AN INCLUSIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT FOR CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE LEARNERS

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DECLARATION

I, Jade Crystal Chetty, hereby declare that this dissertation and its contents is my original work. In cases where I have made use of other people's work, acknowledgement has been made. I further declare that this work has not been submitted to any other university or institution for any other qualification.

Signature: _____   Date: _____

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my baby, who is expected to arrive in April, 2019.

Mum cannot wait to meet you.

I love you already little one!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CALL	Computer-assisted language learning
CAPS	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement
CPTD	Continuing professional teacher development
DOE	Department of Education
FAL	First additional language
FET	Further Education and Training
ICT	Information and communications technology
LOLT	Language of learning and teaching
PAR	Participatory action research
SACE	South African Council for Educators
SMT	School management team
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific And Cultural Organization

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ABSTRACT

Learners with cultural and linguistic diversities face many challenges in a classroom environment that is not inclusive of their needs. Therefore, this study gives these learners a voice, one that expands their language and cultural beliefs while they are still learning to their full potential. Teachers play a pivotal role in creating this environment for learners, and this study therefore includes teachers in the process of overcoming cultural and linguistic barriers. The study was carried out at a public school in Durban, South Africa, and a qualitative research approach was adopted. This study had a sample size of 5 learners and 3 teachers. This research was unpinned by a critical paradigm, as the researcher wanted to bring about change for these learners.

An asset-based approach was used to frame this study, as the researcher wanted to identify the assets in learners and teachers, and mobilise these assets to bring about change. The findings of this study identified the current experiences of the learners and the teachers. Some of the major challenges for learners and teachers were language barriers, the lack of parent involvement, cultural diversity, and the negative attitude of learners. The findings also indicated that a sense of belonging is imperative for learners to function at their full potential. Learners need to be able to participate in the classroom academically and on the playground socially without feeling marginalised because of their cultural and linguistic diversity. Learners also need to have positive relationships with their peers and teachers at school.

The findings indicated the practices that can be seen as assets to overcome these challenges, and that can be adopted by teachers and learners. Information and communications Technology (ICT) was identified as essential in making the classroom inclusive, as it has the ability to include diverse languages and cultures within the classroom. Secondly, learners wanted posters in diverse language and cultures to be present in the classroom, to be used as teaching tools to help learners with vocabulary learning, especially through incidental learning. Lastly, "learners teaching learners," which is also known as peer teaching, can be utilised as a teaching method for learners who experience language barriers, and for learners in the process of change.

In concluding this study, it is recommended that teachers try to use the learners' home language in combination with the language of teaching and learning for learners to fully comprehend their subjects. Language and culture are closely linked, where language can be seen as a representation of one's culture. People have their own diverse cultures, and hence their own diverse languages. This research therefore emphasises the importance of integrating strategies that will enhance the learning environment for culturally and linguistically diverse learners. This will encourage the learners to progress and learn at their full potential, while still maintaining positive relationships with their school community.

Key words: Inclusive learning environment, asset-based approach, positive psychology, cultural and linguistic diversity

CHAPTER 1
EXPLORING THE BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.1   INTRODUCTION

South Africa has a history of segregation, and this study is set against the background of the significant transition in South Africa away from apartheid-era segregation, when diversity in terms of culture and language was not tolerated by the white minority rulers. The apartheid era can be broadly characterised by an intolerance toward cultural pluralism, and the segregation of learners in the education system according to race. Additionally, all non-white learners were required to use Afrikaans as a medium of teaching and learning in schools, irrespective of their home language.

However, 21st-century classrooms in democratic post-apartheid South Africa consist of learners from multiple linguistic, ethnic and economic backgrounds. But the enduring impact of intolerance to cultural and linguistic diversity within the classroom (informed by both the apartheid legacy and post-apartheid thinking) has created an environment that is often not conducive to teaching and learning for all learners within the classroom, causing certain learners to feel marginalised within the education system and to feel a sense of alienation due to their linguistic and cultural difference within the classroom.

Teachers need to become culturally responsive, which can be defined as "a student-centered approach to teaching in which the students' unique cultural strengths are identified and nurtured to promote student achievement and a sense of well-being about the student's cultural place in the world" (Lynch, 2012). Teachers need to shed their cultural biases and learn about the backgrounds of the students that they are teaching.

This is where a gap in the implementation of policy occurs. South Africa has policies that promote inclusivity, not only in terms of disability, but also in terms of race, language and culture. However, the reality of the classroom situation is that learners' languages and cultures are often still being marginalised by teachers. It is often only the teachers' language and culture that are valued in the classroom.

A number of qualitative studies have explored cultural and linguistic diversity in classrooms. Most studies that have been carried out focus on teachers' attitudes and

perceptions towards inclusivity in their classroom, and show that with the appropriate educational support, teachers could practise inclusivity in their classrooms. However, these studies do not adequately show *how* teachers can create a more inclusive learning environment for culturally and linguistically diverse learners, and *what the best practices to use would be* to create more inclusive learning environments for culturally and linguistically diverse learners.

Purcell-Gates (2000) claims that "because culture and learning are so closely linked, any mismatch between home and school culture can mean that linguistically diverse students who are still mastering the language of schooling are put at risk of failing" (p. 860). Teachers are seldom proficient in every home language of their learners. The school at which this study was carried out has a school population that consists of predominantly Black learners while the teaching staff is predominantly Indian. Most of these teachers cannot speak in the home language of more than 60% of their learners.

Many teachers struggle to comprehend the complexities of other cultural values. They often find certain actions of learners to be offensive or unnecessary instead of acknowledging that these actions are a product of certain cultural backgrounds. Desegregation also means that some classrooms are now filled with linguistically diverse learners who tend to speak a different home language from the chosen language of learning and teaching at their school. In order to increase student success, it is imperative that teachers help students to "bridge the discontinuity between home and school" (Yahya & Wood, 2017, p. 305).

Donohue and Bornman (2015) explain that "rapid political and policy changes, however, do not always translate into what occurs in practice, a reality that is evidenced by the lack of progress in implementing inclusive policy in South Africa over the past decade" (p. 43). The South African education system introduced desegregation almost 23 years ago; however, there are still repercussions that need to be dealt with, such as dealing constructively with inclusivity. This study acknowledges that a diverse range of learners of different races, languages, traditions, belief systems and religions have been included within our classrooms. However, as teachers, are we creating a learning environment that is conducive to learning for learners from all these diverse cultures and linguistic groups in our classrooms? My study therefore focused on how to identify

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and mobilise strategies to create an inclusive learning environment for culturally and linguistically diverse learners in all South African classrooms.

1.2 RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

Hartshorne (1992) describes the historical education in South Africa known as Bantu Education as "degrading African people's history, culture, and identity. It promoted myths and racial stereotypes in its curricula and textbooks. African people and communities were portrayed as traditional, rural, and unchanging. The Bantu Education Act which was active in 1953 treated "blacks as perpetual children in need of parental supervision by whites, which greatly limited the student's vision of their place in the broader South African society" (Hartshorne, 1992, p. 41). However, post-apartheid South Africa is now referred to as the Rainbow Nation and is home to a fascinating diversity of citizens. South Africa is known for its cultural diversity and has 11 official languages. Alexander (2009) explains that "classrooms in South Africa today encompass an array of races, languages, traditions, belief systems and religions. This reflects a shift from the apartheid past where learner populations were more homogenous" to a more inclusive type of classroom (p. 1).

This study took cognisance of the fact that historically, learners were racially segregated and linguistically deprived of their home languages in the school environment. This study also acknowledged that the current South African education system legally requires all classrooms to be accepting of cultural and linguistic diversity. Donohue and Bornman (2015) state that "equality and human rights have been central themes in the lives of South Africans since the end of apartheid in 1994, and educating children of varying races, cultures, genders, and degrees of academic ability together within one classroom may be one way to combat deeply entrenched prejudices that at one time permeated South African society" (p. 42).

However, Du Toit (1995) explains that "the opening of schools to all races does not automatically ensure mutual understanding and acceptance between educators and learners and amongst learners themselves" (p. 212). In fact, my observation as a teacher

is that most teachers do not understand the complexities of cultures and languages that are different from their own, resulting in alienated learners. Alienated learners are those who function on the borders of school life, those who consider themselves social outcasts, or "students who are reluctant to maintain the charade of acceptable behaviour in school" (Carley, 1994, p. 221). Alienated learners do not have a connection with their teachers; instead, their behaviour includes "disruptiveness in class, absenteeism, missing homework, poor grades, lack of investment in the learning process, belligerent attitude, social withdrawal, and suspensions" (Schulz, 2007, p. 40).

Such alienation has become evident in my school, where learners who do not understand English (as it is not their home language) show signs of all of the above attitudes and behaviours. Most of the learners from the school at which I conducted the research come from cultural backgrounds that are different to those of their teachers. Because of this disconnection or gap between teacher and learner, learners tend to feel marginalised in the classroom. The aim of this study was therefore to explore such issues. To do this I explored the current situation of inclusive learning environments more extensively, I examined the needs of an inclusive learning environment, and also explained inclusive learning practices that could be used by teachers and learners.

A study like this one is significant in a country such as South Africa, as we are continuously striving to achieve inclusivity and to overcome the barriers created in classrooms by the segregated past. Other studies that have attempted to research such matters have mainly done so from an interpretive point of view that focused on teachers' perceptions and attitudes. A study on inclusive education was conducted by Ntuli and Traore (2013) in Ghana, but it focused purely on teachers' attitudes and perceptions. Another study conducted in the Bahamas by Hunter-Johnson and Newton (2014) also focused on teachers' attitudes and perceptions of inclusive education. As the current study was underpinned by a critical paradigm, as the researcher I aimed not to just understand the social action but rather to bring about change in this social action.

David and Capraro (2001) simplify this by stating that "the responsibility of ensuring cultural pluralism continues to be a driving force of our nation lies in the hands of the educational system" (p. 80). Cultural pluralism can be defined as "a society in which members of diverse cultural, social, racial or religious group are free to maintain their

own identity and yet simultaneously share equitably in a larger common political organisation, economic system and social structure" (Ovando & Collier, 1998, p. 165). As the above discussion suggests, in order for cultural pluralism to manifest within the classroom, teachers need to create a learning environment that is conducive to culturally and linguistically diverse learners. It is for this reason that my study aimed at identifying and mobilising strategies to create a more inclusive learning environment for culturally and linguistically diverse learners.

1.3   FOCUS OF THE STUDY

The main focus of this study was to identify and mobilise strategies for creating a more inclusive learning environment for culturally and linguistically diverse learners. There was an urgent need to carry out this study, as during my observation of the learning environment at the school at which I work (and which was selected as the site for this study) it came to my attention that many learners do not feel included in lessons. Learners tend to lose interest while teachers are teaching, and fall asleep during lessons, hide their cell phones under their blazers or bags and play games on them, or miss class altogether by absconding from class, preferring to stay outside and socialise with friends. There has a been a substantial increase in learners playing truant from class, to such an extent that a visitor to the school at any point in time would be forgiven for thinking that it was a lunch break when in fact it was normal class time.

The pass rates of learners have also declined significantly over the past years. Learners often have to repeat grades or be automatically progressed to the next grade, as according to the Department of Education (2015) a learner cannot spend more than four years in a phase. This means that a learner can only repeat Grade 10 or 11 once before having to be progressed to the next grade. The drawback of this is that learners are not adequately developed in terms of their cognitive behaviours and are passing through the system simply because of their age. This has a tremendous negative impact on a child, especially in their Grade 12 year when previous grades' work is being tested or revised and the learner has not grasped any of that work due to failing previous grades. This in itself is a major issue of concern that deserves an intervention.

This qualitative study was carried out in a mainstream public school that caters for male and female learners, and in which these problems have surfaced. The teachers at the school are predominantly of one culture (Indian) and linguistic background (English), while the school population represents a diverse cultural and linguistic range of learners. Some learners represent Indian culture (which in itself can be broken down into Hindu, Muslim and Christian Indians) and some learners come from English home language backgrounds. These learners form a small percentage of the total school population. There are also Coloured learners who have an English or isiZulu linguistic background. The school has predominantly Black learners who can be broken down into isiZulu and isiXhosa cultures. Their home languages are also isiZulu and isiXhosa, and English is an additional language at school. Lastly, the school also has learners from foreign countries (mainly from Mozambique, the DRC, Zambia and Zimbabwe); for these learners, English is a completely foreign language. The gap between the teachers' cultures and the learners' cultures now becomes evident. Meier and Hartell (2009) claim that "the increasing cultural diversity in educational institutions necessitates that educationists teach and manage learners with cultures, languages and backgrounds that are unknown to them" (pg. 180).

Of the 45 academic staff members, there are only six Black staff members who can relate to the culture and language that is dominant throughout the school. The balance of the teachers at the school can relate linguistically and culturally to only a small percentage of the school population. This in no way suggests that the school should change its population of teachers or learners. However, it is my intention to bring about change in terms of creating an inclusive and conducive cultural and linguistic environment for learners and teachers. Learners need to feel that the environment in which they learn is one that is safe, warm, welcoming and openhearted, irrespective of difference. Teachers also need an environment where learners are willing to learn and gain from the wealth of knowledge that they have to offer. As much as teachers have the responsibility to create learning environments that are conducive to teaching and learning, teachers' personal cultures and languages should in no way be ignored or marginalised. At the same time, learners also need to have a voice, and their cultures and languages need to be included in the curriculum. An environment conducive to learning and teaching needs to be created for all involved.

In accordance with the asset-based theoretical framework selected for this study, I believe that everyone has an asset that can be identified and utilised in order to address problems or challenges. Teachers and learners alike can use their innate assets to overcome such challenges. This study explored how to use these assets to create inclusive learning environments for culturally and linguistically diverse learners.

1.4   RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The primary research question of the study was as follows:

> *How can we create a more inclusive learning environment for culturally and linguistically diverse learners?*

This primary research question was broken down into three secondary research questions:

1.   What is the current situation of inclusive learning environments for culturally and linguistically diverse learners?
2.   Why do we need an inclusive learning environment for culturally and linguistically diverse learners?
3.   What inclusive practice/s can be used to enhance culturally and linguistically diverse learners' learning environments?

1.5   RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the study were as follows:

- To explore the current situation of inclusive learning environments for culturally and linguistically diverse learners

- To examine the needs of an inclusive learning environment for culturally and linguistically diverse learners

- To explain inclusive practices used in a learning environment with culturally and linguistically diverse learners.

1.6   DEFINITION OF MAIN CONCEPTS

1.6.1   Inclusive learning environment

Most studies that focus on inclusive learning focus on learners with disabilities. However, Ohman (2017) describes an inclusive learning environment as an "environment to provide educational settings that fit all pupils" (p. 345). This means that all learners, irrespective of their differences, should have an equal advantage in the educational setting. Dreyer (2017) adds that an inclusive learning environment "aims at increasing the learning and participation of learners and minimising the effect of barriers to learning and participation. It emphasises overcoming barriers within the system to help all learners achieve their full potential" (pg. 391). Inclusive learning environments remove barriers to learning and participation for learners, and help all learners to achieve to their full potential.

1.6.2   Asset-based approach

Kretzmann and McKnight (1993) define the asset-based approach as identifying and mobilising the assets that a community may have, and using them to implement positive change. This means that learners and teachers who represent a school community have certain assets that may equip them to overcome the challenges that they may be facing. In the context of this study, this challenge is the linguistic and cultural diversity that needs to be represented and respected by all in the classroom. Fuimaono (2012) states that assets can be in any form — "financial, social, physical, human, political, environmental and cultural" (pg. 32). Any of these assets that are identified within the learner or teacher can be mobilised to create a more inclusive environment.

1.6.3 Positive psychology

The term "positive psychology" refers to "positive emotions, positive character traits and enabling institutions" (Seligman, Steen, Park & Peterson, 2005, p. 411). Positive psychology needs to be enhanced within the classroom, in order for learners to develop positive emotions. Gable and Haidt (2005) add that positive psychology is the study of the conditions and processes that contribute to the flourishing or optimal functioning of people, groups, and institutions. This means that in order for learners to function at their full potential, positive psychology needs to be practised in the classroom, in order for learners to become motivated and make progress towards success.

1.6.4 Cultural and linguistic diversity

Dietz (2007) states that cultural diversity is "a situation that includes the representation of multiple (ideally all) groups within a prescribed environment, such as a university or a workplace. This word most commonly refers to differences between cultural groups, although it is also used to describe differences within cultural groups" (p. 8). This means that all people belong to a group of people with similar traits that are different from those of other groups. Idang (2015) believes that these traits refer to "people's language, dressing, music, work, arts, religion, dancing and so on. It also goes on to include people's social norms, taboos and values" (p. 98). Language and culture are closely linked, where language can be seen as a representation of one's culture. People have their own diverse cultures, and hence their own languages. Language is a way to communicate one's culture to another culture. Bingol (2016) states that "culture is automatically and naturally hidden in any language; so what exists in a culture exists in a language" (p. 84). It is therefore impossible to respect a person's culture but not their language, as these impact are intertwined.

1.7 OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

1.7.1 Research design

This research can be characterised as a qualitative study. According to Creswell (2014), qualitative research involves "exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. The process of research involves emerging questions and procedures, data typically collected in the participant's setting, data analysis inductively building from particulars to general themes, and the researcher making interpretations of the meaning of the data" (p. 32). It was my aim to explore and understand the learners' and teachers' experiences of the learning environment for culturally and linguistically diverse learners. The research process involved gathering drawings from participating learners as part of a participatory action research (PAR) strategy, as well as conducting focus groups and interviews with learners and teachers.

The researcher also adopted a critical paradigm for this research. According to Asghar (2013), "critical theory does not intend only to highlight and explain these social factors that cause oppressive and powerful groups to dominate the suppressed and repressed section of society, but also strives for a social set up based on equality for all the members" (p. 3123). This means that I did not want to just highlight the challenges that arise from cultural and linguistic diversity, but instead also wanted to see change happen that would help these learners to overcome their challenges.

1.7.2 Research methodology

- Sampling

As this research is a qualitative study, purposive sampling was used to select the participants. Creswell, (2014, p. 239) states that "purposefully selecting participants will best help the researcher understand the problem and the research question". I wanted information-rich cases that were related to this study.

