed light on the experiences of teachers who work with learners with visual impairment. Teachers working with visually impaired learners can learn from this study how to manage these learners and how to use the best teaching methods suitable for them. MOET and other stakeholders can also use this study to improve or enhance the policies on inclusive education, especially for visually impaired learners.

3.10 Data Trustworthiness

According to Connelly (2016), "trustworthiness" refers to confidence in data interpretation and the method used to ensure the study's quality. To ensure this study's credibility and trustworthiness, the researcher recorded all the information during interviews with teachers who educate learners with visual impairment and took some notes to ensure that no important part of this conversation is missed. To address the credibility of the study, techniques such as prolonged engagement and member checks are important (Nowell, Norris, White & Moules, 2017).

Prolonged engagement is where the researcher spends extended time with the participants at the school to gain more information and a better understanding of the phenomenon under study. With member checking, the researcher took the transcripts back to the participants to check the accuracy of their responses. Moreover, where the researcher was unsure of, or confused by the responses, the participants were again contacted to confirm the information. This happened when the data collection process had been completed, so that the researcher may verify the responses.

The main four pillars of trustworthiness are outlined by Creswell (2014) as dependability, credibility, confirmability, and transferability. Transferability is the degree in which the research

findings can be transferred to other settings and contexts." Thus, transferability in this qualitative research required me to describe the research so that the findings of the research could be transferred accurately (Mosola, 2020).

3.11 Ethical Considerations

Before data collection, ethical clearance was obtained from the University of the Free State and the MOET in Lesotho to allow the researcher to collect data and ensure that the study is conducted responsibly and ethically. The researcher explained the purpose of the research to the participants, what is expected from them, the amount of time likely required for participation, and ensured the participants that the information provided would be confidential. The participants were also advised of the expected risks and benefits, both psychological and social, that could be encountered. The participants were informed that they voluntarily agreed to participate in the study and can withdraw anytime if they feel uncomfortable. The researcher respected the participants' privacy and ensured that their real names remained anonymous. The researcher prepared a written consent form that the participants were expected to sign as an agreement to participate in the research. According to Fleming and Zegwaard (2018), it is important to highlight the ethical considerations regarding the research. An essential ethical aspect is the issue of the protection of the participants' identities. This included obtaining letters of consent. The informed consent process can be seen as a contract between the researcher and the participants.

3.12 Chapter Summary

This chapter stated the study's aim to explore teachers' experiences on teaching learners with visual impairment in the Lesotho-inclusive classroom. The research methodology was discussed, including the research paradigm, approach, and design. Research design was discussed based on these topics: phenomenological research design, the origin of phenomenological research**,** justification for the choice of phenomenological research, the principles of phenomenological research, epistemology of phenomenological research and ontology of phenomenological

research. An explanation of the research site for the current study and details of the participants involved was outlined. Also, the processes of data collection and data analysis techniques were discussed. Lastly, credibility, trustworthiness and ethical considerations were also covered.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION, AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter analyses collected data from four teachers teaching visually impaired learners in inclusive classrooms. In presenting the data, the researcher will first briefly describe teachers' experiences teaching learners with visual impairment. The researcher will further follow up with the themes from the four research questions in chapter one. The study results are presented in terms of themes and sub-themes that surfaced after analysis of data generated from interviews. Firstly, this chapter presents the themes and sub-themes that emerged, after which they are discussed in detail. The discussion is supported by the extracts from the transcripts, existing literature, and the theoretical framework to support the ideas central to the discussion.

The questions are as follows:

- What do teachers understand by visual impairment?
- How effective are the teaching strategies used to teach learners with visual impairment?
- What challenges do teachers encounter in teaching learners with visual impairment?
- What strategies can be recommended for teaching learners with visual impairment in an inclusive classroom?

This chapter will further include direct quotations from the participants, which will serve as evidence supporting the claims made based on the data collected.

