

Training quality Learner Support Teachers at North-West University: a framework for meeting the educational challenge

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Thesis accepted for the degree *Philosophiae Doctor* in
Learner Support at the North-West University

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Graduation: May 2020

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DECLARATIONS

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis titled *Training quality Learner Support Teachers at North-West University: a framework for meeting the educational challenge* is my own original work and that I have not previously, in its entirety or in part, submitted this thesis at any university for a degree. This thesis, submitted to the North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus, is in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree *Doctor Philosophy* in *Learner Support*.

I understand and accept that the copies that are submitted for examination are the property of the university.

Signature of student



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Letter of permission

Permission to submit the manuscript for degree purposes

The student is hereby granted permission to submit her thesis for the degree *Doctor Philosophy* in *Learner Support* at the North-West University.

The student's work has been submitted to TurnItIn and a satisfactory report has been obtained. Please note as the articles/manuscripts have been submitted and accepted these are not included in the TurnItIn report.

Supervisor:



.....
Dr LD Preston

PREFACE

Article format

This thesis was completed in fulfilment of the requirements for the completion of the degree *Doctor Philosophy in Learner Support* at the North-West University.

The thesis has been prepared according to the guidelines for a thesis in article format of the North-West University.

Journal

The four articles / manuscripts were individually submitted for publication to the Journals / Book chapters according to the author guidelines of the Journal / Book chapter upon submission.

Chapter	Content	Current status of Articles/Manuscripts
1	Overview of the study	
2	Article 1: The development of education for learners with diverse learning needs in the South African context: a bio-ecological systems analysis.	Accepted for publication in the African Journal of Disability (AJOD).
3	Article 2/Manuscript 18: Training quality Learner Support post-graduate teachers at a higher education institution to meet the educational challenges in South Africa: Perceptions of university lecturers	Accepted as a book chapter in Teaching and Learning Research in Higher Education. ARAPBS vol 8 manuscript 18
4	Article 3: Do alumni student teachers who complete the Learner Support BEd Honours programme at Higher Educational Institutions meet the educational challenge?	Submitted to The South African Journal of Education (SAJE)
5	Article 4/Manuscript 19: A Higher Education framework for Teacher Professional Development in Learner Support	Accepted as a book chapter in Teaching and Learning Research in Higher Education. ARAPBS vol 8 manuscript 19
6	Summary, conclusions and recommendations emerging from the study.	

Page numbers

This thesis is presented as a whole and is numbered as such. On submission for publication, each manuscript was numbered from page 1.

Note to the examiners

The acceptance/submission letter from the relevant journal, as well as the author guidelines of each journal is supplied in the addenda. The tables and figures were numbered in the articles or manuscripts and will therefore not follow in sequence. These tables and figures will also not appear in the List of Tables/Figures.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I dedicate this study to:

- The Lord GOD Almighty. To Him be all the glory and honour.

Psalm 19:1

**The heavens declare the glory of God;
and the firmament showeth his handy work.**

- My family who supported and encouraged me.

Special acknowledgement to:

- Dr Lynn Preston, my supervisor and research mentor, who guided me through the study. Thank you very, very much.
- Prof Johnnie, my co-supervisor, thank you for your assistance.
- Laura Steyn for the graphics.
- The language editor, Valerie Viljoen, thank you so much.
- Kirchner van Deventer, thank you very much for the bibliographic control and the technical editing of the articles and the final thesis.
- My friend Tertia Jordaan who encouraged me when I wanted to quit.

ABSTRACT

The implementation of Inclusive education has, heretofore, been problematic and the transformation process of special (diverse) education has not been realised. The motivation for this study was; firstly, that after 24 years of democracy, learners with barriers to learning do not as yet receive the quality education that will address their educational needs. Secondly, a further motivation for this study was that teachers are unmercifully criticised for inadequate teaching and learning practices in their classrooms. This made me pose the question of whether we adequately train quality Learner Support Teachers, specifically in BEd Honours specialising in Learner Support.

This study is comprised of four sub studies, reported in four articles. Article 1 (Chapter 2) aims to give an overview of the development of special (diverse) education for learners with diverse learning needs in the South African context. The development of diverse education is presented from a bio-ecological systems perspective to show the systemic strengths and challenges in each system, and how the interactive processes between the systems impact on learners with barriers to learning. A document analysis served as method of data generation by means of research literature, including academic articles, reports, policies and policy reviews. The bio-ecological model helped to determine successes and challenges in each educational level by means of categorising data within the levels of education systems.