- Data-generation method

I wanted to give learners a voice in the process of change, and therefore chose to use drawings generated by the learners as part of the PAR strategy. This helped learners to explain their challenges in the classroom. Weber (2008) explains that "images can be used to capture the ineffable. Some things just need to be shown, not merely stated" (p. 44). Learners were interviewed by myself, where they were given an opportunity to explain their drawings. Teachers were interviewed in focus groups to discuss this study. There were 5 learners and 3 teachers used in this sample size. These interviews were recorded, transcribed, and then coded for data analysis.

- Ethical considerations

I ensured that the study was not harmful to anyone directly or indirectly involved. I also made sure that all participants were aware that they could withdraw from the study at any point, and that they were not liable for anything in this study. I ensured the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants at all times, and their names were not mentioned in the study. I also sought permission from all the necessary gatekeepers before conducting research at the school.

1.8   CHAPTER OUTLINE

This report comprises six chapters, and the list of references. The chapters in this report are as follows:

Chapter 1 introduces the background to the study. This chapter also provides an overview of the study, outlines the objectives of the study, and presents the research questions that this study aimed to answer.

Chapter 2 reviews the literature that provides the contextual framework for the study. This review focuses on literature that relates to creating an inclusive environment for culturally and linguistically diverse learners.

Chapter 3 discusses the asset-based theoretical framework that informed this study, and which is underpinned by positive psychology.

Chapter 4 discusses the research design and methodology. This study was a qualitative study that adopted a critical paradigm. In addition, the sampling methods, data generation method, ethical considerations and trustworthiness were also discussed here.

Chapter 5 discusses the data analysis and the findings. There were three broad themes that emerged from the data analysis, and these were broken down further into sub-themes to discuss the findings.

Chapter 6 concludes the research on creating an inclusive environment for culturally and linguistically diverse learners. This chapter also concludes with recommendations for further research.

1.9   CONCLUSION

In this chapter, a brief background of the study has been provided. The motivation for conducting this research study has been explained, and an overview of the research design and methodology used in this study has been provided. The literature review that framed this study will be presented in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1   INTRODUCTION

There is a robust association between culture and learning. Gay (2010) states that "culturally responsive pedagogy enhances the learning experiences of culturally and linguistically diverse students by focusing on their cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference and performance styles. Teachers must move beyond holidays celebrating cultures to infusing culturally relevant practices in the classroom. They must learn the cultures represented in their classrooms and translate this knowledge into deliberate, planned instructional practice" (p. 170). Regrettably, many teachers are still unaware of the power of diversity and the need for culturally responsive practices, especially when interacting with culturally and linguistically diverse students. This study recognises that diversity itself is not a problem; however, "the potential cultural mismatch between teachers and culturally and linguistically diverse students is an issue" (Dray & Wisneski, 2011, p. 30). This literature review will therefore focus on exploring the mismatch or gap between teachers' and learners' cultures and languages.

2.2   EXPLORING THE CURRENT SITUATION OF INCLUSIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS FOR CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE LEARNERS

An inclusive environment is one in which learners feel respected by and connected to one another. Learners and teachers contribute towards curriculum goals together. "Inclusivity moves us away from simply the physical integration of people to the integration of people's experiences, knowledge and perspectives" (Sherry, 2015). As much as classrooms in South Africa represent a variety of races, languages, ethnic backgrounds and religion, there is still a lack of congruity between teachers' cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and learners' cultural and linguistic backgrounds. There is

seldom any connection between the learner and the teacher in terms of culture and language. Learners' experiences, knowledge and viewpoints related to their culture and language are disregarded if these are not already included within the syllabus coverage. The visual appearance of the classroom also seldom reflects diversity. Posters and charts on the walls are predominantly in English and mainly represent the dominant culture.

The school at which this research was carried out has tried to be inclusive in terms of culture and language on numerous occasions; however, this has not been sustained. For example, isiZulu-speaking tutors were hired to tutor learners on subject content in isiZulu, but because of financial constraints, this was not sustainable. Another strategy was when projectors and white boards were installed in almost all the classrooms to enhance teaching within the classroom through using information and communications technology (ICT). However, teachers have not made use of these tools to create lessons that are culturally responsive.

In conversations with other teachers at the school, I heard that many would like to spend time with learners getting to know their backgrounds so that they can respond positively to the learners in a non-judgemental way. However, the large class sizes make it impossible for teachers to spend time getting to know the learners' backgrounds. One teacher's class had increased to 60 learners — 20 more than the maximum number of learners per teacher. This was not the only teacher faced with the challenge of large numbers of learners. Many teachers, even in neighbouring schools, face this same challenge.

The downside of large numbers is that not only can teachers not bond with their learners on a personal level, but they are also left feeling fatigued and frustrated from the resulting issues that range from struggles with classroom discipline to marking large numbers of scripts. Another downside is that teachers cannot give learners personal attention when learners have missed class. Teachers then simply keep a record of learners' non-attendance, but there is no further concern over why they have missed the class. Due to a lack of personal contact with the teacher, learners do not feel that missing classes is a problem. Issues of non-attendance can be exacerbated by teachers' not making the learning environment inclusive of all their learners' needs, especially culturally and linguistically, resulting in learners getting bored in the classroom and

choosing other forms of entertainment outside the classroom. Language and culture has an extensive influence on the way learners think and behave. If learners feel that their culture and language is better respected outside the classroom, then that is where learners will tend to be.

Goduka (1998) explains that "language is inextricably linked to culture. It is a primary means by which people express their cultural values and the lens through which they view the world" (p. 34). If teachers remain unfamiliar with a learner's language, which is inextricably linked to the learner's culture, then teachers will continue to unconsciously isolate themselves from this learner, causing the learner to feel a sense of alienation due to his or her difference from the teacher. Goduka (1998) goes on to explain that "each learner brings to the classroom unique gifts, needs and language patterns that must be taken into consideration within the learning environments, curriculum materials and through instructional strategies" (p. 34).

According to the South African Schools Act, No. 84 of 1996, the "language of learning and teaching" (LOLT) (the medium of instruction or language of instruction) is the language used in the classroom throughout the school day. For example, at the school at which this research was carried out, English is the LOLT. This means that all subjects, such as Mathematics, Business Studies, History and Geography, are taught in English. Learners are required to complete their assessments in English; hence, they need to have a good understanding of the language of instruction, so that they are able to grasp the subject matter of their learning areas. At this same school, which is a secondary school, learners are required to do two examinable languages that are compulsory according to the school curriculum. The first language included in the curriculum is a Home Language, and at my chosen school of research they can choose between English and isiZulu. The second language in the curriculum is a First Additional Language (FAL) and learners can choose between English, isiZulu and Afrikaans.

The learner's choice in Home Language is generally what the learner knows best, and is most comfortable reading, writing and speaking. For this reason, the Home Language taught to the learner at school is often the same as the language the learner speaks at home. However, the parents of many learners choose English as their Home Language (even if it is not the language they speak at home), as they believe that their children

need to be comprehensively proficient in English in order to participate successfully in the economy. The FAL is generally the one in which learners are less fluent but in which they have usually reach the stage where they are comfortable to read, write and speak it. It is only during an isiZulu or an Afrikaans class that the teacher will teach in these specific languages. If the governing body in a particular school has chosen English as the LOLT, then all other subjects are to be taught in that language. If a learner fails his or her Home Language examination, that learner will have failed the entire year, irrespective of whether or not they have passed all their other subjects. The learner will then be required to repeat his/her current grade.

Linguistic diversity is a fact of life in many South African schools, where learners have a rich background in multiple languages. However, when these learners experience difficulty in speaking a LOLT that is different to their Home Language, many teachers judge them as being intellectually inferior, and recommend that they attend a school at which their Home Language is also the LOLT. Goduka (1998) explains that many learners who face these challenges are "those who speak a language or languages other than English in the school settings and are generally viewed as having a problem that must be corrected" (p. 36). In other words, teachers view these learners who are proficient in languages other than English as being a problem, which creates barriers to teaching and learning in their classrooms.

By contrast, Krashen (1989) states "that using children's background language as a medium of instruction is important because, firstly it supplies background knowledge that makes English more comprehensible; secondly it enhances the development of literacy since knowledge is transferred from the home language to the second language and thirdly it has cognitive and practical advantages, and promotes a healthy sense of cultural identity" (p. 154). Is it imperative to note that the researcher recognises that it would be impossible for teachers to teach in ten different languages, if the learners in that class came from ten different linguistic backgrounds. This is alluded to in Section 29(2) of the Constitution, where it states that "every learner has the right to receive a basic education in the language of his or her choice, *where this is reasonably practicable*" (Department of Education, 2015, pg. 7, emphasis added). It is commonly understood that teaching in multiple languages would be impractical for any teacher to

do, especially within one lesson. However, since language and culture are inextricably linked, teachers can use culturally responsive pedagogy as a tool to embrace the diversity within their classrooms, and to create an inclusive learning environment. This can be done by "using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them" (Gay, 2010, p. 31).

Teachers who do not attempt to use culturally responsive pedagogies will tend to classify students by their abilities or lack thereof. As stated earlier, teachers tend to perceive learners with language barriers as intellectually inferior. This has a negative influence on these learners' achievements. Because of this classification, such learners may fail to make any progress in school and will develop a very low self–esteem, which may cause them to drop out of school, especially during their secondary education. Watson and Houtz (2002) explain that many of the learners that face these challenges "come from families with lower incomes and less formal education and as a result, these students may not have the experiences or the social and/or academic pre-skills necessary to succeed in schools" (p. 268).

This has become evident at the school chosen for this research, where the socio-demographics indicate that most of the learners who are faced with these challenges come from informal settlements or child-headed homes where there is no support base from an educated adult. I chose this research topic as it is a current issue at the school, and therefore requires a strategy for change. As a researcher who operates according to a critical paradigmatic view, I believe that we need to empower people and fundamentally change society. With language and culture being so intricately linked, teachers need to embrace more culturally responsive pedagogies. Scotland (2012) expands this perspective by explaining that a "critical paradigm takes the view that language contains power relations so it is used to empower or weaken" (p. 13). It is therefore my purpose to bring about change to empower culturally and linguistically diverse learners by creating a more inclusive learning environment for them.

2.3   EXAMINING THE NEED FOR AN INCLUSIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT FOR CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE LEARNERS

Gay (2015) explains that from as early as the 1970s and 1980s, "scientists and educators in countries that are traditionally more multicultural (i.e., U.S., Canada, or United Kingdom) recognized cultural diversity as a strength and asset that can enrich students' learning" (p. 131). However, in a country such as South Africa, multiculturalism or cultural diversity was a challenge during the apartheid era. People of colour were restricted from embracing their cultural and linguistic diversity in learning environments that capitulated to the laws of the supreme white minority. In the post-apartheid era, South Africans are determined to overcome these challenges of the past. As mentioned earlier, the current South African classroom has a variety of races, languages, ethnic backgrounds and religions. However, the lack of congruence of teachers' cultural and linguistic backgrounds with learners' cultural and linguistic backgrounds has become an issue of concern in the classroom.

Globally, cultural diversity is known to be an asset that enhances students' learning. Conversely, South African perceptions are focused more on redressing the imbalances of the past. Within the context of the South African educational system, the focus is on diversity, which involves placing all races, languages, ethnic groups and religions into one classroom, with no restrictions as to who should or should not be allowed to register in various geographical areas. During the post-apartheid era, South African classrooms have become a perfect reflection of diversity. However, the question still remains whether teachers are creating a learning environment that is inclusive of all diversity within the classroom. A further question is why we need to create inclusive learning environments for culturally and linguistically diverse learners. The latter question forms the main discussion of this section, as the former question has been explained in the previous section.

In order to answer the question of why we need to create inclusive learning environments for culturally and linguistically diverse learners, it is essential to firstly mention that teaching and learning most subjects at school involves knowledge, vocabulary, the use of cognitive strategies and sociocultural influences. As explained

earlier, some learners have a different home language from the LOLT at the school they attend. These learners are then required to learn a second language, known as a First Additional Language (FAL); and when learners take on a "second language, they also take on a second culture" (Watson & Houtz, 2002, p. 269). Because language and culture are so interrelated, taking on a second language means that the second culture will also influence how one thinks, perceives and behaves. Learners are at risk of performing badly because most of them lack the linguistic, the cognitive, the social and the emotional behaviours required for learning.

Cummins (1984), a language learning theorist, expands on this topic by explaining context-embedded tasks and context-reduced tasks. A context-embedded task is one in which "the student has access to a range of additional visual and oral cues; for example he can look at illustrations of what is being talked about or ask questions to confirm understanding" (Cummins, 1984, p. 150). This means that learners will need to understand the visual in terms of its context, which often has a background in cultural values. If the particular culture is foreign to the learner, he/she will not be able to gain the full knowledge on that particular topic.

For example, while I was teaching a topic in Business Studies called Ethics and Professionalism, a section that came up was on how employees should behave in order to be professional in the workplace. Many learners answered by saying "dress appropriately", "talk in a professional manner", "arrive at work on time", and so on. This was accompanied by pictures and videos of professional people at work. Then there was a learner who raised the issue that in black cultures people are trained to not look an elder (which could also make reference to one's manager) in the eye when talking. This is actually a sign of respect. However, in an English person's business culture that would be considered disrespectful. This was a perfect example of context-embedded tasks. As a teacher who respected cultural values, I then had to look for further videos and pictures that depicted that type of scenario. The challenge, however, for the teacher is that this is not initially considered. I, as a teacher, had not considered cultural differences, so much so, that I had been disrespecting other cultures in my classroom.

As much as a teacher can be blamed for such a situation, teachers are also required to follow the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) which is issued by the Department of Education. This policy document outlines the exact syllabus to be covered by a teacher in every subject for every grade. It is evident in the CAPS document that even the Department of Education does not consider cultural differences, in this particular scenario, in the business world. The gap becomes evident again in the fact that even though South Africa is part of UNESCO, its White Paper 6 on Inclusive Education still contains policy that recognises only one language: English. If we claim to be a Rainbow Nation, multiple languages and cultures should be considered in terms of being ethical and professional within the business world. Our policy documents inform teachers on how they should think and how they should teach lessons in the classroom. Teachers are therefore implicitly being instructed to view English as the medium for teaching and learning, and to transfer this perspective to learners.

A context-reduced task is one such as "listening to a lecture or reading a dense text, where there are no other sources of help other than the language itself" (Cummins, 1984, p. 150). This means that learners will have to have an extensive understanding of the language in which they are being taught to gain the full knowledge of what is being taught. Business Studies, for example, is an application-based subject that has a great volume of theory-based notes and requires a sophisticated understanding of English instructions. Text books for Business Studies are so advanced in their language that sometimes even an English Home Language speaker can have difficulty in understanding them. Reading Business Studies text books would therefore be a context-reduced task, where learners would have to have an exceptional understanding of the language first, in order to understand the information context. For teachers then, it becomes compulsory to summarise this type of text book jargon into simple and easy language for learners to grasp such linguistically dense knowledge, especially for those learners who have barriers to understanding English.

It is understood that textbooks are produced only as a guide for learners; textbooks can never replace a teacher in the classroom. However, textbooks that are used by teachers and learners are approved by the Department of Education CAPS curriculum. Another important issue is that learners are encouraged to buy CAPS-approved textbooks despite

the fact that the language may be too complex for the learners to understand, especially learners for whom English is their FAL at school. It is therefore imperative for teachers to practice culturally responsive pedagogy, as this helps learners to gain a full knowledge of the subject matter in terms of its cultural contexts. With classrooms being so culturally and linguistically diverse, teachers need to stop using a one-size-fits-all approach, and instead adapt to diverse practices. Singh (2014, p. 58) states that "a stimulating environment is a pre-requisite for better learning and understanding." Learners need different kinds of stimulation in the classroom, and they need practices that interest them so that that they can be fully engaged in a lesson.

As mentioned above, many subjects at school involve the use of particular cognitive strategies and sociocultural influences. Another earlier theorist like Cummins (1984) was Vygotsky (1978), a social development theorist who talks about the fundamental role of social interaction in development. Vygotsky believes that culture affects development. He also believes that cognitive development results from an internalisation of language. He states that cognitive development stems from social interactions and from guided learning within the zone of proximal development as children and adults co-construct knowledge. For Vygotsky (1987), the environment in which children grow up will influence how they think and what they think about. Children learn from their parents, who are in their cultural proximity, as well as from their teachers at school, who are not related to their culture. This can definitely lead to learning difficulties at school if the learners cannot relate adequately to the teacher or the content due to cultural indifferences. Again, this can be related to the example given earlier of how the learner was taught one thing at home (never look at an elder in the eye) and another thing at school (always look at people when talking to them, as this is considered professional in the workplace). According to the learner's cultural values, the learner was not incorrect in thinking this way, as this is what was learnt at home. However, true to Vygotsky (1978), the learner's cultural context was different to the one taught at school.

Vygotsky (1978) believes that the zone of proximal development is an important concept that relates to the difference between what a child can achieve independently and what a child can achieve with guidance and encouragement from a skilled partner.

However, in order to successfully help a learner, the skilled partner, who is normally the teacher, has to also understand the social environment in which the child exists so that the learner and teacher can relate to each other adequately. Another example that came up in the Business Studies National Senior Certificate Grade 12 trial examination, was a question on age. The question required the learners to express their views on diversity in terms of age in the workplace. Most learners wrote that older employees should be given promotions. Now from most cultural perspectives, this would seem like the correct answer — that young people should view older people as having more knowledge than them, and therefore more experience than them. However, the actual answer according to the memo which was issued by the Department of Education (2012) states that "all promotions should not be linked to age but rather to a specific skill" (p. 17). This does not seem incorrect in the context of the business world, where most employers are looking for employees who have a skill to offer, irrespective of their age.

As the teacher or skilled partner, according to Vygotsky (1978), I understood the cultural background of that answer, and assured learners that as much as respect for the knowledge and experience of age is acceptable at home and in their family culture, the business world is different. I could adequately explain to learners the difference between the two required cultures. In other words, as the teacher I understood the social environment in which the child existed so that the learner and I could relate to each other adequately. It is imperative for the learner to fully understand the instructions of the teacher in order to complete a task successfully. Because of the impact that culture and language play on cognitive development, it is vital that teachers create learning environments that are inclusive of all cultures and languages in order for children to fully develop their cognitive functioning.