4.2 Participants' background information

TABLE 4.1: Participants' background information

Participants Code	Age	Gender	Qualification	Years of teaching experience
T1	**48**	**M**	**B.Ed.**	**5 Years**
T2	**47**	**M**	**B.Ed.**	**22 Years**
T3	**42**	**M**	**B.Ed.**	**14 Years**
T4	**41**	**F**	**B.Ed.**	**6 Years**

4.3 Presentations of Themes and Sub-themes

The themes and sub-themes are presented below in tabular form.

Table 4.2: A summary of the themes and sub-themes identified in the study by the researcher

Theme 1: Teachers' understanding of visual impairment is multifaceted

- A situation where a person has a problem with sight
- Partially sighted or blind
- Deficiency of sight
- Inability to see clearly or not to see at all
- Low vision

Theme 2: Teaching strategies used to teach learners with visual impairment

- Discussion
- Grouping
- Question and answer
- Individual consultation

- Demonstration
- Repetition

Theme 3: Challenges teachers encounter in teaching learners with visual impairment.

- Inadequate braille text
- Inadequate assistive devices like voice recorder and Perkins Braillers
- Use of expensive materials or stationery for writing
- Environmental challenges
- Teachers encounter challenges when teaching science subjects, especially with diagrams and graphs and during experiments
- Low self-esteem
- A lot of attention
- Lack of training
- Time during examination
- Some struggle with braille reading and writing
- Teachers' attitudes
- Learners come from poor households, and they delayed coming to school when the school opened

Theme 4: Recommended strategies for teaching learners with visual impairment in an inclusive classroom

- Group visually impaired with sighted learners
- Repetition
- Every word written on the board should be spelt so that the visually impaired can hear
- Be engaged all the time to increase their speed or be given some tasks
- Audiovisual
- Provide extra time for the visually impaired
- Individual consultation
- Teachers should always use large font when writing on the board to accommodate learners with visual impairment

- ❖ Learners should sit in front of the class

4.3.1 Theme 1: Teachers' understanding of visual impairment is multifaceted

In examining teachers' understanding of visual impairment, four teachers who teach learners with visual impairment were interviewed and asked about their understanding of visual impairment. The participants revealed their understanding of visual impairment as follows: A situation where a person has a problem with sight, partially sighted or blind, deficiency of sight, inability to see clearly or not at all and low vision.

Participant One

"Visual impairment is a situation where a person has a problem with eyesight which can either be partial or wholly."

Participant Two

"*Visual impairment is that deficiency of sight; it can be partially or totally blind. For partially sighted learners, they use magnifiers, and for those who are blind, there are braille textbooks and materials they use and even tape recorders in the class*."

Participant Three

"*Visual impairment is an inability of someone to either see clearly or not to see at all. They use magnifiers and tape recorders in class."*

Participant Four

"*Visual impairment is a disability, a situation where an individual has low vision or is partially sighted."*

From the above excerpts, teachers clearly understand that visual impairment has to do with one's inability to see clearly and can be either partially or totally blind. The findings are in line with Fantaye et al. (2022), Nanjwan and Igba (2019) and Mosola (2020) that learners with low vision

are individuals whose ability to see clearly is permanently limited or decreased. They use a combination of vision and other senses to learn, although they may require adaptations in lighting, the size of the print, and, sometimes, braille.

4.3.2 Theme 2: Teaching strategies used to teach learners with visual impairment

In this theme, all the participants highlighted teaching strategies that they believe are effective in teaching learners with visual impairment. The responses from the participants suggested different teaching strategies that can be used to teach visually impaired learners, like discussion, grouping, question and answer, individual consultation, demonstration and repetition.