Article 2 (Manuscript 18 for a book chapter) explores the perceptions of university lecturers of Learner Support modules in the BEd honours programmes at higher education institutions. The motivation for this article is that teachers need to be trained to address the diverse educational needs of learners with barriers to learning. Therefore, the perceptions of lecturers at higher education institutions are important concerning current practices used for curriculum development, as well as teaching and learning strategies. The findings indicated that lecturers are aware of their roles, which are to prepare post graduate students to cope with the diversity of educational needs of learners with barriers to learning. Yet, there is a gap between theoretical and practical training and the curriculum must be developed in a more practical manner to be more flexible in order to adjust to the contexts of both the post graduate students as well as learners in their classrooms.

Article 3 explores the perceptions of alumni post graduate students who are currently in a teaching post. Obtaining information directly from alumni students themselves would provide insight into how their training relates to the reality experienced in the classrooms, which was the motivation for this article.

Considering the South African context, teachers are confronted with diverse educational challenges on a daily basis, therefore, the strengths and challenges of the training they received, will either equip or hamper them in their daily functioning in the classroom. The findings revealed that alumni students highly value the theoretical training they received, but also identify a gap in practical application.

All things considered, the findings of the first three articles enabled us to compile a framework (Article 4) that suggested curriculum requirements for training quality Learner Support students at higher education institutions. To date, there is no such framework for BEd Hons Learner Support training, resulting in this framework contributing as a starting point for curriculum requirements, and hopefully initiating further development and research towards a national framework.

Keywords: bio-ecological perspective; diverse needs; educational systemic levels; inclusive education; special educational needs; teacher training; theory and practice, Learner Support.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION, BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY, PROBLEM STATEMENT, THE AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY AND OVERVIEW OF THE METHODOLOGY

Introduction

In my capacity as a lecturer and teacher educator of the subject Learner Support, it came to my notice that BEd Honours in Learner Support post graduate students note that they experience challenges regarding the application of theory within the classroom situation. This being said, I realised that, apart from this feedback, various other challenges were also evident. Besides the outcomes, there are no specific guidelines in the curriculum which specify exactly how to train effective post graduate students. This, after conducting a literature search, I concluded that the gap in Learner Support training (in some countries still referred to as special educational needs) between theory and practice is a worldwide phenomenon. Therefore, if we as lecturers want to add value to the BEd Honours in Learner Support training, a study on the requirements of such a curriculum, should be done, which could assist in narrowing this identified gap between theory and practice.

In this chapter I present an overview of the study comprising of the background to the study, the problem statement, the purpose of the study and the research questions. I elaborate on the theoretical framework that guided the study and provide an explanation of terminology. In the overview of the methodology I summarise the methodology applied in each of the four articles presented as chapters two to five. The limitations of the study, contributions of the study and an outline of chapters, conclude the study.

1.1 Background to the study

In the previous dispensation, South African learners with special needs were taught by teachers specifically trained to teach particular categories of “special learners”. Assessment was done by specialised remedial teachers and/or other professionals, for example, counsellors and psychologists (Swart & Pettipher, 2011). In the current dispensation of inclusive education, it is a requirement that all learners are accommodated in ordinary and mainstream classrooms. This must be accomplished by generally trained teachers, who must handle the accommodation and support all learners in their classrooms.

Therefore, learners are screened and assessed, and their problems identified by the class teacher and/or the screening team, such as the school-based support team (SBST). An individual support plan should then be drawn up, implemented and if assistance is needed from the district-based

support team (DBST), a request form must be completed and submitted (DBE, 2014). These requirements have had major implications for the teacher and the education system in general.

The National policy on Special Needs Education, i.e. Education White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001), represents a commitment made by the South African Government towards the maximum inclusion and participation of all learners in the National Education System. This commitment can be seen as a preventative as well as a supportive approach as it promotes equality and minimises discrimination by providing more or additional support to at risk learners (DBE, 2014). Prior to 1994, special needs education was anchored within a paradigm based upon the medical deficit model (Swart & Pettipher, 2011), provided by racially segregated education departments (Engelbrecht, Forlin, Eloff & Swart, 2001). As from the mid to later 1990s, a paradigm shift to the social ecological model occurred, which preceded the shift to inclusive education (Swart & Pettipher, 2011). This paradigm shift resulted in a noteworthy transformation of the education system, including the support offered to learners with barriers to learning and development (Bouwer, 2011). One of the most prominent shifts, which resulted from this ontological shift, was a radical reformation of special needs education terminology, policy and educational structures. The term 'barriers to learning and development' (DoE, 2001) was preferred to the term special needs education (Swart & Pettipher, 2011); remedial education was replaced with learning support (Bouwer, 2011) and the terms 'disability' and 'impairments' are used when reference is made to medical factors that contribute to barriers to learning and development (DoE, 2001). The changed paradigm of the inclusive model required alternative thinking and teaching strategies for teaching learners with diverse needs (Swart & Pettipher, 2011).