Cummins (1984) and Vygotsky (1978) place great emphasis on how culture and language affect children's cognitive and physical behaviour. If this holds true for the development of children, it is then absolutely imperative that teachers create learning environments that are inclusive of all cultures and languages. Teachers need to be more open to culturally responsive pedagogy within the classroom.

While most studies show that teachers are open to culturally responsive pedagogy, many struggle with the implementation of it as they tend to find it quite challenging. Garland and Bryan (2017) explain that

> the most successful implementation happens when teachers partner with families and community members to negotiate classrooms' cultures and curricula that actually reflect the communities where students develop and grow. Family and community members can play a major role in teachers' plans to 1) communicate high expectations to all students, 2) help students learn within the context of their cultures, and 3) value students' cultural backgrounds through content integration. (p. 52)

This type of process works within the theoretical framework that will be elaborated later on in this report — the asset-based approach — where community members and families can get involved in creating social change. Again, this is another reflection of the critical paradigmatic shift by which this study is framed, where I, the researcher, am concerned in bringing about change through empowerment and culturally responsive pedagogy. Alexander (2009) adds that a critical pedagogy "challenges teachers to look at the complexity of diversity in a manner that will transform the classroom so that it is ensured that all learners feel included and empowered in the process of learning" (p. 35). When learners feel included, they become empowered. They take on new responsibilities and become positively innovative in the ways they think and behave. Behavioural changes will take place, such as not sleeping in class, but rather participating within lessons. Ainscow, Booth and Dyson (2006) believe that "inclusion is underpinned by values, particularly values of social justice and citizenship that promote equity, participation, respect for diversity, compassion, care and entitlement" (p. 157). When teachers start to show compassion and a sense of caring attitude towards learners' diversity, learners will not find the need to play truant, as they are now included within the lessons of the classroom. Group work should also be employed, where learners start to also value each other and their differences.

In a school such as mine, where we have a substantial number of international learners from surrounding African countries, they should feel valued and respected and not discriminated against because of their differences. Teachers have a great influence on

learners' lives; by accepting other cultures, teachers can model such behaviour for their learners to replicate. Such cultural understanding and acceptance is of critical importance in a country such as South Africa, where an outbreak of xenophobic attacks occurred in 2008, during which international learners had to even stop attending school. Inclusive environments therefore need to be created by teachers and learners alike, where teachers and learners embrace the diversity in each other. It was therefore the aim of this study to highlight inclusivity, and how culturally and linguistically diverse learners could feel included.

2.4 EXPLAINING INCLUSIVE PRACTICES THAT CAN BE USED IN A LEARNING ENVIRONMENT WITH CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE LEARNERS

The signing of the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1997) by 92 governments and 25 international organisations was a significant international event that marked important progress in inclusive education. The signatory countries agreed to pursue inclusive education practices that accommodate and incorporate diversity to a greater extent, including special needs education. I will now provide a global perspective by describing the inclusive education practices of a few of the countries who were signatories to UNESCO's Salamanca Statement.

Australia views its "education systems as moving towards a more inclusive approach to schooling where segregated special schools and mainstream primary and secondary schools offer a range of programmes to support children with disabilities. In some of the larger cities, parents may have a choice of what type of school their child can attend" (Carrington et al., 2015, p. 560).

China, on other hand, has the "the Compulsory Education Law of the People's Republic of China (2006) which requires that regular schools enrol children with disabilities who were considered psychologically, physically, and educationally able to participate in general education. Schools are also required to provide teacher aides to assist with the

learning and rehabilitation of students with disabilities in the regular classroom" (Carrington et al., 2015, p. 560).

In the United Kingdom, "the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 delivers a strengthened right to a mainstream education for children with special educational needs. This clearly signals that where parents want a mainstream education for their child, everything possible should be done to provide it. Equally where parents want a special school place their wishes should be listened to and taken into account" (Local Government Association, 2001).

The 2010 Kenyan Constitution commits the Kenyan government to making sure that "people with any sort of disability can access relevant education and training and that all schools are able to include children with disability. The Constitution of Kenya has provisions for children's right to free and compulsory basic education, including quality services, and to access educational institutions and facilities for all persons, including those with disabilities" (Bii & Taylor, 2013, p. 25).

In Sri Lanka, the majority of "children who have disabilities attend mainstream classrooms in government schools. Small numbers attend Special Education Units attached to government schools and non-governmental special schools. Assessments are done by a medical officer and class teacher when a child enters primary school. This assessment enables the teacher to practise child-centred teaching methods that address each child's particular problems" (Mendis, 2004).

The aforementioned countries have been successful in focusing on the inclusive education of learners with disabilities that need to be included in mainstream schools. The Salamanca Statement is a framework for learners with disabilities; however, because the signatory countries are members of UNESCO, their schools need to focus on all the forms of diversity that learners may represent, be it culture, language, race or religion. But in spite of being members of UNESCO, these countries still show evidence of discrimination. For example, according to the British Youth Council (2016), "despite the UK having strong equal rights laws and a Government Equalities Office responsible for taking action to remove barriers to equality and help build a fairer society, discrimination continues to remain prevalent in everyday life for many living in the

UK" (p. 5). In Australia, "manifestations of discrimination continue in contemporary Australian society in attitudes and stereotypes as well as in overt forms in communities" (New South Wales Department of Education, 2017, p. 5). According to Mckinne and Guzula (2016), there have been reports of schools in Kenya not allowing learners to speak their home language during lunch breaks. It is therefore evident that trying to implement the policy statement on inclusive education proves to be a great challenge.

South Africa, in spite of also being a member of UNESCO, has shown evidence of discrimination within its schools. We may have diverse classrooms, but the lack of congruence between teachers' and learners' cultural and linguistic values still exists. It is for this reason that this study focuses strongly on educational change, inclusive classroom practices and diversity, in the context of the socio-political transformation of South Africa. As we are well aware, South Africa has had a history of discriminative acts, where "language and ethnic groups were forced to exist separately and were supported by political structures" (Weisse, 2005, p. 263). The South African Schools Act of 1996 changed these discriminatory policies by establishing a "national non-racial, non-discriminatory education system" (Alexander, 2009, p. 1). Classrooms in South Africa now have a variety of races, languages, traditions, belief systems and religions. However, South African classrooms are still faced with the challenges of inequality, linked to issues such as language and culture. Alexander (2009) explains that "many schools house learners from a variety of cultural, racial, religious and socio-economic backgrounds, who often speak different home languages" (p. 2) and also come from different cultural backgrounds. As teachers, it is then our responsibility to become innovative in enhancing our learning environments by using practices that make the classroom inclusive.

Kozleski (2011) recommends the implementation of culturally responsive pedagogy. He requires that "teachers transcend their own cultural biases and preferences to establish and develop patterns for learning and communicating that engage student participation and achievement." In the context of my present school, which has predominantly Indian teachers, and therefore classrooms that are largely Indian influenced, these teachers would obviously need to transcend their own cultural beliefs by starting to incorporate other cultures into their classroom appearance and practice. Kozleski (2011) also

recommends that teachers be required "to negotiate new standards and norms that acknowledge the differences, similarities, inequities, and privilege among and between individuals and groups." In other words, teachers need to recognise that learners in their classes come with principles that are different to theirs, and that also need to be respected in the classroom, irrespective of whether one believes in them or not. For example, many learners in my class have cultural beliefs in traditional healers and the ancestors. As a teacher, I need to respect their beliefs by not judging their actions. Asking questions in a negative manner can make learners feel that their cultural beliefs are being belittled in the class by their teachers. The teacher's attitude towards inclusivity is of critical importance, as is how policy plays an integral role in inclusive education.

2.5   TEACHERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS INCLUSIVITY AND POLICY CHANGES

As discussed earlier, Donohue and Bornman (2015) state that "teachers' attitude towards inclusivity may be one of the most important facilitators, since teachers ultimately have the opportunity to implement or stymie educational policy" (p. 43). Teachers who are placed within the classroom are representatives of policy facilitators. We facilitate the CAPS documents in order to teach the syllabus. We facilitate the Schools Code of Conduct in order to maintain the principles of our school. As teachers, our jobs revolve around policies that need to be adhered to. If policy plays such an integral part of our facilitation as a teacher, a policy that should not be ignored but should rather be practised on a daily basis would be the Education White Paper 6 (2001).

As mentioned earlier, three objectives that teachers, school management teams (SMT) and the school community at large need to adhere to are relevant to this study. The first objective is to "acknowledge and respect differences in learners, whether due to age, gender, ethnicity, language, class, disability or HIV status" (Department of Education, 2001, p. 16). This means that by law, the school community needs to acknowledge and respect the diversity in its learners. This has been done successfully within South

African classrooms. As I have stated numerous times above, diversity itself within the classroom is not a problem. The gap becomes evident in the next two objectives of inclusive education and training: " changing attitudes, behaviour, teaching methodologies, curricula and the environment to meet the needs of all learners" (Department of Education, 2001, p. 16), and " empowering learners by developing their individual strengths and enabling them to participate critically in the process of learning" (Department of Education, 2001, p. 16).

Various studies have shown that teachers generally show a positive attitude towards inclusive education. A recent study in Kenya by Odongo (2012) showed that "most general education teachers showed positive attitudes towards inclusion. Some considered it to be a mutual development in education and indicated mutual benefits for their students with and without disabilities" (p. 2017). Teachers' attitudes and perceptions generally indicate an openness to inclusivity.

2.6   CHANGES IN TEACHING METHODOLOGIES, THE CURRICULA AND THE ENVIRONMENT

While teachers generally show a positive attitude towards inclusivity, teaching methodologies, the curricula and the environment still need to be enhanced to facilitate a more inclusive practice. I have explained in a few examples above how learners in my class felt that their cultural beliefs were being disregarded by not being acknowledged within the curriculum. Teachers cannot change the curriculum document; however, they can use a more culturally responsive pedagogy within the classroom. Examples that they use to explain aspects of the syllabus should be presented according to different cultural values and perspectives. The classroom appearance, in terms of posters, charts and calendars, should be a representation of all cultures. The ICT that has been introduced into many classrooms should be used to enhance the diverse cultural values of the learners.

UNESCO (2005) has encouraged countries around the world to improve educational policies towards inclusive education and technological policies towards digital

inclusion. Recent studies have focused on e-inclusive pedagogy, in particular one that was conducted by Beacham and McIntosh (2014) at a university in Scotland in the United Kingdom. Their focus was on student teachers' attitudes and beliefs about using ICT within inclusive education and practices. Their study showed that as much as the pre-service teachers' attitudes towards using ICT within inclusive education were positive, they were also reluctant to use it as they had not had the required training (Beacham & McIntosh, 2014). It becomes evident that training in inclusive education practices is of the utmost importance for teachers to create learning environments that are inclusive.

This important factor was also brought up in a study by Odongo (2012), conducted in Kenya. He also explained that teachers who were open to inclusive education within their classrooms did not receive sufficient training to implement it, and that the necessary resources were also lacking. "Training was a major issue mentioned by the teachers as a requirement for successful implementation of inclusion. The teachers also talked about the need for additional on-going training and expressed their concern for lack of personal professional experience" (Odongo, 2012, p. 218). This seems to be an issue that needs to be dealt with globally and locally. The South African Council for Educators (SACE) should consider training educators in inclusive education, as it is responsible for managing the Continuing Professional Teacher Development (CPTD) system. If policy requires teachers to be inclusive, then teachers most certainly need to be trained in this regard. Pre-service teachers cover modules on Inclusive Education in their degree, but in-service teachers require on-going training for the continuous successful implementation of inclusive education policies.

Policy makers also play an integral role in inclusive education, and curricula need to be revised to take cultural differences into consideration.

2.7   EMPOWERMENT OF LEARNERS

The third objective refers to empowering learners. This should be done by developing their individual strengths (which Maslow's hierarchy can be used to be achieved) and

enabling them to participate in all the processes of learning. This simply means that all learners have an asset that can be strengthened to their advantage. My theoretical approach for this study has focused on an asset-based approach, which is the belief that even in the poorest schools, and even in rural areas, there exist some assets that could be explored, created and made best use of in the communities in question (Chikoko & Khanare, 2009). This approach proposes that all learners have an asset to offer, and that this asset needs to be identified in the learner and then mobilised to empower the learner. Teachers also have assets that can create warm and welcoming environments for all of their learners. The SMT and the school community at large have assets that can benefit all learners culturally and linguistically. The key is to identify such assets. As this is my theoretical framework, a more comprehensive discussion on the asset-based approach will be provided in the following chapter.

2.8   CONCLUSION

The discussion presented above shows that the aim of this research study is to highlight learning environments with inclusive practices that can bridge the gap between learners' and teachers' cultural and linguistic differences.

This chapter focused on the current situation of inclusive learning environments for culturally and linguistically diverse learners, and the need to have inclusive learning environments for culturally and linguistically diverse learners. It then looked at inclusive learning practices used in a learning environment with culturally and linguistically diverse learners, at teachers attitudes towards inclusivity, and at the changes needed in teaching methodologies, the curricula and the environment. Lastly, the chapter focused on the empowerment of learners

The following chapter looks at the asset-based approach, which is the theoretical framework that underpinned this study. This approach falls under the umbrella of positive psychology, which will also be discussed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 3
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1   INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter discussed the current situation of inclusive education for culturally and linguistically diverse learners, and also showed the need to have inclusive learning environments and inclusive learning practices that can be used in learning environments with culturally and linguistically diverse learners. This chapter discusses the theoretical framework that underpinned this study. The asset-based approach falls under the umbrella of positive psychology. Both positive psychology and the asset-based approach form part of the strength-based approach. A strength-based approach can be defined as a "positive psychology perspective that emphasizes the strengths, capabilities and resources of a youth. Those who embrace a strength-based perspective hold the belief that all youth and their families have strengths, resources and the ability to recover from adversity" (Resiliency Initiatives, 2011, p. 1). As a researcher, I have an interest in enhancing the positive developmental pathways of the learners, where the focus is on their positive aspects rather than their deficits. My research was framed by the above theoretical framework. It is also important to mention that the asset-based and strength- based approaches are interchangeable terms used in this study.

3.2   THE UMBRELLA OF POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY

Positive psychology is a term used to cover aspects such as "positive emotions, positive character traits and enabling institutions" (Seligman, Steen, Park & Peterson, 2005, p. 411). Martin Seligman is the founder of positive psychology, and builds upon the earlier work of Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow, who used a humanistic approach to psychology that stresses the good in human behaviour. Positive psychology focuses on the individual's strengths and uses this "to meet even the highest challenges" (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000, p. 5). Positive psychology forms a framework for the asset-based approach, where the key is to focus on the learner's assets, strengths, capacities,

talents, creativity and available resources, and build upon them to enable learners to cope with the challenges that they face. We are moving away from the medical model of thinking, which focuses on the challenge, towards a social model of thinking, which focuses on the asset or strength. It is important to understand that the asset-based approach does not deny that learners experience challenges, but rather suggests that they not only focus on their challenges but also on their strengths to help them cope with those challenges.

3.3   COMPONENTS OF THE ASSET-BASED APPROACH

The asset-based approach focuses on what is available, and what resources learners have that can be used to address the issues they face. In relation to this study, the greatest challenge that learners face is that their culture and language are being marginalized in the classroom by their teachers, and this has caused a negative reaction from them. Their class attendance and their attention during class are being compromised. They often lose interest in what the teacher is teaching as they cannot relate to certain matters. The aim of using this theoretical framework was therefore to highlight potential improvements to the learning environments for culturally and linguistically diverse learners by using the strengths or assets that the learner and the teacher have to offer.

The positive impact of using the assets of the teacher and the learner is that it creates a positive relationship between them, which in turn contributes to the wellness of the school and ultimately the wellness of the community. For teachers to fully embrace this method of approaching or working with students, there has to be a change that starts with the teacher and not with the learner. "It means being part of preparing students to be taught, not just teaching when students are presenting as willing to be taught. Embracing a strength-based approach involves a different way of thinking about students and of interpreting their patterns of coping with life challenges" (Resiliency Initiatives, 2011, p. 3).

3.4   PRINCIPLES OF THE ASSET-BASED APPROACH

The asset-based approach should not be viewed as a process but rather as a culture that should be adopted within the school community, and teachers play a critical role in creating a school culture. Venter (2013) coined the term "asset based teaching" (p. 6) to describe the incorporation of the asset-based approach into teaching. She believes that asset-based teaching is an "intentional support-based and relationship-driven process where the teacher supports learners in their development in focusing on their assets such as skills, talents, gifts and resources" (Venter, 2013, p. 7). Schools that develop an asset-based teaching approach will help learners to identify the assets in themselves and in others. They will also learn to respect the diversity they see in others. In order to adopt such a culture, Rapp and Goscha (2006) believe that teachers need to practise the following principles:

- Teachers need to believe that every student has the potential to perform tasks.
- Teachers need to focus on what a learner is capable of doing, and not on what they cannot do.
- Teachers need to be mindful of the language they use, which can create an accepting or an alienating environment.
- Teachers need to believe that their learners can change and will be successful.
- Teachers need to understand that positive change occurs in the context of authentic relationships with their learners.
- Teachers need to engage in capacity building and view it as a process and a goal.
- Teachers need to value differences and the essential need to co-operate in transformational change through an inclusive and participatory process.

3.5   THE PHASES OF THE ASSET-BASED APPROACH

According to Kretzmann and McKnight (1993), the asset-based approach has three phases: identifying the assets (which would mean to recognise the assets that one holds) , mobilising the assets (which would mean to organise and prepare for these assets to be used), and managing the assets (which would mean to actually use the assets that were

identified). As explained earlier, assets are not only identified in learners, but in teachers, SMTs and the school community at large. Kretzmann and McKnight (1993) believe that through asset mapping, assets be can be found in an individual, in a group of citizens that work together, in the local institutions of the community and in the community's economic structures. We know that learners do not exist in isolation, but rather as part of a bigger community that has a direct or indirect influence on their lives. Teachers, parents, community members, and government policies all play a role in a learner's education. Using an asset-based approach means finding the strengths of each of these influences and mobilising them in the best interests of the child.