Participant One

"*Teaching learners with visual impairment is not as simple as writing on the board, and you are done. It comes with different things, like to know the kind of learners you teach and their needs. When teaching visually impaired learners, I will go the extra mile to ensure that they understand what was taught in class, either during or after class. I will also do individual consultations when they do not understand what was taught in the class. I also bring them close as friends so they feel free to tell me when they do not understand something, and then we will discuss it.*"

Participant Two

"*For some of us who teach subjects like languages and social sciences, most of our teaching is based on speaking; therefore, since they do not see but have that hearing; they use the hearing sense. Therefore, there are not too many problems there, but we should always ensure that when we write certain words on the board because they will not see them, you spell them. Whatever word we introduce in class, you have to spell it. If you are reading a novel or a text, the characters there, you have to spell their names so that they know that in this chapter or this unit, we have the following characters.*"

He says, "*The strategies we use are not different from the ones we use for sighted learners. Grouping is one of the ways you group them with learners with sight. Discussion method, where you discuss certain concepts in class and question and answer method*."

Participant Three

"*I teach sciences, so I have not had any special strategies that I use differently. I use the equipment they are given to make learning easier. The other thing that I normally use is grouping learners with visually impaired after class if I notice that they did not understand in class, especially topics which have diagrams and graphs and explain to them.*"

Participant Four

"*They use magnifiers, recorders and smart boards. Sometimes, we take them individually after classes because they sometimes take time to understand, or we provide extra time. Sometimes, we use videos for teaching so that they will use their hearing sense. Demonstration is one of the strategies we use on the smart board; it makes it easier for visually impaired learners to understand mathematics and diagrams for science subjects. Visually impaired learners should be allowed to work on their own so that they will be independent. They should not be helped all the time.*"

The above statements indicate the effective strategies that can be used to teach learners with visual impairment in an inclusive classroom. The findings also show that some strategies can be used for sighted learners. The findings of the current study correspond with Tseeke (2021) that teachers should be creative and innovative and use suitable teaching methods that will accommodate learners with special needs, for example, to facilitate the support of students who are visually challenged in larger classes, teachers should use group work and cooperative teaching. Smaller groups can be formed from the class, but they should not include more than one visually impaired student (Tseeke, 2021). The teacher should explain the concepts thoroughly, allow learners to ask questions, and verbalise what is written on the blackboard. In that way, blind learners will gather some information (Maurya, 2016). These findings are also in line with self-efficacy theory that says teacher self-efficacy is important in inclusive settings because it affects how teachers approach their lessons, what motivates them, and how much time and effort they devote to providing instruction to all students, including learners with visual

impairment (Tseeke, 2021). The teachers should provide instruction enabling visually impaired learners to act independently (Landsberg et al., 2019).

4.3.3 Theme 3: Challenges teachers encounter in teaching learners with visual impairment

Under this sub-theme, the participants indicated that they encounter some challenges in teaching learners with visual impairment, such as environmental challenges, attitudes of other teachers, inadequate assistive devices, shortage of braille textbooks and lack of training to teach visually impaired learners. The following responses confirm this:

Participant One

"*One of the biggest challenges is related to time, especially when one had given an examination or a test, they would not cope with finishing at the same time as others, so they had to be given extra time which at other times that extra time would even exceed before them finishing. Another challenge is related to the low self-esteem of these learners. They did not believe that they could make it in the education system. They did not believe in themselves in the sense that at other times they would even decide to be at home, not wanting to come to school just because they were saying it would be like they would not make it*."

Participant Two

"*Yes, there are many there because some are environmental challenges; our environment here is not conducive for them. There are no rails for them to move easily from one class to another, one office to another. There are no adequate assistive devices like Pekins Braillers that they use, the machine that they use to write. The voice recorders are also not adequate. Braille test books are also not adequate. Even purchasing their teaching materials is expensive because we buy them from South Africa. They do not just use ordinary paper."*

He says, *"Some learners are from primary or our feeder schools and come to high school not having necessary braille skills, and some struggle so much and fail to continue their studies because they could not read braille".*

Participant Three

"*During my first years of teaching, I experienced problems; I did not know how to teach them, I sometimes used my hands, and I struggled a lot because I did not have training on teaching learners with visual impairment. Another challenge is the lack of equipment that they use, equipment that they can use to draw diagrams because when writing final exams, they will just be given diagrams, which will be their first time to see or encounter. However, during the year, we usually explain diagrams to them. Some teachers have a negative attitude towards visually impaired learners.*"