As previously mentioned, all these changes had major implications for teachers and the education system in general, therefore, the Education White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001) served as a framework for the establishment of an education and training system, which would meet the diverse and special learning needs of learners in schools. More recently, an additional policy document, namely The Policy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS) (DBE, 2014) was implemented. This document highlights the procedures and steps for implementation and sustainability of the Education White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001) in ordinary and special schools. The SIAS serves as a guideline to identify and assess the individual needs of learners in order to provide an individual support plan for each learner who needs additional support.

Furthermore, supported by the National Curriculum Statement Grades R–12 (DBE, 2011), the SIAS document (DBE, 2014) provides a framework for schools to determine the needs and

requirements of all learners, to manage teaching and learning processes and to provide the necessary learning support and assistance for all school-going children.

With the BEd Honours (BEd Hons) in Learner Support at the North-West University (NWU) as a point of departure this process was explored during the research as each university's path towards the development of Learner Support programmes differs.

1.2 Problem statement

The inefficiency of attempts worldwide to sustain transformation in education, in order to address the challenges (Frisk & Larson, 2011), is also relevant in South Africa. Education for sustainable development requires a constant and holistic approach to continuous educational reform (UNESCO, 2016). Quoting from paragraph 89 (UNESCO, 1997): "A basic premise of education for sustainability is that, just as there is a wholeness and interdependence to life in all its forms, so must there be a unity and wholeness to efforts to understand it and ensure its continuation..."

Political, economic and social changes (Swart & Pettipher, 2011) in South Africa since 1994, brought specific educational challenges to teacher training. In order to circumvent these challenges, inclusive education was seen as the solution. Although there are various expectations and idealistic perceptions around the implementation of Inclusive education in South African schools, the resulting implementation of Inclusive educational practices, is questioned (Engelbrecht, Nel, Smit & Van Deventer, 2016). The Department of Education states in their definition of Inclusive education and training that "*all children and youth can learn and that all children and youth need support*" and aims to "*enable education structures, systems and learning methodologies to meet the needs of all learners*" (DoE, 2001:6). This implies that Education White Paper 6 acknowledges that learners are different and have different learning needs and should, therefore, be given the opportunity to receive individualised support in order to optimise their learning and development (DBE, 2014; DoE, 2001).

With the delay in policy formulation of special needs education from 1994 to 2001, the launching of White Paper 6 and the delay of implementation, special needs education did not reform at the expected pace in South Africa (DBE, 2015). This situation brought about many gaps that needed to be bridged, amongst others, the gap between the remedial teacher and the new concept of Learner Support teacher (Bojuwoye, Moletsane, Stofile, Moolla & Sylvester, 2014), resulting in universities needing to (Yusuf, Priyono & Yeagerb, 2011) adapt their education practices.

Furthermore, there is great concern surrounding the underachievement of learners in schools worldwide (Spratt & Florian, 2013), and South African schools are not exempt from this problem (Zuze & Reddy, 2014).

