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PRINT: ISSN 0975-1122 ONLINE: ISSN 2456-6322

Int J Edu Sci, 53(1): 10-17 (2026)

DOI: 10.31901/24566322.2026/53.1.1426

Essential Competencies for Educators to Effectively Teach in Inclusive Education Environments: A Case Study of Thabo Mofutsanyana District

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KEYWORDS Attitudes. Capacity-building. Co-teaching. Diversity. Knowledge. Skills

ABSTRACT This study explores the competencies educators need to effectively teach in inclusive settings within South Africa's Thabo Mofutsanyana District. The study sought to explore educators' understanding of inclusive teaching practices, to identify the essential competencies required by educators for effectively teaching in inclusive education environments, and to propose strategies for enhancing the competencies of inclusive education educators. Using Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory as a framework, the study emphasises the connection between educators' knowledge, skills, and attitudes in creating inclusive environments. Grounded on a qualitative research approach and assuming a multiple case study design, the study gathered data through interviews and document analysis, showing that while educators understand inclusivity principles, they still face challenges in applying them effectively. Important competencies include understanding of diverse learning needs, use of sign language communication, braille machine operation, and technology-integrated pedagogy. In conclusion, continuous capacity-building initiatives are essential for empowering inclusive education educators to remain effective.