Participant Four

"*The other challenge is that most learners are from poor households and struggle to have learning materials. They have low self-esteem, and their devices are very expensive. Visually impaired learners need a lot of attention from their teachers. Some teachers have a negative attitude towards learners who are visually impaired because they are not trained to deal with this kind of learner.*"

The findings are supported by Andrew (2015), who stated that inadequate materials or equipment used by visually impaired learners is a serious challenge that hinders them from effectively learning since they cannot function without them. In some schools, the building is not accessible for visually impaired learners due to high steps, curved staircases and narrow walkways. Also, some teachers have negative attitudes towards learners who are visually impaired. The findings also reveal that some students fail to continue their secondary education because they cannot read braille. This is supported by Msimango (2019), who stated that visually impaired learners experience problems in reading and understanding braille.

4.3.4 Theme 4: Recommended strategies for teaching learners with visual impairment in an inclusive classroom

The analysis revealed that strategies can be used to teach learners with visual impairment in an inclusive classroom. Such strategies include the use of audiovisual tools in a classroom, repetition, use of a large font and allowing visually impaired learners to sit in front in the classroom, grouping

visually impaired with sighted learners, every word written on the board should be spelt for visually impaired to hear, being engaged all the time to increase their speed or be given some tasks, provide extra time for the visually impaired and individual consultations. The participants said the following:

Participant One

"*All right, the audiovisual strategy is the strategy we can use for visually impaired learners. We should not just concentrate on visual ones but also be coupled with audio so that they can hear clearly. Another strategy I have learned is that they should be made to work repeatedly. They should be given a piece of work to write so that they are acquainted with writing, and the speed can increase, especially regarding examination issues. Also, engage visually impaired learners in physical activities."*

Participant Two

"*For my colleagues teaching other subjects, for instance, in sciences, it involves experiments, so they should group learners with visual impairment with those with sight and explain every step they do in the lab there. Make use of other senses for learning, like hearing and touching*."

Participant Three

"*The educators should be aware of visually impaired learners in the classroom and cater for their needs; they should spell every word written on the board and provide extra time after class for visually impaired learners. The educators should prepare the work of visually impaired learners on time so that when other learners (sighted) are given work, even their work is ready to avoid discrimination."*

Participant Four

"*Provide extra time for learners with visually impaired and also engage them in a classroom. Learners with visual impairment can sit in front of the classroom, and educators must use large fonts when writing on the board to accommodate learners with visual impairment. Learners must*

engage in physical activities because it is part of the curriculum, and individual consultation must be provided when needed."

From the above, it was clear that teachers should provide extra time for visually impaired learners to enhance their understanding of what was taught in class. Almost every participant said this. Write boldly for the visually impaired to see and provide braille material in time for blind learners. This agrees with the theory that, with experience and a strong sense of self-efficacy, teachers are more likely to use various teaching strategies while instructing visually impaired students (Graham, 2022). The literature also supports the findings that visually impaired learners need specific support in the classroom concerning the best seating places to use effectively to conduct their studies. Others will need to sit where there is enough light, where they can hear the sound properly and in a darker place, depending on the nature of their visual impairment (Landsberg et al., 2019). Some learners will need to sit in the front seats of the classroom, near the board, to see clearly. That means the teachers should be able to identify the needs of learners with visual impairment and cater for them. Friend (2008) stipulates that one of the crucial components in teaching learners with visual impairment is to provide instructional material in time with appropriate media. For example, learners with low vision should be provided with large print text use of optical devices or recorded media while in class.