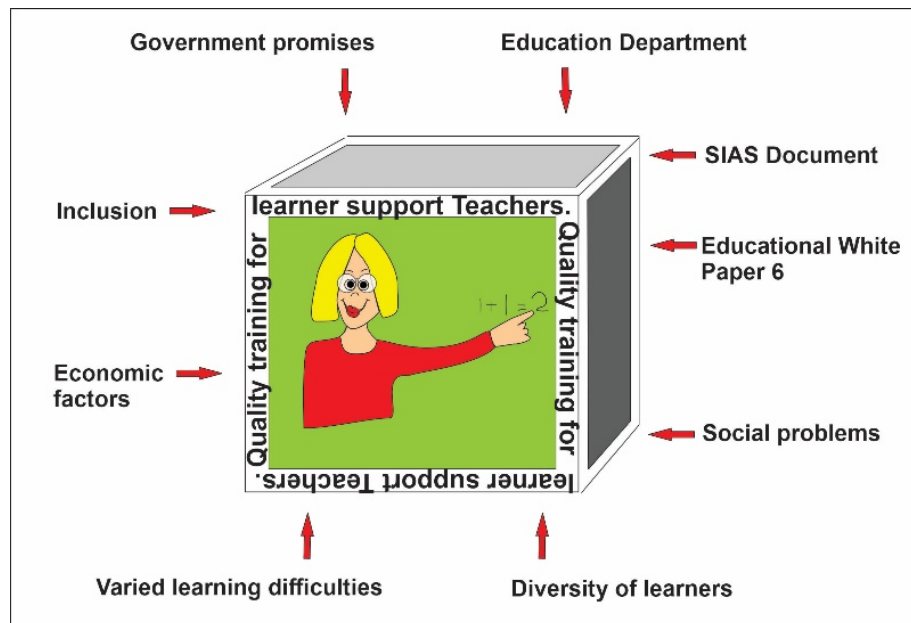


Figure 1-1: Schematic representation of external challenges that confront, dispute or test the current outcomes of education and Learner Support Teachers against the expected or ideal outcomes of education

Expectations of the education system and the reality of the presenting situation, regarding the implementation of inclusive education, do not align (Engelbrecht et al., 2016). Although there are many contributing factors, teacher training and education or professional teacher development is a main contributing factor (Spratt & Florian, 2013). Frisk and Larson (2011) pose that this worldwide problem is due to current education systems, and problems experienced in specialised teacher training, especially considering the gap between theory and practice (Spratt & Florian, 2013); South Africa is no different (Engelbrecht et al., 2016).

Therefore, as in other countries, by developing a framework for training quality Learner Support Teachers for the South African context, a solution for this concern might be achieved. Having such a framework to merge theory and practice is commonly used internationally, for example; at the University of Aberdeen (Scotland) students who enrol for the *Professional Graduate Diploma in Education* (PGDE) complete a theoretical common core (the Professional Studies unit), which consists of workshops and lectures. The student then applies the theoretical knowledge to practice, in the student's school context (Spratt & Florian, 2013).

In Germany, teachers who are training for special education also do a basic course of two stages: a theoretical component and then a course in practical pedagogical training (European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 2016).

In South Africa, the Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development, is a framework used for the development of teaching and practice in schools, which should enable students to learn from practice (Gravett et al., 2015). However, this framework is not effective enough and a gap remains. Research that was conducted for the Department of Basic Education and the Department of Higher Education and Training by the University of Johannesburg, identified this gap and highlighted a void between theory and practice (Gravett et al., 2015). Furthermore, in the Education White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001) and the SIAS document (DBE, 2014), there is no definite or clearly defined indication of who is qualified, suitable or capable of doing the assessments, developing support programmes and applying these programmes, as the documents only refer to “teachers” in a general sense. This again emphasises the training or lack thereof when considering the training that a “teacher” needs to function effectively in an inclusive classroom. Furthermore, the assessment and intervention of any programmes are complicated by the scope and diversity of needs of specific learners, which range from contextual disadvantages, social problems, disabilities and learning difficulties (Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana, 2010). These aspects all compound the dire need for properly trained specialisation teachers.

With the above statements emanating from the Department (DoE, 2001), come great challenges for the new generation of pre-service teachers who will be standing in front of Inclusive classes (See Figure 1-1). The question that is asked is: what will happen? Will it be the same as in the case of Scotland, where fourth year graduates/teachers are not seen as sufficiently prepared to accommodate the diverse range of needs of learners (Spratt & Florian, 2013) as the training in pedagogical methods is often too theoretical, with the impact in practice being questioned (Mulkeen, 2010)? Therefore, with no specialised remedial teacher, as in the past, there is a current need for specialised Learner Support Teachers to support young graduate teachers and to fulfil the requirements of the Inclusive policy (DoE, 2001).

In conclusion, looking at South Africa, with the diverse range of cultures and learner needs; for a teacher to be considered a specialist in Learner Support they must not only be adequately trained in the process of developing a profile for each learner through screening, identification, assessment and support as referred to in the SIAS (DBE, 2014), they must also be able to progressively and continually support the learner with the mutually agreed upon individual support plan (ISP).