For example, I have explained that curriculum documents need to be revised to incorporate the cultural differences of the learners. The economic structures of the community need to be used to finance the building of classrooms that are inclusive, and in accessing more resources to help schools and teachers become more effective in practising inclusivity. Parents also have assets that can be identified, such as being more involved in the school curricula that involve their children. Parents can be more supportive in working with teachers to improve discipline and the enforcement of rules with their children. Teachers have certain assets that can be utilised, such as having a positive attitude to the diversity in their classrooms, and becoming culturally responsive in their pedagogy to include diverse learners instead of alienating certain behaviours and attitudes. Lastly, the learners themselves also have assets that need to be identified. One way of using a learner's asset is to let him or her do mini translations in the classroom as a teacher teaches. This also gives them a sense of responsibility in terms of the teacher beginning to trust them. These assets that I have identified above are only a few examples of what each role player has to offer as an asset.

Through the use of participatory action research (PAR), this study sought to find the assets of learners, teachers, SMTs and community members that could help in creating a culturally and linguistically inclusive learning environment for diverse learners. The second phase is to mobilise these assets, which means that after identifying these assets we need to build partnerships with each of the above structures. For example, teachers need to build a partnership with their learners, teachers also need to build partnerships with parents, parents need to form partnerships with their children, and so on. During

this phase individuals are able to mobilise their assets. The last phase involves managing assets — reviewing and evaluating the assets to determine what new assets can be born from those that have already been identified and mobilised. On successful implementation of such an approach, the study tended to assume that learners would become more responsible and that a positive change in behaviour patterns would occur that would benefit not only the learner but the school community at large.

3.6   REASON FOR CHOOSING AN ASSET-BASED APPROACH

As has been established, every individual has an asset. Whether learners come from informal settlements with a low socio-economic status, from other countries, from child-headed homes, from abusive family environments, or from a nuclear family, they all have assets that can be identified and mobilised. These examples of where learners possibly come from are representative of the learners that attend the chosen school of research. These learners are mainly looking to be accepted; they are looking for a place of belonging, a feeling of importance and of being wanted, and an environment that accepts their backgrounds where they feel safe.

I believe that as teachers we have the responsibility to create an inclusive environment in schools, where, at the very least, learners can feel accepted, safe and included. School should be a place where learners feel included, irrespective of their language and cultural differences, and it should be an environment that encourages learners to use their assets to change their current situation, irrespective of their faults. Instead of teachers alienating learners because of their cultural and language differences, teachers should find strengths in this diversity that can enhance the learning environment of every learner. It is in light of this that I, as the researcher, have chosen the asset-based approach as the theoretical framework for this study, by means of which I identified assets through drawings and discussions in order to gain insights that would contribute to a more inclusive learning environment for culturally and linguistically diverse learners.

3.7   CONCLUSION

This chapter has discussed the asset-based approach as a theoretical framework that focuses on resources that are available and can be utilised in order to address issues. In addition to the asset-based approach, positive psychology was also discussed, the asset-based approach falls under the umbrella of positive psychology. Positive psychology similarly focuses on the individual's strengths, and uses them to overcome even the greatest challenges.

The following chapter discusses the research design and methodology of the study, starting with the critical paradigm of the study, and moving on to discuss participatory action research in general and visual participatory action research in particular, focusing specifically on drawings. The research methodology and process of the study are outlined, focusing in particular on the researcher's use of focus groups, and the qualitative nature of the study. Ethical considerations and trustworthiness are also discussed, as well as the limitations of the study.

CHAPTER 4
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1   INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter discussed the asset-based approach as the theoretical framework that underpins this study. Drawing from this theoretical framework, this chapter discusses the critical paradigm on which this study is based, and which aims to bring about change. Learners need to use their assets to bring about change in their current situations. This is precisely what the critical theory is about. It is about the process of emancipation to bring about change.

Critical theory is historically situated in the Frankfurt School, where Horkheimer, Adorno and Marcuse were the first three theorists to employ research techniques that derived from the Marxist tradition. Horkheimer (1982) defines the purpose of critical theory as "seek[ing] human emancipation to liberate human beings from the circumstances that enslave them" (p. 244). This means that critical theory seeks to challenge the status quo by creating a democratic society. In relation to this study, the critical theory complements the political change that South Africa is undergoing. Drawing from the history of South Africa and the transformational changes needed after apartheid, working within a critical theory paradigm epitomised great value for this study, which is the reason it was chosen.

According to Asghar (2013), critical theory is "particularly concerned with the issue of power relations within the society and interaction of race, class, gender, education, economy, religion and other social institutions that contribute to a social system" (p. 3123). Linking this to my present study, I will be dealing with power relations between teachers and learners, and teachers implementing changes to create more inclusive learning environments to give learners a voice.

Horkheimer (1982) suggests three criteria that must be met for an adequate critical paradigm to be used:

1. "*It must be explanatory about what is wrong with current social reality*" (Horkheimer, 1982, p. 300). In relation to this study, I have explored the current situation of inclusive learning environments in my literature review, which identifies many gaps in policy implementation on the part of teachers.

2. "*It must identify the action to change it*" (Horkheimer, 1982, p. 300). In relation to this study, I have used the asset-based approach to identify changes that could create more inclusive learning environments. This was done through participatory action research, which involved giving the learners a voice, as well as the teachers and the school community at large.

3. "*It must provide both clear norms for criticism and transformation*" (Horkheimer, 1982, p. 300). This study is open to building upon criticism, as long as such criticism creates a positive transformation to more inclusive learning environments.

In comparison with other paradigms, the critical paradigm does not just try to understand and describe social actions; instead, it tries to positively change the challenges that it has identified. Asghar (2013) suggests that "non-critical paradigms only present what is observable in a situation, whereas the critical paradigm goes beyond mere recording observations, and strives to reform for a better world" (p. 3121.). As the researcher, that became the intention of my study — to make constructive changes to the challenges that were identified.

Like every paradigm, the critical paradigm consists of the following components: ontology, epistemology and methodology.

4.2   QUALITATIVE STUDY

This study adopted a qualitative research approach, which Creswell (2014) explains as "exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. The process of research involves emerging questions and procedures, data typically collected in the participant's setting, data analysis inductively building from particulars to general themes, and the researcher making interpretations of the meaning of the data" (p. 32). In keeping with the definition of a qualitative approach,

this study explored learners' and teachers' experiences at school, which were interpreted and used to bring about change. The study was carried out at my school, which was "the site where participants experience the issue or problem under study" (Creswell, 2014, p. 234). I used various forms of data, such as drawings with interpretations and focus groups, instead of just one form of data, as is often done in a quantitative study. Through the entire qualitative research process of this study, the focus was on learning the meaning that the participants hold about the problem or issue, and not my meaning of it.

4.3   ONTOLOGY, EPISTEMOLOGY AND METHODOLOGY

The ontology of a critical paradigm suggests that reality is shaped by "ethnic, cultural, social and political values" (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 110) that are facilitated by power relations, and is constructed within a historical context. In relation to this study, the reality of present-day South Africa has been shaped by past laws and socio-political values based on segregation. At present South Africa is trying to change those values by practising non-discrimination through radical change. Critical theory believes that every individual has the power to change; they are by no means stuck within the state that they are currently in, especially individuals who feel marginalised. In relation to this study, the ontology of the critical paradigm assumes that culturally and linguistically diverse learners can emancipate themselves and bring about change. Learners can use their assets and strengths to bring about this change. Critical theory also believes that reality is deeply shaped by power, which is "constructed through language" (Scotland, 2012, p. 13). If language has the power to change a situation, then it is of immense importance that everyone, including the oppressed, has a voice to speak in their desired language and be heard. As cited earlier by Scotland (2012), a "critical paradigm takes the view that language contains power relations so it is used to empower or weaken" (p. 13). In relation to this study, if language has power then learners should be able to use their desired language and still be heard. Learners should be given a voice that creates a more inclusive learning environment for them in the classroom.

The epistemology of this paradigm suggests that knowledge is grounded in historical context. "It is socially constructed and influenced by power relations from within society" (Scotland, 2012, p. 13). To be socially constructed means that people are

created and developed by society. We all have perceptions of individuals and groups, and those perceptions are constructed through cultural or social practice. Scotland (2012) believes that "we are born into a culture" (p. 13). However, in every culture there is a common asset or strength that can be identified, which can bring about unity. In relation to my study, the diversity of the learners within the chosen school of research means that they have been born into different cultures. Historically, South Africa has used knowledge to teach people that the white minority was superior to other race groups and cultures. Because knowledge is transformative, today South Africa can use knowledge to enlighten people regarding equality for all races and cultures. Critical theorists believe that having knowledge means being able to emancipate oneself, by questioning the way things are done. Relating this to my current study means that teachers and learners alike need to question school curricula and policies that are not inclusive of all cultures and languages by using past and present knowledge. Considering that knowledge is socially constructed, learners and teachers can also identify common assets and strengths in their knowledge of diverse cultures, and utilise these to create inclusive environments.

Crotty (1998) suggests that "critical methodology is directed at interrogating values and assumptions, exposing hegemony and injustice, challenging conventional social structures and engaging in social action." As this study sought to question and reveal the current situation of inclusive learning environments for culturally and linguistically diverse learners, and to then bring about change for those who are disempowered by engaging in social action, a participatory action research methodology was used. As with critical theory, this type of methodology involves making learners and teachers critically aware of their situation. This awareness is then followed by change, and is then repeated in the form of reflection, which is conducted through discussions and drawings.

The methodology of a critical paradigm also assumes that "researcher do not carry out transformation *for* their participants but rather *with* their participants" (Freire, 1970, p. 49, my emphasis). Being the researcher of this study does not mean that I can exclude myself from being a teacher at the chosen school of research. Any changes that are brought about due to this study mean a change in my classroom and a change in my

attitude towards inclusivity. When doing this research, it was imperative not to make the other participating teachers feel that I am in any way better than them. Instead, it was made clear from the start of the study to the teachers who were participants that my research was not done *for* them but rather *with* them. It was because of their discussions and drawings that I was be able to "collect data, analyse information and benefit from the research" (Creswell, 2009, p. 9).

4.4   PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH

Participatory action research (PAR) as its name suggests "involves participation and action" (Savin-Baden & Wimpenny, 2007, p. 332). The idea of PAR began in the 1940's with the work of Kurt Lewin, who founded action research. Carr and Kemmis (1986) recognised action research but advocated for a more critical and emancipatory form of it. A new form of action research developed, which formed a link "between critical emancipatory action research and participatory action research" (Savin-Baden & Wimpenny, 2007, p. 332).

Researchers who use PAR seek to discover empowering benefits that result in social transformation. In this study I, as the researcher and as a teacher, was interested in bringing about social transformation within learning environments to create inclusivity for learners from diverse cultures and languages. However, PAR "challenges the notion that legitimate knowledge lies only with the privileged experts and their dominant knowledge" (Savin-Baden & Wimpenny, 2007, p. 333). In using this research design, I believed that an immense amount of knowledge could come from the learners who are alienated by their difference. Knowledge does not always come from those who are in power; knowledge can also come from those who have been oppressed, as they are the people who have been experiencing the challenges that need to be changed. Teachers directly influence a learner's academic performance, as they are the communicative channels to learners on a daily basis. However, teachers also deserve a voice, as often they are simply indirect facilitators of policies. The challenges that teachers experience in trying to create inclusive learning environments need to be heard, but due to policy and other obstacles this has been impossible.

I therefore asked the learners who participated in this study to express themselves using drawings, a method of PAR. Teachers and SMTs were involved in discussions during focus groups, where their challenges were discussed and ideas for change were noted. As stated by Savin-Baden and Wimpenny (2007, p. 334), "participants are encouraged to consider themselves as co-researchers, driving the study forwards as a group of individuals with shared objectives and decision-making powers".

Any project that uses PAR seeks to make a difference in a specific way for the participants; if it does not do this, it has failed in its most essential objective. According to Savin-Baden and Wimpenny (2007), using PAR as a research tool allows for the following, which this study sought to include:

- Empowerment offered to silent groups (learners and teachers)
- Collective support
- Facilitating change in a practical sense
- Development of a sense of agency and voice.

4.5   VISUAL PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH

4.5.1   Drawings

"For a number of decades from as early as 1935, psychologists and researchers have engaged children and adults in activities using varied forms of draw-and-write or draw-and-talk techniques" (Theron, Mitchell, Smith & Stuart, 2011, p. 19). This allows for a rich exploration of their reflections, perceptions, and views on multiple topics. An example of a drawing test is the Goodenough (1926) Draw-a-Person test. With this projection test, a child is asked to draw a man, a woman, and themselves. The administrator uses the Draw-a-Person: QSS (quantitative scoring system) to evaluate the child's cognitive abilities.

Weber (2008) explained that "images can be used to capture the ineffable. Some things just need to be shown, not merely stated. Artistic images can help us access those elusive hard-to-put-into-words aspects of knowledge that might otherwise remain

hidden or ignored" (p. 44). Weber's reasoning forms the basis of why I chose to use drawings as a method of data generation. As the researcher, I wanted to understand the learner's perspective on a deeper level — a level that learners are not usually able to explain in written words. I am an English-speaking teacher; I do not want learners to be limited in their explanations of the way they feel because they possibly cannot write in English adequately. Therefore, I feel that through drawings learners are often able to project a better understanding of their experiences and perceptions.

Using drawings as a research method often entails participants drawing and talking, or drawing and writing about the meaning embedded in their drawings (Mair & Kierans, 2007). In relation to this study, learners were asked to draw and talk about their drawings to me the researcher, who wanted to encourage meaning-making that would give the learners a voice. Burke and Prosser (2008) explain that "children have the ability to capture feelings and emotions through drawings and paintings while lacking an equally expressive written language" (p. 414). I intended to capture learners' feelings by asking them to draw two pictures, which were then translated by them as well. Their responses were recorded. The first drawing that learners were required to draw was of their present classrooms. They could illustrate the teacher's practices, in terms of language and culture, that they liked and did not like. The second picture that learners were asked to draw was of their ideal classroom, where every learner feels included irrespective of their language or culture. Learners were then asked to explain what they had drawn in both the pictures, and these explanations were used to generate data, which was then analysed. When learners were invited to participate and to draw, I assured them that the "focus [was] on the content of their drawing, and not on the quality of it as a drawing" (Theron, Mitchell, Smith & Stuart, 2011, p. 23). Learners were also supplied with adequate stationery and plain white paper, and were given a very relaxed and comfortable environment in which to do their drawings and give feedback. The learners that were chosen to participate were aged 14–17 years old and were in grades 10–12. They were male and female, and their gender was not of great concern, as they were chosen for their cultural and linguistic diversity.

4.5.2   Focus groups in action research

Williams and Katz (2001) describe focus groups as a small gathering of individuals who have a common interest or characteristic, assembled by a moderator, who uses the group and its interactions as a way to gain information about a particular issue. I used focus groups with teachers and SMT members from my current school to discuss the issue of inclusive education for culturally and linguistically diverse learners. Berg (1995) believes that focus groups help to capture those experiences that cannot be "meaningfully expressed by numbers" (p. 3). Because focus groups generally involve small numbers of people, participants usually feel free to give their input on matters. Krueger and Casey (2000) suggest that focus groups effectively "tap into the multiple realities of people's experiences and often provide researchers with tiny glimpses of their world" (p. 50). In relation to my study, it was of great value to tap into my colleagues' worlds or classrooms to hear about their experiences and perceptions of inclusive education and the cultural and linguistic diversity within their classrooms, including their challenges and the opportunities and solutions that they suggested.

One of the main advantages of using a focus group to gather knowledge and data is its "open-response format and synergistic, snowballing effect of group discussion that often results in rich ideas that would be impossible through individual interviews or more quantitative methods" (Stewart, Shamdasani, & Rook, 2007, p. 127). This was a strong reason for choosing the focus group as a research tool, in conjunction with the drawings, as the results are also usually practical. Teachers engaged in discussions that were facilitated by me, the researcher, and were also recorded and captured as data. The input received from the focus group was extremely useful when trying to make decisions about the changes that needed to be implemented after this research study. Teachers and SMTs who play an integral part in learners' lives can also contribute to the practices that are required to create more inclusive learning environments. Because teachers and SMTs gave feedback in a group, they could build upon each other's ideas and also "share their best practices with each other to help improve their success" (Piercy, Franz, Donaldson, & Richard, 2011, p. 821). This was of great value to this study in terms of proposing and introducing changes. A teacher to represent each subject

in Further Education and Training (FET) was chosen. They were either male or female, and their LOLT in the classroom was English.

4.6   SAMPLING

The general idea behind qualitative research is to "purposefully select participants or sites (or documents or visual material) that will best help the researcher understand the problem and the research question" (Creswell, 2014, p. 239). Purposive sampling was used to select the participants for this study, as they provided information-rich cases that were related to this study. One learner was chosen to represent each of the diverse languages and cultures at the school. Teachers were chosen to represent the various subjects that are offered at my school, and this group also included SMTs, as they also teach at Grade 12 level.

4.7   ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

I recorded the discussions with the learners and the teachers as I did not want to break the flow of conversation by having to write information down while they spoke. Considering that this study was conducted *with* the participants, I also did not want teachers to feel that I was doing this *for* them. After the discussions, I replayed the recorded audio and thereafter transcribed the data. In order to analyse the data, I firstly read through the transcriptions and then started coding it into categories. After a very intense coding process I was able to reach an interpretation of the data, and, most importantly, suggest what changes could be made to make learning environments more inclusive for culturally and linguistically diverse learners. Thematic analysis was used to identify the patterns and themes within the data.

4.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Permission to conduct this study was sought from the Ethics Committee at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, from the Department of Education, and from the school at which the study was carried out (a government/public school). A letter of consent from my principal was also required, as it was important that this study would not interrupt school lessons. Letters of consent were given to the two sets of participants: the teachers who were willing to participate in this study, and the learners who were willing to participate (as well as their parents, as the majority of the learners were still under the age of 18 years old). I ensured that the study would not be harmful to anyone directly or indirectly involved, and I made all participants aware that they could withdraw from the study at any point and were not liable for anything in this study. I assured the participants of confidentiality and anonymity at all times, and that their names would be changed in the study.