4.4. Chapter Summary

This chapter presented, analysed and discussed the data generated through interviews with teachers who educate learners with visual impairment. There were four major themes which were identified. The first theme was teachers' understanding of visual impairment, which was perceived to be multifaceted in line with how teachers unpacked different meanings regarding visual impairment. The second theme was teaching strategies used to teach learners with visual impairment. The third one was challenges teachers encounter in teaching learners with visual impairment, and lastly, recommended strategies to be used in teaching learners with visual impairment in an inclusive classroom. Chapter 5 will summarise the findings of this study, conclude, give recommendations, and suggest directions for further research in this related field.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

Chapter four dealt with data presentation, analysis and interpretation of the findings. Four themes and sub-themes from the data were discussed in detail. The discussion was supported by the participants' verbatim statements, the existing literature, and the theoretical framework adopted in the current study. The researcher also referred to the field notes taken during the visits. This chapter summarises the findings, suggests recommendations, and directs further research in a similar area to the current study.

5.2 Discussion of the Findings

5.2.1 Theme 1: Teachers' understanding of visual impairment

The teachers have a clear understanding of what visual impairment is. From their statements, they understood that visual impairment is a generic term for visual loss (blindness and low vision) that impacts learning in a school context. They even indicated that learners with visual impairment use assistive devices for learning, such as magnifiers, tape recorders and Perkins Braillers. According to Fantaye et al. (2022), Nanjwan and Igba (2019) and Mosola (2020), learners with low vision are individuals whose ability to see clearly is permanently limited or decreased; they use a combination of vision and other senses to learn, although they may require adaptations in lighting, the size of print, and, sometimes, braille. One can conclude that if teachers understand the concept of visual impairment, they will be able to address the needs of visually impaired learners and accommodate them in an inclusive classroom.

5.2.2 Theme 2: Teaching strategies used to teach learners with visual impairment

The findings from this study suggested teaching strategies that can be used effectively to teach learners with visual impairment. Such strategies include discussion, grouping, question and answer, individual consultation, demonstration and repetition. The results also revealed that the same strategies can be used for sighted learners. Almost all the participants encouraged teachers

to create time to assist learners with visual impairment individually to ensure that they understood what was taught in class or group them as visually impaired learners. The self-efficacy theory supports the belief that teachers who possess this attribute (mastery of experience) are eager to encourage and point students toward success. They may, therefore, look for more creative ways to teach that will allow them to address the needs of visually impaired students (Tseeke, 2021). The participants emphasised using assistive devices to make learning easier, using magnifiers, tape recorders, Perkins Braillers and smart boards. Partially sighted learners learn best when using large print materials, so magnifying glasses can be used if large print books are unavailable (Msimango, 2019).

5.2.3 Theme 3: Challenges teachers encounter in teaching learners with visual impairment

The findings indicate that there are challenges that teachers encounter in teaching learners with visual impairment. Those challenges are environmental challenges, attitudes of other teachers, inadequate assistive devices, shortage of braille textbooks and lack of training to teach visually impaired learners. These challenges affect the learning of visually impaired learners negatively. Inadequate materials or equipment used by visually impaired learners is a serious challenge that hinders them from effectively learning since they cannot function without them (Andrew, 2015). In some schools, the building is not accessible for visually impaired learners due to high steps, curved staircases and narrow walkways. Also, some teachers have a negative attitude towards visually impaired learners (Andrew, 2015).

5.2.4 Theme 4: Recommended strategies for teaching learners with visual impairment in an inclusive classroom

The findings suggested the best teaching strategies that can be used to teach learners with visual impairment in an inclusive setting. Such strategies include audiovisual, repetition, use of a large font and allowing visually impaired learners to sit in front in the classroom, grouping visually impaired with sighted learners, every word written on the board should be spelt for visually impaired to hear, being engaged all the time to increase their speed or be given some tasks, provide extra time for the visually impaired and individual consultations. The teachers should be creative and innovative and use suitable teaching methods to accommodate learners with special

needs; for example, teachers should use group work and cooperative teaching to support visually challenged students in larger classes. Smaller groups can be formed from the class, but they should not include more than one visually impaired student (Tseeke, 2021). I agree with the findings that the above strategies can be used to teach learners with visual impairment in an inclusive classroom.