As there are no, or very little, Learner Support elements in most fourth year teacher training courses at South African universities, it is not known how, or if, requirements are complied with, therefore, developing a proposed framework for training quality Learner Support Teachers in the BEd Hons level in Learner Support, will narrow the gap between theory and practice and in doing

so, be of invaluable support for Learner Support Teachers (See Figure 1-1) in counteracting external challenges.

Therefore, in considering this, applicable training must be considered mandatory (See Figure 1-1) and constructive ways to find solutions are imperative (Rowe, 2007; UNESCO, 1997). In order to confront these challenges, an effective reform in education and training is needed (Frisk & Larson, 2011), whereby a framework for training quality Learner Support Teachers in South Africa will be the first step in practically solving the problem. I thus argue that, although teacher training and development is not the sole responsibility of higher institutions, the contribution of a balanced theoretical and practical-based programme can contribute to specialist teacher confidence and success in practice as well as whole child development.

Therefore, it is the duty of institutions to deliver programmes of quality to equip Specialist Learner Support Teachers to be able to competently face the “real” educational world (Donald et al., 2010) and succeed. In order to achieve this, a framework must be created, guided by the present gap between practical and theoretical aspects and the legally required functionality of a specialised teacher in order to face and conquer the challenges that accompany the delivery of quality education in learning environments that are often not inclusive.

1.3 Purpose of the study

Based on the problem statement, the main purpose of this study was to construct a framework for training quality Learner Support Teachers in South Africa to meet the educational challenge.

From the main purpose of the study, the following secondary aims and objectives were derived:

- to qualitatively explore the current practices used for curriculum development in BEd Hons programmes in Learner Support;
- to explore the current practices used for teaching and learning in BEd Hons programmes in Learner Support;
- to explore the perceptions of lecturers teaching the modules in the BEd Hons programmes in Learner Support;
- to explore the perceptions of teachers who completed the BEd Hons programme in Learner Support;
- to use the information gathered to identify possible gaps in the BEd Hons Learner Support programme.

1.4 Research questions

It is with this in mind, that the following primary research question was formulated:

What must a framework for training quality Learner Support Teachers entail in order to meet the educational challenges in South Africa?

The secondary questions asked, are:

- What current practices are used for curriculum development in Learner Support specialised training in BEd Hons programmes?
- What are the current practices used in teaching and learning in the BEd Hons programme in Learner Support?
- How do the lecturers teaching the modules in the BEd Hons programme in Learner Support perceive the modules?
- What are the perceptions of teachers who completed the BEd Hons programme in Learner Support?
- What are the gaps that are evident in the BEd Hons Learner Support programme?

1.5 The theoretical framework that guided the study

The theoretical framework that guided this study is the bio-ecological model, namely the Process-Person-Context-Time model (PPCT) (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998), which was developed from Bronfenbrenner's socio-ecological model of child development (Bronfenbrenner, 1993). The socio-ecological model was expanded to the PPCT model to include the processes of human development (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998). This theoretical framework facilitates the structure of the study in that it gives a framework in which the researcher can explain various concepts that arise in the study and qualify these from a systemic platform. The bounded structure, consisting of the four environmental levels and timeframe, explains the direct and indirect influences that impact on a child's life (Swart & Pettipher, 2011). It consists of elements that interact, are interrelated and interdependent, but also contribute to whole child development (Bouwer, 2011).

The PPCT theory includes four components: *Process*, *Person*, *Context* and *Time*. The theory describes the interactive relationships between the components (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998). The *Process* component is placed at the heart of the model and shows the reciprocal interaction between the child and objects, symbols and persons in the environment. The interaction is called proximal (or near) processes, which defines child development over a period of time.

Process also includes distal processes, which is a more indirect influence, referring to the ability of the family to support the child. The degree of influence of *Process* on the outcomes is determined by the child's characteristics, the context and timeframe in which development takes place (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998, 2006).

The three types of *Person* or biological characteristics: dispositions, ecological resources and demand (Swart & Pettipher, 2011), affect the proximal processes by either initiating, sustaining or inhibiting them (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998). Dispositions are the influences or inputs that initiate, inhibit or sustain proximal processes (Swart & Pettipher, 2011). Ecological resources are bio-ecological barriers or assets that influence the participation in proximal processes during a certain developmental stage. Demand characteristics refer to the factors that encourage or discourage actions from the environment and can also inhibit or sustain proximal processes (Swart & Pettipher, 2011).