4.9 TRUSTWORTHINESS

Instead of focusing on reliability and validity in a qualitative study, researchers substitute data trustworthiness. Trustworthiness can be seen as evidence that the results after the study are complete is true and strong. Trustworthiness has the following components: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

4.9.1 Credibility

Establishing credibility requires the researcher to try to establish whether the results of the research are believable. Triangulation and member checks are common methods used to address issues of credibility. DeVault (2017) explains that "triangulation is accomplished by asking the same research questions of different study participants and by collecting data from different sources and by using different methods to answer those research questions." Triangulation was employed in this study by generating data from different participants (teachers, SMTs and learners). The methods used to generate the

data were also different (drawings and focus groups), and each required a different form of data analysis. Member checks were also employed. DeVault (2017) explains that "member checks occur when the researcher asks participants to review both the data collected by the interviewer and the researcher's interpretation of that interview data." Considering trust is extremely important between the participants and the researcher, all participants were given the opportunity to review the data to ensure that they had been interpreted appropriately within the study.

4.9.2 Transferability

Transferability refers to the generalisation of this study to other studies. DeVault (2017, p. 36) recommends that "purposive sampling can be used to address the issue of transferability." When using purposive sampling, specific information is required from the participants. The characteristics of the sample of participants need to be appropriately to the research questions being asked. This study used purposive sampling to select learner participants who represented the various cultures and languages of the population of my school. The teachers and SMTs that were chosen represented each subject that was offered at the school. This worked well to address my research questions, which focus on creating inclusive learning environments for culturally and linguistically diverse learners.

4.9.3 Dependability

Dependability refers to the stability of the data generated by the study over time and under various conditions. Dependability is an assessment of the quality of the data collection, the data analysis, and the theory generation. To ensure dependability triangulation can also be used, where the weak points of one approach to the data collection are compensated for by the use of another data collection method. As explained above, there were two groups of participants and two data collection methods, which the researcher assumes have compensated to some extent for each other's weak points.

4.9.4 Confirmability

Confirmability has to do with the level of confidence in the research findings, whether it is based on the participants' words or on the researcher's bias. Confirmability was ensured in this study, as an audit trail was established where every step in the process of data collection, coding, categorisation, theme generation, analysis, and interpretation

was documented, to enable readers to trace the process and logic of the study, and also determine whether the study can be extended for further enquiry.

4.10   LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The first limitation of the study involves the asset-based approach, which falls under the umbrella of positive psychology, which requires inner-directedness and self-evaluation in order to discover goals. However, many learners come from collectivist cultures, whose beliefs and social expectations would determine such self-oriented actions to be selfish, and which require people to think about what's best in terms of the common good. Because of this, learners might not want to set themselves apart from friends who choose not to participate, in order to make changes in their individual lives.

The second limitation of the study relates to the critical paradigm. The value of using a critical paradigm is the agreement that change needs to happen. However, many people resist change. They are reluctant to change and choose to remain in their current situation.

The third limitation of the study involves the use of PAR, which cannot always ensure that every opinion is considered and is heard. PAR was chosen to give everyone a voice. However, certain participants can overpower others, so it is important, especially during the focus group discussions, that even the smallest voice should be heard and taken into consideration.

The final limitations relate to the qualitative approach adopted by the study. Qualitative methods are time-consuming and sometimes there is a limit to what can be completed within the allotted time frame. As a result, analysis can sometimes not be extended as far as the researcher would like. There is also no mechanism for verifying results in qualitative research, which is quite subjective in nature and therefore gives the participants a great deal of influence over the results. The size of this study, as with most qualitative studies, is small and the results therefore cannot necessarily be generalised   to   a   larger   population.

4.11 CONCLUSION

This chapter has presented the research design and methodology of the study, and has discussed the critical paradigm and the use of PAR, particularly the drawings and focus groups. It has also discussed the qualitative approach used to explore the learners' and teachers' experiences at the selected school. Trustworthiness, ethical considerations and the limitations of the study were also discussed in this chapter. The following chapter presents an analysis of the data, and a discussion of the findings.

CHAPTER 5
DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1   INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter discussed the qualitative nature of the study and the critical paradigm underpinning it. It also discussed the use of PAR, and the degree of trustworthiness, ethical issues and limitations of the study. This chapter presents the data analysis and discussion of the findings. The data was generated through drawings, focus group discussions and interviews. The researcher then categorise the data into themes. Verbatim quotes are used where necessary, in conjunction with references to the existing literature and the theoretical framework to infuse the discussion of the findings.

5.2   DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

There were three broad themes that emerged from the data analysis:

1. Theme One: *The current situation of inclusive learning environments for culturally and linguistically diverse learners*

2. Theme Two: *The need for an inclusive learning environment for culturally and linguistically diverse learners*

3. Theme Three: *Inclusive practices that can be used in a learning environment with culturally and linguistically diverse learners*.

Table 5.1 Teachers' and learners' responses to an inclusive environment for culturally and linguistically diverse learners

THEME	SUB-THEME
Theme One: *The current situation of inclusive learning environments for culturally and linguistically diverse learners*	Learners' experiences of a culturally and linguistically diverse classroom: • Language barriers in the classroom • Parental difficulties • Cultural differences Teachers' experiences of culturally and linguistically diverse learners: • Socio-economic issues that lead to the negative attitude of learners • Language barriers in the classroom
Theme Two: *The need for an inclusive learning environment for culturally and linguistically diverse learners*	Teachers' perception of the need for an inclusive environment: • Societal norms to fit into Learners' perception of the need for an inclusive environment: • Full participation with a sense of belonging
Theme Three: *Inclusive practices that can be used in a learning environment with culturally and linguistically diverse learners*	• Information and communications technology • Posters • Learners teaching learners

5.3 THEME ONE: THE CURRENT SITUATION OF INCLUSIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS FOR CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE LEARNERS

In this theme, the researcher used the students' first drawing to explain their current experiences of their learning environment in terms of the cultural and linguistic differences between learners and teachers. During the discussion of the drawings, the students were firstly asked about their home language and subjects that they do at

school. All participating students spoke a home language that was not English. English is their FAL. The following home languages were identified amongst the students:

- Learner A: Xhosa
- Learner B: Swahili
- Learner C : French
- Learner D: isiZulu
- Learner E: Swahili

Four sub-themes were identified in relation to Theme One: *language barriers in the classroom*, *parental difficulties*, *cultural differences*, and *socio-economic issues that lead to the negative attitudes of learners*. These sub-themes are discussed below.

5.3.1 Language barriers in the classroom (learners' responses)

All the participating students explained that in their first drawing there was a major barrier between the language their teachers taught in and the language that they understood and spoke. They explained that most of their classrooms represented their subjects in one language only. Their challenges are expressed below:

Learner A – Picture 1

> *... this picture represents the classroom as it is right now. Just notes on the board and charts and stuff. All in English, everything is in English... Especially in Life Science, very confusing and big words. Would be easier in my home language...*

Learner B – Picture 1

> *... the first drawing is in English. It is showing us the poster in English and board also in English... I am having difficulties. If the school offered Swahili as a First Additional Language it would help me a lot...*

Learner C – Picture 1

... in my first picture I have a teacher who's teaching in English and Zulu. What I have here is a language I don't get that much compared to home language. Because at home we don't speak any English or Zulu... There are English words that I have never heard before. When the teacher is teaching, I hear it for the first time. Very difficult to ask about a word because I feel embarrassed. Those that know the words will ask how you don't know this word.

Learner D – Picture 1

... my picture has posters and table with all big words in English that I don't understand in my English class. Shakespeare books like Hamlet very difficult because I don't understand these words. Even in the classroom, the posters are all English in big words. I watched the show but it did not help me because they were speaking the tough English. I saw what was happening but I just couldn't hear. From the actions I could pick up what was happening...

Learner E – Picture 1

... this is the isiZulu class. The teacher in the front telling the class to keep quiet in Zulu. Sometimes I feel left out because most of the learners speak isiZulu. Most if the things they say, I don't understand. If teachers spoke in my language, it would make life easy, and study also easy because I will understand what I'm learning...

From the participants' responses, we can see that learning only in a language other than their home language poses challenges for learners in the classroom. Learners feel marginalised, as they are left out of participating in class discussions and activities. This can lead to a loss of interest in that particular subject, and these learners becoming a distraction and causing major disruptions while the teacher is teaching. Learners may also not be motivated to make progress, causing low self-esteem. Bandura (1997) insists that if learners believe that they can do well in an educational setting, they will feel confident, they will tend to try harder at their work, they will be more persistent, and they will be likely to perform better. However, learners in a classroom with diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds do not feel included in the lesson and therefore have

a low sense of self-efficacy or none at all. They often feel ignored by their teachers, as teachers tend to communicate with learners of the same language more frequently. This is therefore definitely not an environment that promotes inclusivity for all.

Krashen (1989) explains that "using children's background language as a medium of instruction is important because firstly, it supplies background knowledge that makes English more comprehensible, secondly, it enhances the development of literacy since knowledge is transferred from the home language to the second language, and thirdly, it has cognitive and practical advantages, and promotes a healthy sense of cultural identity" (p. 154). In this study, the students mentioned that no background language was used, and hence English became incomprehensible. They could also not develop a literacy which would be transferred from their home language to their second language. There were also no practical advantages, as the learners stated that they could not participate in the discussions due to not understanding the language these discussions were being conducted in. As a result, they did not feel a healthy sense of cultural identity.

In addition to the learners' responses above, the researcher also conducted focus group sessions with teachers. It became evident that the teachers were in agreement that the learners were experiencing difficulties in their subjects due to language barriers.

Teacher B, who is a Life Sciences teacher, stated:

> ...Life Science is a language of its own. Learners need to understand scientific terminology and definitions. Zulu learners find it extremely difficult to understand.

Similarly, Teacher A, who is also a Life Sciences teacher, stated:

> ...For one language barrier is big. I teach Life Science and to get the kids to understand body organs. They understand in in their language but if you mention it in English they get confused...

Teacher C explained her challenge, where learners would rather not attend the class at all, because of the language barriers.

... a child in our school and in my class doesn't speak a word of isiZulu. He bunks the isiZulu class, he doesn't write the exams because he doesn't speak a word of isiZulu. He speaks French and English. He goes to all the other classes but fails isiZulu. When I questioned him, he said, 'Mam, I don't understand isiZulu'...

It became evident that the teachers were aware that the learners were experiencing challenges in their classes because of the language barrier. This links directly to Cummins' (1984) discussion of a context-reduced task, which is one such as "listening to a lecturer or reading dense text, where there are no other sources of help other than the language itself" (Cummins, 1984, p. 150). As mentioned earlier, learners have to have an extensive understanding of the language in which they are being taught to gain the full knowledge of what is being taught. In relation to this study, both teachers and learners highlighted that learners do not understand what is being taught because of the language barriers, and that reading through challenging English textbooks is of great difficulty; thus, it can be concluded they are not gaining a full understanding of their subject matter, which could lead to major complications for their assessment and progress.

However, Owen-Smith (2012) explains that "if both the Home Language and English as a second language can be used in a synergistic combination throughout schooling, the Home Language can continue to strengthen as a base for the development of English, while both languages support each other in the cognitive processing of subject concepts" (p. 3). It is therefore evident that to avoid the detrimental effects of using only English as the LOLT, home languages should be used in combination with English for learners to attain the full comprehension needed for all subjects.

Owen-Smith (2012) further explains that "where the main Language of Learning and Teaching is a second language, using and moving between languages needs to be part of active learning. Teachers need to manage and support this learner activity. They do not need to be multilingual to play this role but they do need a systematic methodology to do it effectively" (p. 4). This means that teachers need to integrate the learners' home languages into their teaching for learners to fully grasp the lessons. In accordance with

Owen-Smith (2012), Benson (2004) also explains that "mother tongue-based bilingual programs use the learner's first language, known as the L1, to teach beginning reading and writing skills along with academic content. The second or foreign language, known as the L2, should be taught systematically so that learners can gradually transfer skills from the familiar language to the unfamiliar one" (pg. 2). These systematic practices can be seen later on in this study, where teachers and learners have recommended strategies to make the environment more inclusive in terms of the diverse languages and cultures present in the classroom.

5.3.2 Parental difficulties

Parents play a vital role in the education of their children. According to Vygotsky (1978), children learn from their parents, who are in their cultural proximity, as well as from their teachers at school, who are not necessarily related to their culture. However, it has become evident in this study that parents were experiencing difficulties in helping their children to improve their academic abilities after school hours. This again was due to language barriers, where their parents do not speak or understand the language spoken at school at all.

Learner C stated:

> *... because at home we don't speak any English or Zulu. It's very difficult because no-one can help at home. Mum doesn't know what is going on. Dad also doesn't know what is going on. They speak Swahili and French, can't communicate with neighbours, not that close because of the language...*

It became evident in this study that parents also feel marginalised within their home environment because of the language barriers. Being a part of a community gives one a sense of belonging; however, in this case parents are alienated from their communities due to language barriers and cultural differences. This sense of alienation has extended into their relationship with their children, as doing homework together is now a foreign activity, and this is due to the LOLT of the school being different from their home

language. This excludes parents from their children's academic lives completely, which negatively affects the monitoring role that parents should be playing in the progress of their children at school. According to Durissic and Bunijevac (2017), "parental involvement can encourage children's and adolescents' achievement in many ways. One way that parents can contribute positively to their children's education is to assist them with their academic work at home. Parents who read to their children, assist them with their homework, and provide tutoring using resources provided by teachers tend to do better in school than children whose parents do not assist them" (p. 144).

It is of major concern in this study that parental involvement is non-existent for numerous learners, as the teachers mentioned this a number of times. Parents seldom meet with their child's teacher with regard to their progress and behaviour, as language, amongst other factors, is a challenge to communication. However, there are negative effects to no parental support for the child at school, which often include a high rate of absenteeism and absconding from class. This type of behaviour is already evident, as Teacher C stated again below.

> *... a lot of bunking is taking place. Absenteeism is quite high. The noise outside the classroom is very high as music is being played from boom boxes...*

This type of behaviour leads to these students failing examinations at school and repeating the grade for another year. Amorsen (2015) elaborates on the importance of engaging linguistically diverse families in the classroom programme. She believes that "fostering strong parent-teacher partnerships, parent communication and involvement in classroom activity can go a long way toward sharing and valuing children's home language" (Amorsen, 2015, p. 22). This means that parents need to become more involved in their children's school programme, by finding alternative ways of communicating, instead of choosing not to be involved at all. Graham-Clay (2005) expands on this by explaining that "in these changing times, teachers must continue to develop and expand their skills in order to maximize effective communication with parents" (p. 117). Amorsen (2015) suggests the following, which can be practised to help teachers communicate better with parents, and also to include parents in their child's academic life:

- Using translators or other parents/staff in the school who may be bilingual.
- Using web resources for translation.
- Reading and sharing dual-language books.
- Sending classroom routines or timetables home to be translated into a child's home language. In this way, the parents are aware of the classroom routine and timetable.
- Parents helping teachers to 'label' room resources in both languages, which would also make the classroom more inclusive of all languages.
- Teachers and parents together making a growing vocabulary box.
- Making use of computer programs and software that displays content in dual languages.

Parent involvement in the school programme can drastically change a child's behaviour and attitude towards school. Parents and teachers need to communicate frequently, so that parents can monitor their children's behaviour and progress academically. "Children whose parents are actively involved in their schooling benefit better than children whose parents are passively involved. Specifically, if parents attend teacher conferences, accept phone calls from the school, and read and sign messages from school, their children will benefit academically more than children whose parents do none of the above" (Durissic & Bunijevac, 2017, p. 144).

In addition to communication, teachers and parents need to also discover diverse ways for parents to be able to help their children academically outside of school hours in spite of the language differences. It should therefore be mandatory for teachers to have positive relationships with parents. Parents can also be used as an asset in this process by offering parental support and involvement that contributes to the wellbeing and progress of their child's life. Hornby (2011) recommends that the partnership model be used between parents and teachers. The purpose of this model is to create and build a partnership between the parent and the teacher, to which each party brings their strengths to provide the best education for the child. This has to be a long-term commitment from both the teacher and the parent.

5.3.3 Cultural differences

Guerra and Nelson (2011) state that "cultural values acquired in childhood endure into adulthood and influence basic functions, including communication, thinking processes, relational styles, and even conflict resolution" (p. 65). Culture can be seen as central to learning. According to Idang (2015), culture has "peculiar traits and goes on to include the people's language, dressing, music, work, arts, religion, dancing and so on. It also goes on to include people's social norms, taboos and values" (p. 98). This means that culture influences our views and value systems and also gives meaning to our lives. All cultures need to be respected and represented, irrespective of how different they are. However, diverse cultures can cause segregation, as different cultures have different "peculiar traits" (Idang, 2015, p. 98). To avoid this type of segregation, teachers need to embrace all cultures in their classrooms and lessons. The school at which this study was carried out caters for a wide variety of learners from diverse cultural backgrounds. There are international learners who come from surrounding African states and local learners who all practise different cultures. However, it was highlighted by the learners that their classrooms represent the teachers' cultures predominantly, and these are cultures that they cannot relate to.

Learner D explained that the

> *... majority of the teachers are Indian teachers, and they put up posters of their culture around the classroom. Sometimes I feel uncomfortable because I don't find it in my comfort zone. Like is it something we supposed to learn? I prefer all cultures in the classroom...*

It became evident that learners also want their cultures to be represented in the classroom. When all cultures are represented in the classroom, learners feel a sense of belonging, which promotes inclusivity. Teachers need to develop strategies to embrace all cultures in the classroom. This relates to Gay's (2010) concept of culturally responsive pedagogy, which he believes "enhances the learning experiences of culturally and linguistically diverse students by focusing on their cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference and performance styles" (p. 170). Teachers need to embrace this style of teaching in the classroom, which Ladson-Billings (1995)

describes as "a student-centered approach that includes cultural references and recognizes the importance of students' cultural backgrounds and experiences in all aspects of learning" (p. 160). This means that teachers need to identify and nurture learners' cultural strengths. This again can be viewed through the lens of the asset-based theoretical framework, which focuses on identifying learners' assets or strengths and then mobilising them to create a more inclusive environment. Feeling culturally included will give learners a sense of relevance and security in the classroom, and also encourage their achievement.