5.3 Limitations of the study

The following limitations are recognized in the study:

- This study is a qualitative study, which enabled the researcher to generate rich data. The participants that were selected for the purpose of this research study were teachers who teach leaners with visual impairment in two high schools in Maseru District, out of many schools in Lesotho. Therefore, the findings may not be generalized to reflect experiences of all the Lesotho high schools.
- This research was conducted under time and resource constraints. For example, when the schools were open in august 2023, several appointments were made between the researcher and the individual participants on the same day and the researcher was forced to spend a lot of cash for transport and other basic needs.
- During data collection when the researcher arrived on the date of appointment to continue with the interviews, some of the participants were not ready for the interviews to commence. As a result, the researcher had to extend the data collection time by two to three weeks. This means the researcher had to be patient until those participants were ready.

5.4 Recommendations of the study

The recommendations are based on the findings of the current study**.** The following are recommendations that can be employed in teaching learners with visual impairment in an inclusive classroom:

- Teachers should be trained on how to teach learners with visual impairment.
- The school environment should allow visually impaired learners to move freely; it should accommodate them.
- For learners who use braille, their learning materials must be prepared in time.
- Visually impaired learners should be provided with assistive devices that assist them in carrying out their studies because their learning becomes difficult without them.
- Teachers should provide extra time for visually impaired learners as sometimes they might take time to understand.

5.5 Recommendations for further studies

- The study specifically targeted teachers who teach learners with visual impairment and therefore, it would be significant to reproduce the study that will engage the principals, learners, and the parents to find out their experiences on teaching learners with visual impairment.
- Further studies exploring teachers' experiences on teaching learners with visual impairment in Lesotho primary schools be conducted.
- This study was conducted in two high schools in Maseru District. It would be interesting to conduct a study within a different context, such as a special school. Such a study would explore teachers' experiences on teaching learners with visual impairment in Lesotho special schools.

5.6 Conclusion of the study

The study explored teachers' experiences teaching learners with visual impairment in Lesotho-inclusive classrooms. The study employed a qualitative research approach and a phenomenological research design. Interviews were used to collect data from teachers who educate learners with visual impairment. Content analysis was used to analyse data. Four themes emanated from the data collected: teachers' understanding of visual impairment, teaching strategies used to teach learners with visual impairment, challenges teachers encountered in teaching learners with visual impairment, and recommended strategies for teaching learners with visual impairment in an inclusive classroom. The themes were discussed and supported by the theory (self-efficacy theory) and literature. Teachers' experience plays an important role in teaching learners with visual impairment because teaching visually impaired learners requires teachers who are trained to teach them or have gathered some experience teaching visually impaired learners so that one will be able to cater for their needs.

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APPENDIX A

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE KINGDOM OF LESOTHO
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING - MASERU

P.O.BOX 47 MASERU 100

TEL:22322816

The principal
…… high school
Maseru 100.

2nd March 2023

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH STUDY

Permission is hereby granted to MALITEBOHO MASELI (Ms) to undertake a study whose Topic is - "TEACHERS EXPERIENCES ON THE TEACHING LEARNERS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENT IN LESOTHO INCLUSIVE CLASSROOM".

It is the hope of the Ministry that the findings of this study will help in the advancement of the Ministry's efforts to provide quality education.

I hope this will reach your favourable considerations.

Yours Moneri Sincerely

Teboho Moneri - Regional Inspector Central

MINISTRY OF EDUCATICU
AND
TRAINING REGIONAL INSPECTOR - CENTRAL

2 MAR 2023

TEL: 22327816, F.o. BOX
MASERU '100 LESOTHO

APPENDIX B

UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE
UNIVERSITEIT VAN DIE VRYSTAAT
YUNIVESITHI YA FREISTATA
UFS

LETTER OF PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH

THE PRINCIPAL

I am a part—time Master's degree student from the University of the Free State specialising in the field of Psychology of Education. I am conducting a study on Teachers' experiences on teaching learners with visual impairment in Lesotho inclusive classrooms. The study will be conducted in two high schools in Maseru. The data will be collected through interviews with teachers who

teach learners with visual impairment.