Together, these biological characteristics form a *Process* structure that influences the outcomes of proximal *Processes* (Bronfenbrenner, 1993, 2001) and is embedded in the influential *Context* (micro-, meso-, exo- and macrosystems) in which development takes place (Bronfenbrenner, 1993, 2001). For outcomes to be effective, reciprocal interactions in proximal processes should occur regularly and become more complex during a developmental timeframe (Swart & Pettipher, 2011).

The *Context* (Bronfenbrenner, 1993) in the model encompasses four environmental levels: The microsystem, referring to the structures close to the child and with which the child is in direct contact, include the physical, social and psychological environment, e.g. the family, the school and peers/friends. The mesosystem refers to processes of interactions and accompanying influences of the different microsystems on the child, e.g. the interaction between the child's parents and the teacher at school. The exosystem is the broader social system that affects the child, but with which the child has no direct contact, e.g. a parent's work. The macrosystem refers to a society or social group with its own traditions, cultural values and even laws, e.g. ethnic groups or religious groups that influence child development (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998; Swart & Pettipher, 2011). A fifth system, the chronosystem, was later added to the model and it refers to a timeframe linked to the occurrence of the incidents influencing child development, but also the role the child attributes to own development (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998; Swart & Pettipher, 2011).

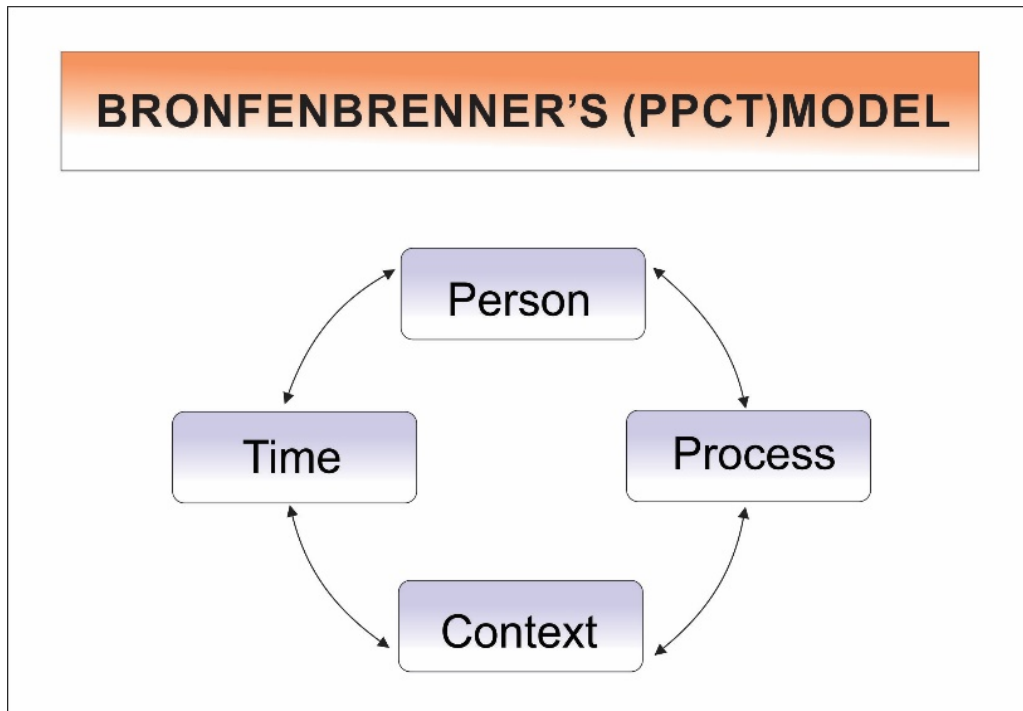


Figure 1-2: Bronfenbrenner's PPCT model

The PPCT model (See Figure 1-2) served as basis for exploring a framework for the BEd Hons Learner Support programme in the many facets of its application in the work environment of the teacher.

It supports the enquiry into teacher training, concerning the approach to understanding problems, assessment and planning interventions, allowing for the exploration of specialised teacher training requirements and work place needs from an integrated systemic perspective as well as keeping in mind the developmental perspective, as a principle of the inclusive approach (DoE, 2001). The PPCT model is important in the holistic support to learners as it proposes a balance between internal and external developmental processes. In further considering of the holistic approach to Learner Support (DBE, 2014), proposed by the Department of Education, this model underpins the learner-centred systemic and developmental approach in teaching and learning, and support (DoE, 2001). The model also underwrites reciprocal interactions between the child and the environmental systems (Swart & Pettipher, 2011) that are required of the specialist teacher, as they are supposed to be theoretically and practically equipped to meet the diverse needs of learners in the classroom.

