

How Inclusive is South African Inclusive Education? A Case Study of Three Foundation Phase Classes

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ABSTRACT Inclusive Education is about supporting all learners, educators and the system as a whole so that a full range of learning needs can be met. In this paper a descriptive analysis of the situation in South African schools regarding the implementation of the policy on inclusion (Education White Paper Six on Inclusive Education) is provided. This qualitative study, located within an interpretive paradigm, is part of the wider study on opinions about inclusive education of learners with minor physical and learning disabilities. The three schools were drawn from the five pilot schools for Inclusive Education used in the wider study. Purposive sampling was used to identify the participants. Using interviews with individual foundation phase teachers and classroom observations, data was generated. Issues such as academic exclusion; exclusion through the Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) / medium of instruction; and total exclusion from sports emerged from the case studies. The study reveals that there are hindrances in the implementation process hence learners are excluded in different ways. Due to the minimal support they get and the lack of relevant resources, teachers are failing to give necessary support needed by learners. Implications of the findings are discussed at length the paper makes recommendations thereof.