The strong association between culture and learning indicates that classrooms should be a representation of diverse cultures. Drawing from Goduka (1998), "language is inextricably linked to culture" (p. 34). If teachers remain disconnected from their learners' languages, which are inseparable from their learners' cultures, then teachers will continue to unconsciously isolate themselves from their learners, causing the learners to feel a sense of alienation due to their difference. In a recent study by Samuels (2018), which explores teachers' perspectives on culturally responsive pedagogy, she states that "participants spoke extensively about how cultural responsiveness has the potential to positively influence classroom culture, foster positive relationships, and build a solid relationship of trust. She spoke about how these components not only encourage students to feel connected, included, and valued, but lead to empowerment on behalf of students, helping them better understand and positively view both themselves and others, thereby inspiring them to maintain their cultural identity and integrity" (p. 25). This shows that teachers who practise culturally responsive pedagogy in their classrooms have the ability to make learners feel included in spite of their cultural difference. Practising culturally responsive pedagogy can help create positive relationships between teachers and learners, as supported by the asset-based theoretical framework of this study, which is underpinned by positive psychology. Learners will not feel marginalised or alienated in the classroom, as their cultures will also be embraced in all teaching methods.

Samuels (2018) suggests that for teachers to practise culturally responsive pedagogy, they should let students' voices be heard and be significantly represented in multiple contexts. Similarly, Cefai and Pizzuto (2017) also propose that "giving students the

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opportunity to have a meaningful and influential voice enhances both the teaching and learning processes, impacting both academic and social behaviours" (p. 248). The main objective of this study (to explore how to create a more inclusive learning environment for culturally and linguistically diverse learners) supported this strategy, as the researcher believes that in order for change to happen successfully and for learners to feel included in the teaching and learning process, learners should be given a voice. Hence, in this study the learners were given a voice by being given the opportunity to explain their drawings, in order to contribute to the process of change that they want to see in the classroom. A similar approach needs to be practised by all teachers, where they encourage learners to participate and voice their cultural beliefs in the classroom.

Giving learners a voice in the classroom is not always easy for teachers, as sometimes it can lead to power struggles between the learners and the teacher. Morrison (2008) explains that "teachers may be fearful of this unknown, fearful that involving students' voices and choices in running a course will produce chaos and an overall lack of learning." Giving the learner a voice means that teachers have to actually listen to learners' opinions, even if those opinions are in conflict with theirs. Teachers have to give up their autocratic leadership style, and move towards a more democratic leadership style. According to Black (2005), "democratic schools tend to have fewer discipline problems, more civic involvement, higher student engagement, and higher achievement. Plus, schools that genuinely seek and appreciate students' ideas are more likely to see their school improvement plans succeed" (p. 39). It is evident that teachers who use culturally responsive pedagogy need to give learners the chance to voice their perspectives on matters in the classroom. This will definitely help encourage learners from diverse languages and cultures to be included in the classroom, where student engagement and progress can be achieved successfully.

5.3.4 Socio-economic issues that lead to the negative attitudes of learners

Teachers are faced with challenges on a daily basis, ranging from oversized classes to the negative attitude of learners. As I am a teacher as well, I can testify that some learners do not care about school in general. Their attitude towards school and their

future academic goals is extremely poor. Apart from playing truant from class because of not understanding the LOLT, these learners also find that being away from the class more exciting than being in it. But even many of the learners who do attend class choose to sleep while the teacher is teaching, do not carry notebooks and refuse to take down notes that are dictated by their teacher.

Teacher A stated:

> *... their attitude more than anything is negative. Kids come into your class and sleep while you teaching, while you teaching they sleeping. Their books are there, some don't even have books. Sometimes you don't even know if it's worth to wake them up...*

Teacher C stated:

> *... they don't like or do homework. With the juniors, they hate writing notes. They bunk classes and photocopy somebody's book and just paste it. The reason for writing notes apart from shortage of paper, is their writing is really really poor. Having a worksheet doesn't allow them to do clear formations with their letters. When given a lot of worksheets, they see words in the exam for the first time...*

Teacher A continued:

> *... we have to try and decipher their writing for the first time in the exam. This is very challenging to try and decipher their writing...*

It is important to also mention that a large number of students at the school at which the research was conducted come from child-headed homes. So the teacher is faced with the challenge of learners who have parents who choose not to communicate with the teacher, as discussed earlier, and learners who do not have parents at all and have to parent themselves and their younger siblings. In addition, many female learners are already parents themselves, as teenage pregnancy is another challenge for some learners to cope with. These are some of the main causes of the learners' negative attitudes

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towards their schoolwork. They have no guidance or support structure to assist or encourage them to progress towards higher goals.

Yokozeki (1996) explains that "parental education has a significant influence in students' attitudes towards schooling, as educated parents are likely to value education more than parents with little or no formal education" (p. 92). In relation to this study, there is no parental education to influence learners' educational choices. Learners who are faced with these socio-economic challenges have to take on the role of parent, where they need to start making decisions and providing for the basic needs of their younger siblings or their own child. Some of the challenges that these learners face are increased school absenteeism and withdrawal, and poor school performance. This in itself forms a new culture — there are no parents to pass down cultural values to their children so learners are adopting a culture of their own. Earlier in this study, we discussed the importance culture plays in one's life. Culture influences our views and value systems and also gives meaning to our lives. It also "refers to the pattern of our behaviour" (Idang, 2015, p. 99). Learners that are forced to become adults, and in particular parents, at an early age, are deprived of this privilege. They do not have parents to look up to who can guide their life choices, but instead are forced to become parents at an early age without any guidance along the way. The negative decisions that they make in the classroom are based on a culture that does not promote optimism. However, Idang (2015) believes that "culture is passed on from generation to generation. The acquisition of culture is a result of the socialisation process" (p. 99). Considering that these learners do not have parents who can communicate these values, it then becomes the responsibility of the school to do so, and in particular, the teacher. According to Eid (2015), "preparing young people to be active citizens has to be a core value of schools and higher education institutions" (p. 1). School is not merely a place that educates its learners; school is also an environment that trains students to become responsible citizens in the future.

This study takes into account the challenges that child-headed learners face, and maintains that it is up to the teacher and the school to teach these learners a culture of progress and development in spite of these challenges. Instead of schools marginalising these learners and labelling them negatively, the school should be used as an asset to

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facilitate change in creating a sense of inclusivity and producing responsible citizens for the future. The behaviours that these students currently practise are likely to lead to failure. Snyder (2013) explains that "academic failure increases learners' alienation from school, leading to absenteeism, which, in turn, increases the risk of dropout" (p. 15). This contributes to poverty and the high rate of unemployment, which are already major issues that South Africa is facing.

According to Keating (2013), "citizens' values, attitudes and behaviours are *learned* not inherited, and schools play an important role in informing children and young people about the formal and informal rules of citizenship, and in preparing them for their role as citizens" (p. 3). In addition, Eid (2015) also explains that "good citizens are made not born; accordingly, helping children develop their full potential as citizens should be an important priority of families, communities and schools. School has an obligation to educate for informed, rational citizens who participate in, and contribute to society" (p. 2). Learners have the ability to learn from their teachers the behaviours that are expected of them in the classroom. Keating (2013) explains that "teachers and school leaders act as role models, leading by example not just through their teaching of subject matter, but also in the ways in which they moderate student discussions in classrooms, and/or allow students to participate in school decision-making" (p. 5).

It is suggested that teachers move towards a more student-centred approach, where learners are also included in decision-making. By participating in this way, learners also learn to take responsibility for their decisions, and also have their teachers' input to help inform situations so that they can learn from their mistakes and make progress towards an optimistic future. This study has suggested that teachers can be used as an asset to facilitate such change, while learners can also be given a voice so that they are a part of the process of change. Teachers need to mobilise their assets of being role models, so that learners can imitate their behaviour. Teachers and school leaders can now serve as the "parental support" in these learners' lives.

5.4 THEME TWO: THE NEED FOR AN INCLUSIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT FOR CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE LEARNERS

The researcher thought it important to learn about how learners felt about an environment that would be inclusive in terms of language and culture. This study acknowledges that an inclusive environment is vital for learners to learn to their full potential. This study also recognises that learners need to have a voice, not just about identifying their challenges but also to discover strategies to help overcome them. In this theme, the researcher used one-on-one interviews with the children to learn how they felt about an inclusive environment for diverse cultures and languages. The following sub-themes were determined from the learners' responses: *full participation with a sense of belonging*, and *societal norms to fit into*.

5.4.1 Full participation with a sense of belonging

Drawing from positive psychology, the asset-based theoretical framework was used to shape this study into exploring strategies for how to create a more inclusive learning environment for culturally and linguistically diverse learners. "Positive psychology" is a term used to cover aspects such as "positive emotions, positive character traits and enabling institutions" (Seligman, Steen, Park & Peterson, 2005, p. 411). This means that in order for learners to use their assets or strengths to help them cope with the challenges of inclusion, they need to have optimistic emotions, optimistic character traits and an institution that is enabling. This became evident during the interview with learners, as seen below.

Learner E stated:

> ... *having an inclusive environment is important to me because I need to understand what the teacher is saying, and if I understand I can do better in my exams and all, ja, and it's also important because I can make friends easily when I'm outside with other children because I am going to be speaking the*

language with them. If I understood more of the language, I would have more friends.

It is evident here that the learner wants an environment that is enabling, meaning that they want an environment where language does not segregate them in the classroom and on the playground. Instead, they require an environment that creates oneness, and that promotes optimistic emotions and optimistic character traits that promote learning. Bucholz and Sheffler (2009) state that "classrooms that encourage emotional well-being create an atmosphere for both learning and emotional development" (p. 1). With this positive emotion stimulating the environment, learners' strengths or assets can then be used to cope with the challenges related to inclusion.

Learner C stated:

... during the lesson when mam is talking it's hard for me to take part and sometimes when mam is reading stories it's hard for me to understand. But if I'm included and you know, it will be easy for me and I'll be able to participate in everything and all the class activities and I think it will make my life easier because with the exam paper in front of me I will know what to write... Even during the break I will like to communicate with my Zulu friends but it's difficult. Sometimes they will be cracking jokes and it will be hard for me to laugh, I will be the only one standing but if I understand what they saying maybe I will also join in the laughing...

Learner A stated:

... if you feel included you encouraged to participate in class discussion. And that can help you get a better understanding of your work and improve your marks...

Learner B stated:

... I will feel left out sometimes. But if I was included I will have time to participate with classes and learners and understand what the teacher is explaining. And also the time learners answer questions but you there but don't

understand what the teacher is explaining. You also be able to get good marks if you understand...

It is evident from how these learners are expressing their need for an inclusive environment that they want a sense of belonging in the classroom. They do not want to feel marginalised because of their difference. Perry (1996) explains that "belonging has been hypothesized to influence motivation, and through motivation to influence effort, participation and subsequent achievement" (p. 74). Similarly, the learners have indicated that their academic performance would also improve in an inclusive environment which encourages a sense of belonging. The learners' need to feel optimistic and confident in order to function at their full potential is in keeping with the principles of positive psychology.

The researcher thought it important to recognise and include what teachers felt about the need for an inclusive environment. This is discussed below.

5.4.2 Societal norms to fit into

Teachers play a pivotal role in creating the environment in which learners learn, and in which they teach. According to Conroy, Sutherland, Snyder, Al-Hendawi and Vo (2009), "creating a positive and engaging classroom atmosphere is one of the most powerful tools teachers can use to encourage children's learning and prevent problem behaviors from occurring" (p. 18). Again, positive psychology encourages a learning environment for culturally and linguistically diverse learners by using the strengths or assets that the learner and the teacher have to offer to cope with their challenges. The main intention is to create a positive relationship between the teacher and the learner, in which both their assets can be used to overcome the challenges of inclusivity.

However, teachers have challenges too. In order to create this positive relationship, teachers need time to bond with their learners. Unfortunately, class sizes that exceed the rule of one teacher to thirty learners do not always make this possible for teachers to do.

This places a major demand on teachers and regrettably makes it impossible for them to focus their attention on individual learners.

Teacher A stated:

> *... in society at large, the moment that you fit in you perform better. When you don't fit in, you feel like your whole world is crashing down. Especially in this case, when the child is ridiculed. They lose their confidence, they feel like they are not worthy in terms of society and norms. Peer pressure, social pressure comes into play. It's very important to boost their confidence to work harder... however as educators our hands are tied. For one, we have big classes and unfortunately it doesn't allow us time with them to give them individual attention. Like we said, most of them come from child-headed homes, everyone is competing for your attention and as an educator how many people can you give your attention to?*

The learners' responses and the teachers' responses above make it clear that the main idea running through both is belonging. The learners want to have a sense of belonging in the classroom and on the playground. Teachers also agree that once learners fit in, they can achieve better at performing their tasks. I refer back to the discussion of the theoretical framework that underpins this study, where it was stated that positive psychology builds upon the work of Maslow in terms of the good in human behaviour. In particular, I look at Maslow's hierarchy of needs, which discusses the psychological need for love, belonging and esteem. According to Maslow (1943), the lower order needs have to be fulfilled first before one can progress to the next level. When viewed through this lens, the psychological needs of love and belonging need to be fulfilled by learners first, before they can move on to the next level, which is esteem. Maslow (1943) again explains that the need for belonging and acceptance is associated with our interactions with people around us. When viewed through this lens, learners interact and want a feeling of belonging and love from their teachers, peers and school community at large. Similarly to Maslow (1943), Goodenow and Grad (1993) explain that learners' sense of belonging in the classroom is "the extent to which students feel personally

accepted, respected, included and supported by others in the school social environment" (p. 80).

The reason we have social relationships is to motivate our behaviour, which leads to the next level of psychological needs on Maslow's hierarchy, esteem. Maslow (1943) categorised this need into two parts, the first of which is esteem for oneself, which can be referred to as one's dignity and achievement. The second part is the desire for respect and reputation. This part of esteem was probably most important to the learners in this study. The learners wanted to create a positive reputation for themselves amongst their peers and teachers, involving mutual respect. This would increase motivation on the part of the learners, helping them to make progress towards their full potential.

According to McLeod (2018), Maslow's hierarchy is directly related to learning, and this occurs through motivation. He explains that in order for students to progress in the classroom, they must be motivated to learn. Only when all of Maslow's needs are met can students perform at their full potential for learning. Again, this is supported by the asset-based theoretical framework supported by positive psychology, in terms of which building positive relationships is paramount to learners. Having positive relationships with their teachers and peers would give learners a sense of belonging and a sense of being loved, which would increase their esteem and motivate them to move to the next level of needs, which is self-actualisation. This is Maslow's highest level, where one can then realise one's full potential and become everything that one is capable of becoming.

Applying Maslow's hierarchy of needs in the classroom can help teachers enhance the learning environment for learners, who can then achieve to their full potential. Maslow (1970) takes a holistic approach to the learner in education by considering the complete learner, which refers to the learner's physical, emotional, social, and intellectual qualities. Maslow (1970) looks at each level of the hierarchy and how it could affect a learner in reaching their full potential. As stated above, all the lower levels of Maslow's hierarchy need to be fulfilled first in order for learners to function at their full potential. This includes the basic need for food and shelter. Unfortunately, it is impossible for teachers to fulfil this need for every single learner in their classes. However, teachers can provide access to programmes which can help the learners with these challenges.

The next step of Maslow (1943) hierarchy, safety, is reliant on the school structure as a whole. This is mainly controlled by the managers of the school, who make sure that the school is a safe environment for learners to learn and interact in. In the classroom, teachers again can be an asset to make sure that learners feel safe by implementing an open-door policy to talk about things that may concern them. Themane and Osher (2014) call this "emotional safety", which includes "the feeling of belonging and connection, as well as feeling free from embarrassment, sarcasm, teasing, harassment, relational bullying, stigmatisation, and other forms of humiliation" (p. 1).

This leads to the next level of Maslow's hierarchy, which is love and belonging. Again, the teacher as an asset needs to create an environment that promotes this type of behaviour. According to Perry (1996), "if children receive warmth and supportiveness from their teachers, they are encouraged to cooperate and also to act prosocially, and those behaviours become part of their experiences. Those experiences allow and encourage them to model the behaviours" (p. 75). Teachers need to make sure that learners feel valued and loved in the classroom, so that learners can also model this type of behaviour. According to Burleson and Thoron (2017), "teachers must take advantage of every opportunity to reinforce positive learner behavior and self-esteem. Let learners know that teachers appreciate the effort they are making during the time together in the learning environment. This reinforcement will aid in a learner's development of a favorable self-image" (p. 2).

This suggests that if teachers reinforce positive behaviour, learners will proceed to the next level of Maslow's hierarchy, which is esteem, where they will have an optimistic perspective of themselves and work to their full potential. In this case again, teachers could use positive reinforcement, such as praise, as an asset to encourage learners to achieve to their full potential. Conroy, Sutherland, Snyder, Al-Hendawi and Vo (2009) explain that "if teachers attend to and praise children's appropriate behaviors and ignore their problem behaviors, children will learn that these positive types of behaviors are more likely to obtain teacher attention than problem behaviors" (p. 18.) Whether learners come from informal settlements with a low socio-economic status, from another country, from child-headed homes, from abusive family environments, or from a nuclear family, positive reinforcement by teachers can motivate learners to change

their mindset in the classroom. According to Rumfola (2017), "when a child experiences positive reinforcement, there is often a greater willingness to exhibit positive behavior" (p. 12). For many of these learners, getting praised by their teachers is about the only praise they will receive from an adult, which will impact their behaviour in a positive way. The key is not to focus on the challenge, but rather to focus on the strengths that can used to overcome these challenges. This can be seen in the next theme, in which learners and teachers identify their strengths, which can be mobilized for creating an inclusive environment.