Another motivation for the suitability of the theory for this study is the important role of the teacher in the screening, identification and assessment process to determine barriers to learning and development, as described in the SIAS document (DBE, 2014), as it is based on both systemic and developmental factors. Once again, the person-environment interaction, as described in the PPCT theory, underwrites the holistic approach to support as required, due to the Inclusive approach, by the South African Department of Education.

Influences from or the processes in the micro- and mesosystems usually also have a strong impact on the child, as these systems provide immediate support and protection to the child; the school and teacher, as educator, play an active role in the micro and mesosystem in which the child develops (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994). Therefore, the PPCT theory is a suitable enquiry tool to investigate a framework for the training of the teacher, as an agent, in the development process of the child (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998). The principles of effective and full Inclusion in the classroom (DoE, 2001) can be linked to the reciprocal interactions between process, person, context and time, underpinned by the PPCT theory (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006).

In conclusion, if the above aspects are thoroughly considered, the PPCT theory presents an ideal all-encompassing model as framework for identification, assessment and classification of occurrences during child development phases and the effects of these occurrences on development (Griffore & Phenice, 2016), as well as facilitating the exploration of the environment, the specialised teachers and the relationships regarding their roles in the work place.

1.6 Explanation of terminology

1.6.1 Training

Training is the action of teaching or instructing a person to enhance their knowledge and skills with the aim to improve performance (Business Dictionary, 2016). For the purpose of this study, training will refer to educational activities to convey specialised knowledge and skills to students in the BEd Hons Learner Support programme, to equip them to deal with the educational challenges in South Africa.

1.6.2 Learner Support

No specific definition of *Learner Support* could be found in the consulted literature that suited the holistic support as posed in this study. In the general explanation of *learning* support that could be found (Alant & Harty, 2011): learning is described as consisting of three aspects: the desire for mastery, which encompasses the personal potential and abilities of the child; the press for mastery, including some learning principles like planning, motivation, goal setting, active

engagement and reinforcement; and the physical and social environment in the classroom, however this explanation does not specifically refer to the influence of all the environmental systems. A second set of explanations found in literature refers to the Learner Support offered to, in most cases, distance education students. This support is within the areas of correspondence, tuition and support in methods of learning (Bates, 2014). This form of support is not analytical or inclusive of the PPCT model and cannot be used as definition for this study.

The term *Learner Support* seems to be more encompassing in describing both internal and external influences, and therefore, I pose my own explanation of Learner Support as applicable to this study. Learner Support can be seen as the range of methods and strategies employed by educational institutions and educationists to manage teaching and learning processes in order to ensure that all learners have access to equal educational opportunities. As assistance to learners should be holistic, both internal and external barriers to learning and development must be considered, which originates from their reciprocal interactions in diverse contexts with diverse people under diverse circumstances. All support strategies should sustain or improve development towards total well-being of the learner.

1.6.3 Teachers

A teacher, being synonymous to a school teacher or educator, is an individual who underwent formal training to gain professional qualifications to provide education for learners. In this study, teacher will refer to a person with the necessary professional qualifications to have the knowledge and skills, and who accepts the responsibility of delivering quality education in their field of expertise (Loughran, 2011). Furthermore, a teacher is also seen as a person who provides quality education through learner-centred teaching and learning (Landsberg & Matthews, 2016).

1.6.4 Framework

A framework is a logical and sequential design or presentation of identified key concepts, showing the relationships amongst the concepts, and can be derived from existing theories or related concepts (University of Southern California, 2016).

In this study, a framework of ideas will be presented to support, extend or even challenge existing knowledge about training high quality Learner Support Teachers in South Africa, with the BEd Hons in Learner Support at the North-West University as point of departure. The overall objective of the framework will be to present the scientific findings in a meaningful way so as to congruence existing training with reality in practice.

1.6.5 Quality

Quality refers to being superior, or showing excellence or worth (Collins Concise Dictionary, 2005). In this study, quality will refer to the excellence in training of teachers in BEd Hons in Learner Support at universities, to provide them with the capabilities they require to be successful Learner Support Teachers.