Confidentiality and Voluntary participation

The information gathered from the interviews will be used for the purpose of this study only. Teachers will not be forced to participate in the study they will volunteer. The information provided will be held confidential and the participants will remain anonymous. The interviews

will be carried out once the Teachers have given their assent

Your permission as the principal is therefore needed for me to continue with this research in your school.

INFORMED PERMISSION

I as the principal, am aware of the research that will be conducted and give full permission to the researcher conducting the research in my school.

Signature.....

ST. CATHRINE'S

The principal of the school F O BOX 17 INE'S HIGH SCHOOL MASERU 100 OUTHERN AFRICA

LESOTHe,

TELEPIZE: 32N52

APPENDIX C

UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE
UNIVERSITEIT VAN DIE VRYSTAAT
YUNIVESITHI YA FREISTATA
UFS

LETTER OF PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH

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Your permission as the principal is therefore needed for me to continue with this research in your school.

INFORMED PERMISSION

I as the principal, am aware of the research that will be conducted and give full permission to the researcher conducting the research in my school.

B. Hegoa

Signature....<.....

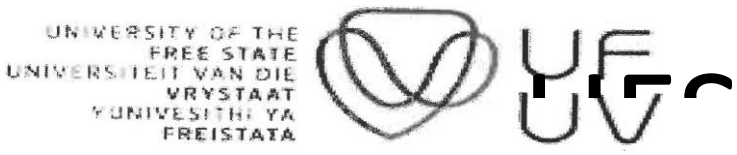
The principal of the school

MABATHOANA
HIGH scH00L

2023 -09-07

P.O.
Box 2135, PITSO GROUND 102
+266 5046 2864 T: 22 317 150
2864 T: 22 317 150
www.mabathoanahs.co.ls

APPENDIX D



CONSENT LETTER TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH

THE TEACHER

I am a part—time Master's degree student from the University of the Free State specialising in the field of Psychology of Education. I am conducting a study on Teachers' experiences on teaching learners with visual impairment in Lesotho inclusive classrooms. The study will be conducted in two high schools in Maseru. The data will be collected through interviews with teachers who teach learners with visual impairment.

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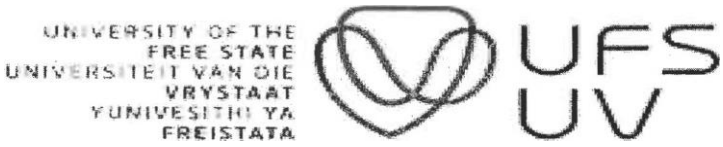
Your permission as the Teacher is therefore needed for me to continue with this research.

Kind Regards

INFORMED PERMISION

SIGNATURE OF A TEACHER. .....

APPENDIX E



CONSENT LETTER TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH

THE TEACHER

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Your permission as the Teacher is therefore needed för me to continue with this research.

Kind Regards

INFORMED PERMISION

SIGNATURE OF A TEACHER.....

APPENDIX F

UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE
UNIVERSITEIT VAN DIE VRYSTAAT
YUNIVESITHI YA FREISTATA

UFS UV

CONSENT LETTER TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH

THE TEACHER

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Kind Regards

INFORMED PERMISION

SIGNATURE OF A TEACHER. .....

APPENDIX G

UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE
UNIVERSITEIT VAN DIE VRYSTAAT
YUNIVESITHI YA FREISTATA

UFS UV

CONSENT LETTER TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH

THE TEACHER

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Your permission as the Teacher is therefore needed for me to continue with this research.

Kind Regards

INFORMED PERMISION

.....

SIGNATURE OF A TEACHER.

APPENDIX H

TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES ON TEACHING LEARNERS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENT IN LESOTHO-INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS.docx

ORIGINALITY REPORT

10%	7%	2%	8%
SIMILARITY INDEX	INTERNET SOURCES	PUBLICATIONS	STUDENT PAPERS

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