5.5 THEME THREE: INCLUSIVE PRACTICES THAT CAN BE USED IN A LEARNING ENVIRONMENT WITH CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE LEARNERS

As stated above, the researcher wanted to give learners a voice in creating an inclusive environment. When learners feel included in the process of change, they will actually want to change. According to Kretzmann and McKnight (1993), the asset-based approach has three phases, with the first phase being to identify the asset. This was done through the learners' second drawing. The researcher asked the learners to re-draw the first picture, only this time it needed to be of their ideal classroom that embraced inclusivity. The drawing needed to represent the inclusive practices that they wanted utilised in the classroom. Learners were then asked to explain their drawings during one-on-one interviews with the researcher. The researcher also asked teachers to offer their perspective of inclusive practices that could be mobilised in the classroom. This was done through focus groups where teachers also voiced their practices.

5.5.1 Information and communications technology

One of the most favoured practices that was identified by teachers and learners alike, was the use of ICT in the classroom. Since we live in the 21st century with a rapid increase in the use of technology, it comes as no surprise that learners and teachers want

a 21st-century classroom. By this I mean a classroom that is centred around the use of ICT. Abbott (2007) introduces the term "e-inclusion", which refers to "the use of digital technologies to enable inclusive learning practices for people with learning difficulties" (p. 7). An example of breaking a barrier through e-inclusion was explained by Bjekić, Obradović, Vučetić and Bojović (2014), where "students with the most profound reading difficulties are eligible for special education services and supplemental academic supports such as assistive technology, e.g. text-to-speech, speech-to-text, and spell check software" (p. 131). Abbott's (2007) aim is to use digital technologies to break down barriers associated with gender, race, age, sexuality or class. Using Abbott's concept in this research study means teachers could use ICT as an asset in the classroom to overcome the challenges created by different cultures and languages, and create a space for inclusivity. Learners had the following to say about their second drawing regarding ICT.

Learner A stated:

> *... my drawing is just the first drawing just this time with computers and stuff on learners desk. I'm into IT. The teacher will also have one. I want children to use computers in the classroom... with Google translate, if you teach something in English I can translate in Google to my language and understand it better...*

Learner D also stated:

> *... every subject must use the projector and Google translate into Zulu. Technology in English would really help me. I also want to use tablets, tablets could help with translation. If the teacher says a word I don't understand, I can type it in Google translate and I will be able to study better...*

Learner B stated:

> *... I want Internet in the classroom, with laptops and cell phones. It would really help the learners and teachers.*

Teachers also agreed on the use of ICT and had the following to say.

Teacher A stated:

> *... they enjoy the videos. That helps a great deal because with videos they understand things better. For example, in grade 10 we taught about the heart. Lots of learners think of the heart shape and when you show them the real heart it's different, in fact while doing a prac, one of the learners got sick. He couldn't handle seeing the heart like that. Just touching the heart made him feel weak. He had to leave the class. Having a projector brings things into reality. Having the projector is a big plus to showing videos and pictures...*

Teacher B stated:

> *... especially with science, showing them videos on reproduction and the whole process of how the egg becomes fertilised, they become very fascinated about the whole thing and they understand it better. The visual explains more than the language...*

It becomes evident that ICT can be used as an asset in the classroom that can be embraced by both the teacher and the learner. According to Balagiu, Patesan and Zechia (2018), "ICT is a valuable asset for education both for students and teachers. It brings novelty, involvement, interaction and interest into class" (p. 418). The intention of this study was to explore strategies to bring about involvement and interaction between the teacher and the learners in the class. This research aimed to create a space for inclusion. Learners stated that they would feel more included in the lesson if they could use Google translate for work they did not understand. Teachers have also admitted that it would be much more beneficial to learners if they could learn in their home language.

Teacher A explained that

> *... sometimes children would write whatever they can in English and would write the Zulu word for what they can't translate themselves. I feel they would perform much better in their home language...*

However, if learners had access to Google translate or other sources of ICT in the classroom, they would be able to translate their work directly into the language of their

choice. This could definitely improve the learners' results in subjects that they have difficulties in. This could also mean that learners would be able to participate better in the classroom, as many of them had stated that they felt left out of class discussions due to not being able to understand the LOLT. Balagiu, Patesan and Zechia (2018), in their study on language learning and ICT, explain that "when it comes to language teaching and learning the part played by ICT is huge. Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL), as a new method of teaching languages, is used as the experts in language learning who fully agree that it helps improve efficiency and effectiveness of learning and thus the quality of understanding and mastery of the language studied is improved" (p. 419). From a teacher's point of view, it is impossible for them to learn several different languages in order to accommodate all the languages represented in their classroom. However, when ICT is used as an asset, it can bridge the gap between those languages and the teacher's language in the classroom. Mafuraga and Moremi (2017), who also did a study on integrating ICT into language teaching, concur with Balagiu, Patesan and Zechia (2018) above, adding that if ICT were integrated into language classes, it would assist the teacher and the learner to achieve the objective at hand, and would make tasks simpler as information would be available and accessible all the time. In relation to the current study, the use of ICT could be extended from language classes to all classes, as learners are experiencing difficulties with all subjects taught in a language other than their home language.

Apart from bridging the gap between teachers and learners in terms of language barriers, ICT can be used in numerous other ways to help learners and teachers in the classroom. A few benefits have been mentioned, particularly in relation to cell phones or mobile phones, as this is the most affordable and hence most popular item for learners or parents to buy. According to Pilgrim, Bledsoe and Reily (2012), educators can utilize this technology so that academic learning translates to real-world applications. Students can keep an agenda on their phones or iPods, read books on their smart phones, and utilize mobile resources such as a dictionary, calculator, or camera. Students can use phones or other technology to take pictures of the classroom agenda or the teacher's notes on the board" (p. 16). This means that ICT can be used for a variety of other purposes to help the learner with educational requirements. ICT can be used as an asset to improve the learner's education as well as bridge the gap created by language

barriers. ICT can also be used as an asset by teachers to assist with administration. According to Vlachopoulos and Pitsiavas (2016), "ICT use could simplify the taking of attendance, help limit expenses and aid in efficiently chunking and rendering administrative information units" (p. 18). Administration is vital for a teacher, as this is what is used in the process of communicating with parents. The importance of parent-teacher relationships was discussed earlier, and ICT can be used as an asset to sustain that relationship.

Pointing out the benefits of ICT as discussed above does not mean that the researcher is unaware of the disadvantages ICT can also bring into the classroom. For example, cell phones can be a distraction for learners, or cause a disconnection by replacing face-to-face social activities. However, as much as ICT in the classroom may create a few barriers, it is important to consider that it also creates limitless opportunities for both learners and teachers. Oliver (2002) states that "the world is moving rapidly into digital media and information, the role of ICT in education is becoming more and more important and this importance will continue to grow and develop in the 21st century." Used within the right context and with the appropriate restrictions and controls, ICT as an asset can be of major assistance to teachers in the classroom, and can also eradicate certain barriers to learning for learners.

5.5.2   Posters

Another practice that learners thought would make the classroom environment more inclusive, was to have posters around the classroom in English, and also translated into their home language. Learners spoke of how useful it would be for diagrams to have English terms that were also translated into their home language. As mentioned previously, teachers noted that learners tend to write in English but quickly change to their home language when they can no longer translate words into English. Sener and Bostan (2017) believe that "vocabulary knowledge is what foreign language learners most need" (p. 552). This vocabulary that learners need can be found on posters. Having posters around the classroom would get learners used to seeing the English term as well as the term in their home language. This would definitely help learners to identify terms

that could be quickly translated into English. Sener and Bostan (2017) further explain that "since vocabulary knowledge is one of the vital components of learning a foreign language and sufficient amount of vocabulary knowledge is necessary, in language classrooms posters are widely preferred by language teachers" (p. 552). This again becomes necessary not just in language classes, but in all subjects, as learners experience difficulty with vocabulary in all subjects. Eker (2016) expands on Sener and Bostan (2017) by explaining that "posters allow students to learn the issues they have difficulty in understanding, easily and meaningfully. At the same time, they are the teaching tools that support student-centered education and improve students' "communication skills by allowing them to find, summarize, and use the information" (p. 104).

The effect that posters can have on learners in the classroom is clear, as they can be used as a teaching tool to improve the communication skills of learners. According to Hubenthal, O'Brien and Taber (2011), "educational posters may foster sporadic, individual, incidental learning" (p. 196). This means that posters as a teaching tool can help learners indirectly or accidentally learn subject matter through repeated reading of the posters every day. Ghazi-Saidi and Ansaldo (2017) further explain that the repetition "process is important in language acquisition, both developmentally and in learning a second language, and has applications in language rehabilitation." It is evident that repeated reading of posters in a classroom every day has a positive impact on learning a second language. Again, this applies to all subjects, as learners are learning all their school-related material in their second language. Posters can therefore be used an asset in language acquisition.

In addition to improving language skills, posters can welcome diverse cultures, as language and culture are closely linked. Having posters containing different languages in the classroom could be used as an asset to embrace diversity and encourage inclusivity. Learners had the following to say regarding this asset.

Learner C stated:

> ... I prefer posters in my language. Some drawings or cartoons. I want pictures to understand what the teacher is trying to say.

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Learner E stated:

> *... post pictures on the wall to help me remember words in Swahili. Words must be translated in Zulu and Swahili.*

It is evident that learners want a classroom that represents their language and cultural differences through the use of posters. The positive impact that posters as an asset in the classroom will have on learners is also clear. It then becomes the responsibility of the teacher to create this type of environment in the classroom. During the focus group session, the researcher explained to teachers how the learners felt about posters with different languages being used in the classroom. Teachers had the following to say regarding posters being an asset in the classroom.

Teacher B stated:

> *... I will definitely take it into consideration. I did put up posters in my Life Sciences class. Learners took interest in the posters where they were actually reading it. It caught their attention. It would be a good idea to ask learners to do the translation...*

Teacher C stated:

> *... in terms of putting up translations, it would definitely help.*

This indicates that the teachers want to create a learning environment that is conducive to teaching and learning. Swafford, Bailey and Beasley (2014) add that "effective teachers who create positive learning environments develop not only a classroom setting, but also an emotional setting that enhances student performance, making the learning environment a key focus in educating students" (p. 32). The teachers also want learners to be included in this process, by doing the translations for the posters. Emotionally, this would boost their confidence, as learners would be proud of their work on the classroom walls. Learners would be encouraged to learn and improve in their difficult subjects. Posters can definitely be seen as an asset in the classroom that could be used by teachers and learners in making the environment inclusive and conducive   to   learning.

5.5.3 Learners teaching learners

Another very important asset that was mentioned during the focus group with the teachers is when learners teach other learners in their home language. This can definitely be regarded as an asset, as all learners would feel included, culturally and linguistically, and would be part of the process of improving poor results.

Teacher A, who embraces this practice, said the following:

> *... when the syllabus is done and we are doing revision, I give them topics and we discuss that. One child who understands, translates it into Zulu. Four years back it improved the results greatly. I tell the children, if they don't understand, these are the people you should go to for help... it also makes them feel included by giving them an opportunity to teach in their language.*

Teacher B added:

> *... speaking English is one thing, our accent is another thing. You may say something in English with high grammar, but when the child speaks to someone at their own level they understand it better...*

Teacher C stated:

> *... Tourism has Geography and they don't understand maps. Usually I bring a learner to the front and make them translate. Learners respond with how they now get it.*

It is evident here that learners can be an asset to each other. They have the potential to also create an environment that is inclusive for their peers. Bettenhausen (2002) calls this "peer teaching" and adds that it "can benefit all students in the inclusive classroom academically and at the same time develop positive attitudes and meaningful relationships among classmates" (p. 190). This links back to the asset-based theoretical framework of this study, which is rooted in positive psychology, as the main intention of

this study was to create positive relationships, firstly between the teacher and the learner, and secondly between learners and their peers. This study wanted to explore strategies or practices that could bridge the gap between the teacher and the learner, so that learners did not feel marginalised in the classroom because of their cultural and linguistic differences. Creating these positive relationships in turn contributes to the wellbeing of the school, which in turn contributes to the wellbeing of the community. It is evident that teachers are willing to fully embrace this way of approaching or working with students, where they are "preparing students to be taught, not just teaching when students are presenting as willing to be taught" (Resiliency Initiatives, 2011, p. 3). Learners teaching learners becomes an asset that can be used to help peers with language difficulties and to build positive relationships amongst them.

As discussed earlier, Venter's (2013) "asset based teaching" (p. 6) is an "intentional support-based and relationship-driven process where the teacher supports learners in their development in focusing on their assets such as skills, talents, gifts and resources" (Venter, 2013, p. 7). It is evident in this study that teachers are definitely trying to focus on the learners' assets, and have recommended ICT, posters and learners teaching other learners in the process of creating an inclusive environment. If all teachers were to develop this asset-based teaching approach, learners would be able to identify the assets in themselves and in others. They would also learn to respect the diversity they see in others. This would be an asset in bridging the gap between teachers and learners, as learners would not feel marginalised in the classroom due to their linguistic and cultural differences. Learners would be encouraged to communicate with other learners in their home language, giving them a greater degree of cultural and linguistic freedom.

In summary, the findings of this study indicate that the present environment for culturally and linguistically diverse learners involves a plethora of challenges that learners and teachers are faced with in the classroom. The findings also indicate the need for an inclusive environment for culturally and linguistically diverse learners, which both teachers and learners have advised is essential in creating today's classroom atmosphere. Because most of the learners in this study come from poor socio-economic backgrounds, it is imperative that an inclusive environment for culturally and

linguistically diverse learners is created by teachers and learners alike. Teachers and learners need to respect and embrace the diversity in each other.

The asset-based theoretical framework of this study was underpinned by positive psychology, and involved identifying and then mobilising the assets of the teachers and learners in creating an inclusive environment. Positive psychology starts with positive relationships. This study has indicated that it is essential for teachers and learners to have positive relationships, in order to prevent learners from feeling marginalised in the classroom. Positive psychology supports the asset-based approach, which further creates an inclusive environment for culturally and linguistically diverse learners.

The findings of this study lastly indicate the different assets that both teachers and learners recommended. In accordance with the phases of the asset-based approach suggested by Kretzmann and McKnight (1993), the first step is to identify the assets. The second step is to mobilise the assets, which is where this study is presently. Now that learners and teachers have identified assets that can make the classroom more inclusive, these assets now need to be mobilised and managed, so that future assets can be identified to create an even more inclusive environment.

5.6   CONCLUSION

This chapter has presented the data analysis and discussion of the findings from the data generated by the learners' drawings, the explanations of the drawings by the learners, and the focus group discussions with the teachers. The data was presented according to the various themes and categories generated from the study. Verbatim quotes were used to keep the participants' voices as an integral part of the findings, in conjunction with references to the existing literature and the asset-based theoretical framework. The final chapter contains the summary, recommendations and overall conclusions of the study.

CHAPTER 6
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1   INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter the data analysis and discussion of the findings of this study were presented. In this final chapter, the summary of findings is provided. The researcher will also be making recommendations based on the findings, and will discuss the limitations of this study. Recommendations for future research will also be discussed.

6.2   SUMMARY OF THE KEY RESEARCH FINDINGS

This section provides a summary of the findings that responded to the three key research questions that framed this study:

- What is the current situation of inclusive learning environments for culturally and linguistically diverse learners?
- Why do we need an inclusive learning environment for culturally and linguistically diverse learners?
- What inclusive practice/s can be used to enhance culturally and linguistically diverse learners learning environments?

The responses to the above questions are presented according to the themes that have unfolded from this study.

6.2.1   Theme One: The current situation of inclusive learning environments for culturally and linguistically diverse learners

The findings under this theme indicated that learners are struggling with language barriers in the classroom. Learners feel marginalised as they cannot participate in class discussions and activities due to the fact that they cannot understand what is being taught or said in the classroom. This is because their teachers speak a language that is different from their home language. In these circumstances learners often lose interest in the subject and are not motivated to work in that subject. Learners also indicated that if teachers spoke in their home language, they would feel more included in the lesson and would be able to participate better in the lesson. The findings under this theme also indicated that teachers agree that learners are struggling in their subjects due to the language barriers between them and the learners. There are some subjects that require scientific terms which the children just do not understand. This has led to learners losing interest in the subject and playing truant from class.

In addition to the language barriers that the learners face, learners have commented that their parents also feel marginalised due to language barriers. They cannot communicate with teachers about their children's progress, and they cannot help their children with homework as they do not understand the language. Community members also ignore them as they cannot communicate due to the language difference. High absenteeism and playing truant from class is a major concern, as learners seem to take advantage of the fact that their parents do not communicate with the school.

There were also cultural differences that made learners feel left out. Goduka (1998) explained that "language is inextricably linked to culture. It is a primary means by which people express their cultural values and the lens through which they view the world" (p. 34). They indicated that teachers had different cultural beliefs to theirs, and that only the teachers' cultural beliefs were being represented in the classroom. Learners felt that all cultures should be represented in the classroom, and that this would make them feel included.

Lastly, under this theme teachers indicated that learners generally had a negative attitude towards their work and school, and that some of them made no effort to even try. They would come to class and sleep, and not take down notes or even carry notebooks for that lesson. Teachers then sometimes found it difficult to understand the

handwriting of these learners' during examinations, as some of these learners could not even form their letters correctly. The socio-economic issues that learners face in this school are mainly child-headed homes and teenage pregnancy, which both help to create the negative culture that they portray in the classroom.

It is clearly evident from the findings that the language and cultural differences in the classroom have a major unsupportive impact on the learners, which is making the environment one that is not conducive to teaching and learning.

6.2.2   Theme Two: The need for an inclusive learning environment for culturally and linguistically diverse learners

The findings under this theme indicated that learners want to have a sense of belonging. They want to feel more included in the lessons, which they stated would improve their marks. In addition, learners also want to feel accepted by their peers on the playground. The learners stated that they would be able to make friends more easily if they understood the language of the majority of the learners that attended the school. Learners who are linguistically and culturally different often feel excluded socially, as they stated that they cannot even laugh at jokes made by their peers due to the language barriers. Being excluded socially and academically means that these learners are marginalised because of their diversity.

The teachers also indicated that learners need to fit in and have a sense of belonging in order for them to reach their full potential. If learners fitted in, it would boost their self-confidence. This would increase their motivation, which would in turn help learners to progress. Learners turn to their teachers to get a sense of belonging in the classroom. However, the teachers stated that with large class sizes it becomes almost impossible to attend to each individual learner. Furthermore, a significant number of learners come from child-headed homes, so there is a large number of learners competing for their teacher's attention.

It is clearly evident from the findings that learners want to fit in, and they want to have a sense of belonging, which would have a positive influence on them academically and socially.

6.2.3 Theme Three: Inclusive practices that can be used in a learning environment with culturally and linguistically diverse learners

The findings under this theme indicated that teachers and learners both wanted more ICT to be integrated into learning and teaching. The learners stated that by being able to use ICT in the classroom, they would be able to translate subject matter into their home language, which would give them a better understanding of what is being taught. They would also then be able to participate better in class. They also indicated that they wanted projectors to be used to watch videos, which would provide a lot of context and perspective for their work. Teachers expressed this same wish, as they believed that watching videos on various topics would really improve the learners' understanding. When language fails, visual cues can provide enhanced understanding for the learners. Integrating ICT into the classroom would also be a way to introduce cultural diversity, as language and culture are closely linked, especially when diverse videos can be played to include all cultures within the classroom.

In addition to ICT being used in the classroom to enhance inclusivity, learners also indicated that they wanted posters in diverse languages around the classroom. They indicated that all difficult terminology should appear in English and in their home language. This would help learners to quickly identify words that could be used in the exam. When teachers were asked if this could be done in their classrooms, they were more than willing to do so. To make learners feel more included in the process, teachers further suggested that learners should help them with the actual translations. Teachers also admitted that posters caught the attention of learners quickly, which means that learners would be able to unintentionally learn while they are reading a poster.

The teachers also indicated that learners should be used to teach other learners in their home language. This is also referred to as peer teaching. The teachers indicated that this

strategy would help learners academically, as well as socially. Learners would then form positive relationships with their peers while still being able to learn.

It is clearly evident from the findings that ICT, posters and learners teaching learners could be integrated into teaching and learning, and used as an asset to create a more inclusive environment for culturally and linguistically diverse learners.

6.3   RECOMMENDATIONS

It is clear in this study that learners with a home language and culture that are different from the LOLT and the culture of the teacher face many challenges in the classroom. However, there are various measures based on the findings of this study that the school and teacher can employ to create a more inclusive learning environment for culturally and linguistically diverse learners. Other schools that accommodate learners with diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds could also adopt these recommendations. This study has shown that learners from these backgrounds need adequate support from the entire school community (their teachers, the school management and their parents) in order to learn at their full potential. I therefore recommend the following:

- Teachers need to ensure that they help learners build their self-confidence, as this will boost learners' motivation and lead to an improvement of their work.
- Teachers need to try to use practical examples of subject requirements that include all cultures. This will also give learners a background knowledge of their work in their cultures.
- Teachers need to try to use the learners' home languages in combination with the LOLT for learners to fully comprehend their subjects.
- Parental involvement is crucial. Parents need to monitor their children's behaviour and progress at school frequently. They need to be in constant communication with their child's teacher and with school management.
- Teachers need to find diverse strategies of communicating with parents who also experience language barriers.
- Parents need to find alternative strategies of helping their children with homework, which is a crucial part of parental involvement.
- Teachers need to use diverse strategies to include all cultures within the classroom and not just their own.
- Teachers need to give learners a voice in the classroom to express their diverse cultures and languages.

- Teachers need to develop a more democratic leadership style, so that learners can be more involved in the process of teaching and learning.

- Teachers and school management need to take on certain parental roles, especially where learners come from child-headed homes. These learners need motivation, which will create a positive attitude towards their work.

- The school is largely responsible for creating good citizens for the future; therefore, the school needs to educate learners to make positive decisions that influence their future.

- School management, teachers and parents need to act as positive role models for learners to emulate.

- Teachers need to create an environment that is enabling for learners, where they can build positive relationships with their learners. They need to help learners to identify and mobilize their assets to overcome their challenges.

- The school management and teachers are responsible for creating an environment that is safe for learners, physically and emotionally. They need to help learners have a sense of belonging in the classroom.

- Teachers need to use positive reinforcement such as praise to encourage learners to focus on their strengths and overcome their challenges.

- Teachers need to integrate ICT into their learning and teaching methods and promote the inclusion of diverse languages and cultures.

- Teachers need to integrate posters reflecting diverse language and cultures into their learning and teaching methods to promote the inclusion of linguistic and cultural diversity.

- Teachers need to include learners in this process of change, for example by asking learners to do the translations which could help them at a later stage. This will also lead to incidental learning for the learners.

- Teachers can encourage learners with similar home languages to teach other learners. Peer teaching can promote positive relationships amongst learners where they respect the diversity in each other while still learning.

6.4   RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The following recommendations for further research have been provided below:

- Further studies should be done that focus on improving the learning environment for culturally and linguistically diverse learners in a different context, such as at a private school or in other countries, as this study only focused on a public school in South Africa.

- This study focused primarily on what teachers and school management could do to improve the learning environment for culturally and linguistically diverse learners; however, further research needs to be conducted on what learners could do to improve the learning environment for culturally and linguistically diverse learners.

- This study focused primarily on creating an inclusive environment for culturally and linguistically diverse learners; however, there are many other factors that should be researched in order to create an inclusive environment for all learners.

- Lastly, this study focused on high school learners (aged 15–18) and high school teachers only. However, it is recommended that further research should be carried out on experiences and practices that could be used with younger learners and primary school teachers.

6.5   CONCLUSION

This study explored the experiences of culturally and linguistically diverse learners in a learning environment that does not promote inclusivity. This study showed that culturally and linguistically diverse learners face many challenges that cause them not to make progress at their full potential. Teachers also face many challenges in teaching learners that do not speak the LOLT at the school. This research therefore emphasises the importance of integrating strategies that will enhance the learning environment for

culturally and linguistically diverse learners. This will encourage the learners to progress and learn at their full potential, while still maintaining positive relationships with their school community.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A – Department of Education Permission to Conduct Research

education

Department:
Education
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

| Enquiries: Phindile Duma | Tel: 033 392 1063 | Ref.:2/4/8/1519 |

Ms J.C Chockalingam

5 Kapota Street

Arena Park

Chatsworth

Durban

4092

Dear Ms Chockalingam

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research entitled: **"'AN INCLUSIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT FOR CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE LEARNERS"**, in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education Institutions has been approved. The conditions of the approval are as follows:

1. The researcher will make all the arrangements concerning the research and interviews.
2. The researcher must ensure that Educator and learning programmes are not interrupted.
3. Interviews are not conducted during the time of writing examinations in schools.
4. Learners, Educators, Schools and Institutions are not identifiable in any way from the results of the research.
5. A copy of this letter is submitted to District Managers, Principals and Heads of Institutions where the Intended research and interviews are to be conducted.
6. The period of investigation is limited to the period from 17 May 2018 to 09 July 2020.
7. Your research and interviews will be limited to the schools you have proposed and approved by the Head of Department. Please note that Principals, Educators, Departmental Officials and Learners are under no obligation to participate or assist you in your investigation.
8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s), please contact Miss Phindile Duma at the contact numbers below
9. Upon completion of the research, a brief summary of the findings, recommendations or a full report/dissertation/thesis must be submitted to the research office of the Department. Please address it to The Office of the HOD, Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.
10. Please note that your research and interviews will be limited to schools and institutions in KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education.
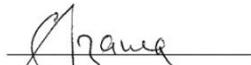
Dr. EV Nzama
Head of Department: Education
Date: 17 May 2018

...Championing Quality Education - Creating and Securing a Brighter Future

KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Postal Address: Private Bag X9137 • Pietermaritzburg • 3200 • Republic of South Africa
Physical Address: 247 Burger Street • Anton Lembede Building • Pietermaritzburg • 3201
Tel.: +27 33 392 1063 • **Fax.:** +27 033 392 1203• **Email:**Phindile.Duma@kzndoe.gov.za •**Web:**www.kzneducation.gov.za
Facebook: KZNDOE....Twitter: @DBE_KZN....Instagram: kzn_education....Youtube:kzndoe

Appendix B – Ethical Clearance

UNIVERSITY OF ™
KWAZULU-NATAL

INYUVESI
YAKWAZULU-NATALI

5 June 2018

Ms Jade Crystal Chockalingam 206505160
Scool of Education
Edgewood Campus

Dear Ms Cockalingam

Protocol reference number: HSS/0277/018M
Project Title: An Inclusive Learning Environment for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Learners

Approval Notification – Expedited Application

In response to your application received 28 March 2018, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment /modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

....
Professor Shenuka Singh (Chair)
Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

/pm

Cc Supervisor: DR V Jairam
Cc Academic Leader Research: Dr SB Khoza
Cc School Administrator: Ms Tyzer Khumalo

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
Professor Shenuka Singh (Chair)
Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building
Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban 4000
Telephone: +27 (0) 31 260 3587/8350/4557 Facsimile: +27 (0) 31 260 4609 Email: ximbap@ukzn.ac.za / snymanm@ukzn.ac.za / mohunp@ukzn.ac.za
Website: www.ukzn.ac.za

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100 YEARS OF ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Founding Campuses: ■ Edgewood ■ Howard College ● Medical School ■ Pietermaritzburg ■ Westville

Appendix C – Gatekeeper Consent Form
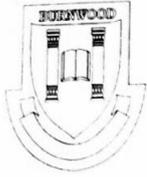
Burnwood Secondary School
A Class of Distinction

www.burnwood.co.za
burnwood@afrihost.co.za

www.twitter.com/burnwoodschool

P.O. Box 19275
Dormerton
4015

Tel : (031) 208 6842
Fax : (031) 208 0399

16 April 2018

Dear: Chairperson of the Ethics Committee

RE: An Inclusive Learning Environment for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Learners

Name: JC Chockalingam

ID: 8803150288084

Student number: 206505160

Please be informed that Ms JC Chockalingam (206505160) has been granted permission to do research at Burnwood Secondary School for a period of 1 month.

Mr. V. Gokal
Principal

Teaching and Learning
The Eternal Handshake

YEBO   OBEY

Appendix D – Participant Consent Form (Teachers and Learners)

School of Educational Psychology,

University of KwaZulu-Natal (Edgewood Campus)

Dear Participant, (Student or Teacher)

My name is Jade Crystal Chockalingam. I am Masters student studying at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Edgewood Campus. The title of my research is: An Inclusive Learning Environment for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Learners. The aim of the study is to explore diversity within the classroom and how to adapt to these diversities. I am interested in your participation so as to share your experiences and observations on the subject matter.
Please note that:

- The information that you provide will be used for scholarly research only.
- Your participation is entirely voluntary. You have a choice to participate, not to participate or stop participating in the research. You will not be penalized for taking such an action.
- Your views in this interview will be presented anonymously. Neither your name nor identity will be disclosed in any form in the study.
- Your participation will take about 1 month of the school term. We will meet once or twice a week.
- The records as well as other items associated with this study will be held in a password-protected file accessible only to myself and my supervisors. After a period of 5 years, in line with the rules of the university, it will be disposed by shredding and burning.
- If you are willing to be interviewed, please indicate (by ticking as applicable) whether or not you are willing to allow the interview to be recorded by the following equipment:

Audio equipment

Willing		Not Willing	

- If you agree to participate please sign the declaration attached to this statement.

I can be contacted via email: j.crystalc@gmail.com or 0612099807.

My supervisor is Dr. V. Jairam who is located at the School of Educational Psychology, Edgewood Campus, University of KwaZulu-Natal. Contact details: email jairam@ukzn.ac.za. Phone number: 031 260 1438

The Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee contact details are as follows: Prem Mohun, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Research Office,Telephone: 031 260 4557. E-mail mohunp@ukzn.ac.za

Thank you for your contribution to this research.

DECLARATION

I………………………………………………………………… (full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire. I understand the intention of the research. I hereby agree to participate.

I consent / do not consent to have this interview recorded (if applicable).

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT   DATE

_____   _____

Appendix E – Parent Consent Form for Learners under 18 years of age

School of Educational Psychology,
University of KwaZulu-Natal (Edgewood Campus)

Dear Parent,

My name is Jade Crystal Chockalingam (206505160). I am an educator at Burnwood
Secondary School who is also studying at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Edgewood
Campus toward my master's degree. The title of my research is: An Inclusive Learning
Environment for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Learners. The aim of the study is
to explore diversity within the classroom and how to adapt to these diversities. I am
interested in your child's participation so as to share their experiences and observations
on the subject matter.
Please note that:

- The information that they provide will be used for scholarly research only.
- Their participation is entirely voluntary. They have a choice to participate, not to
  participate or participating in the research. This will not affect any school work
  or contribute to the school curriculum.
- The learners' views in this study will be presented anonymously. Neither their
  name nor identity will be disclosed in any form.
- Their participation will take about 2 weeks in the school term. Meeting will be
  held during the school breaks.
- The records as well as other items associated with this study will be held in a
  password-protected file accessible only to me and my supervisors. After a period
  of 5 years, in line with the rules of the university, it will be disposed by
  shredding and burning.
- Learners will be asked to draw pictures and then interviewed about the picture
  that they drew. The interviews will be recorded by means of an audio recorder.
- If you agree to let your child participate, please sign the declaration attached to
  this statement.

I can be contacted via email: j.crystalc@gmail.com

My supervisor is Dr. V. Jairam who is located at the School of Educational Psychology,
Edgewood Campus, University of KwaZulu-Natal. Contact details: email
jairam@ukzn.ac.za. Phone number: 031 260 1438

The Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee contact details are as
follows: Prem Mohun, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Research Office,Telephone: 031 260
4557. E-mail mohunp@ukzn.ac.za

Thank you for your contribution to this research.

DECLARATION

I…………………………………………………………………… (full names of parent/guardian), hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to ……………………………... (full names of learner) participating in the research project.

I understand that my child/ward can withdraw from the project at any time, should I/they so desire.

SIGNATURE OF PARENT/GUARDIAN   DATE

_____   _____

Focus Group Discussion Schedule

Data Generation through Focus Groups

You are invited to participate in a study which explores the experiences of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Learners in a classroom that is not inclusive of their needs. This study will explore what the current situation is and how you will like to bring about change. Your participation is voluntary and if you wish not answer any of the following questions in this discussion, you are more than free to withdraw from this study or not answer.

Introduction: Thank you in advance for participating in my study. As you know my topic is An Inclusive Learning Environment for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Learners. I would like explore you classroom experiences and challenges with language and culture barriers, and also work on strategies to bring about change. So I have the following questions to frame our discussion so let's begin. Remember, I am also a teacher and I face similar challenges as you. Everything that is recorded today is strictly confidential.

1. We are all teachers in a classroom; I would like to know how you feel about diversity in terms of language and culture in your classroom?

2. How do you view your current classroom?

3. What would you say your learners enjoy most about your classroom?

4. What are some of the things you know they don't enjoy?

5. Do you find it difficult to teach learners of diverse cultures and language to yours?

6. Explain your difficulties.

7. What can us as teachers do to overcome this?

8. Why do you think it's important for learners to feel included? Especially at our school.

9. What approach can we as teachers use to make sure all learners feel included at all times in our lesson?

10. These are some of the pictures that learners drew of our classrooms and lessons and how they view it. In discussion with them about their pictures, they said they wanted this to be seen in their classrooms and lessons. So what can us as teachers do to help them achieve this?

Thank you for your participation once again, it is highly appreciated. Please also remember that everything is strictly confidential.

Appendix G – Drawings and Interview Schedule

Drawings and Interview Schedule

Data Generation through Drawings and Interviews

You are invited to participate in a study which explores the experiences of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Learners in a classroom that is not inclusive of their needs. This study will explore what the current situation is and you will like to bring about change. Your participation is voluntary and if you wish not answer any of the following questions in this discussion, you are more than free to withdraw from this study or not answer.

Introduction: Thank you in advance for participating in my study. As you know my topic is An Inclusive Learning Environment for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Learners. I would like explore your classroom experiences and challenges with language and culture barriers, and also work on strategies to bring about change.

Session 1

Today we will begin with your first Drawing. I have given you some colour crayons and a page. You are required to draw the classroom as you see it now. You can draw any part of the classroom, any teacher or any subject of your choice. It can be one of your favourite subjects or one that you do not particularly like. Do not worry about your drawing skills, I am not looking at that. What am I looking for is your view on culture and language within the classroom.

Session 2

Today we will begin with your second drawing. Again I have given you some colour crayons and a page. You are now required to draw the classroom the way you would like to see it in the future. Draw the same situation that you chose in your first picture but how you would like to improve it in terms of language and culture differences in the classroom. Do not worry about your drawing skills, I am not looking at that. What am I looking for is your view on culture and language within the classroom.

Session 3

Today I want to discuss the two pictures you have drawn, Picture 1 and pictures 2. Before we start with your pictures, I just want to know a few details about yourself.

Grade:

Subjects at school:

Area you reside in:

Home Language:

Please explain your first picture to me.

Please explain your second picture to me.

Why did you choose that particular situation to draw?

How would you like to see it change? (if needed)

Thank you for your participation once again, it is highly appreciated. Please also remember that everything strictly confidential.

Appendix H – Editor's Certificate

P.O. Box 100715

Scottsville

3209

6 December, 2018

To whom it may concern,

I have edited the following document for language errors, and in the process have checked the referencing and layout:

      Title: *An inclusive learning environment for culturally and linguistically diverse learners*

      Author: Jade Chetty

      Degree: Master of Education (Educational Psychology)

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Please feel free to contact me should you have any queries.

Kind regards,

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Appendix I – Turn It In Report

An Inclusive learning environment for culturally and lingusitically diverse learners

9%	6%	1%	8%
SIMILARITY INDEX	INTERNET SOURCES	PUBLICATIONS	STUDENT PAPERS

PRIMARY SOURCES

1	Submitted to University of KwaZulu-Natal Student Paper	2%
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11	Daniel, Shannon M.. "Learning to educate English language learners in pre-service elementary practicums.", Teacher Education Quarterly Publication	<1%
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