1.6.6 Educational challenges

Educational challenges refer to factors that confront, dispute or test the current outcomes of education against the expected or ideal outcomes of education (UNICEF, 2000) (See Figure 1-1). Educational challenges for the purpose of this study will refer to any factor or circumstance that hinders teaching and learning to take place effectively.

1.7 Overview of methodology

Article 1 presents the application of a bio-ecological approach to highlight the development of education for learners with diverse learning needs in South Africa by exploring the interactive processes within the systemic levels in the South African education system, which affects the learner on the person dimension of the bio-ecological approach. To determine successes and challenges in each level, a large body of research literature, which included academic articles, reports, policies and policy reviews, were utilised by analysing the documents. In order to obtain data a literature review was performed. Article 2 (manuscript 18) reports on a qualitative study, using semi-structured interviews, to explore the perceptions of university lecturers of Learner Support modules in the BEd Honours programmes at three higher education institutions. These perceptions concerned current practices used for curriculum development, as well as teaching and learning practices. In this article, due to the exploratory nature of this research, an interpretivist (Creswell, 2013; Denzin & Lincoln, 2008) was justified with a descriptive qualitative approach (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). This design facilitated the description the characteristics (views) of the population and enabled the researcher to interpret aspects of the elements evident in the data obtained. Data was gathered by performing interviews with open-ended questions (See addendum B). The qualitative data was analysed inductively through Tesch's method. This process was followed throughout the data gathering processes regarding all the articles.

Regarding article 3, in keeping with the study, the same research design, and approach was followed as with the previous articles. The purpose of the inquiry, for this article, was to determine the perceptions of alumni teacher students who completed a Learner Support BEd Hons programme at the Higher Education Institution where I am a lecturer, to conclude whether they

meet the educational challenge in the South African context. In Article 4 (manuscript 19), based on the findings of Articles 2 and 3, the aim was to inductively derive a higher education framework for Teacher Professional Development (TPD) in the BEd Hons Learner Support through HE. All methods regarding data gathering were performed by interviews and sampling was done by selective sampling as these participants had specific knowledge of the phenomena. Snowball sampling was applied when participants, by word of mouth, recruited other willing individuals to participate in the study.

1.8 Ethical considerations

An application for ethical clearance was submitted to the Ethics Committee NWU and granted (ethics approval number 00530-17-A2).

1.9 Limitations of the study

Curriculum developers at other universities might not be willing to reveal the contents of the BEd Honours course at their university. Furthermore, participants' attitudes might also pose a problem as there is a tendency for academics to be closed to scrutiny and they may feel that the researcher is prying. There may also be barriers regarding the BEd Hons students as they may not be positively inclined towards research.

1.10 Contributions of the study

On a theoretical level, the findings added to the body of knowledge about how the PPCT theory could be applied to develop a framework for training quality Learner Support Teachers in South Africa to meet the educational challenge.

On a practical level, this study supported the design of a framework for training quality Learner Support Teachers in South Africa to meet the educational challenge, which can be implemented at various institutions.

Thirdly, the research and the resulting framework contribute towards the general support and facilitation of new Learning support teachers in practice, and provide them with practical skills and knowledge that will enable them to be quality support teachers.

1.11 Chapter outline

Table 1-1: Chapter layout of this study

Chapter	Content	Current status of Articles/Manuscripts
1	Overview of the study	
2	Article 1: The development of education for learners with diverse learning needs in the South African context: a bio-ecological systems analysis.	Accepted for publication in the African Journal of Disability (AJOD).
3	Article 2/Manuscript 18: Training quality Learner Support post-graduate teachers at a higher education institution to meet the educational challenges in South Africa: Perceptions of university lecturers	Accepted as a book chapter in Teaching and Learning Research in Higher Education. ARAPBS vol 8 manuscript 18
4	Article 3: Do alumni student teachers who complete the Learner Support BEd Honours programme at Higher Educational Institutions meet the educational challenge?	Submitted to The South African Journal of Education (SAJE)
5	Article 4/Manuscript 19: A Higher Education framework for Teacher Professional Development in Learner Support	Accepted as a book chapter in Teaching and Learning Research in Higher Education. ARAPBS vol 8 manuscript 19
6	Summary, conclusions and recommendations emerging from the study.	

CHAPTER 2

ARTICLE 1

THE DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATION FOR LEARNERS WITH DIVERSE LEARNING NEEDS IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT: A BIO-ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS ANALYSIS

Accepted for publication in the African Journal of Disability (AJOD).

SEE ADDENDUM E: ACCEPTANCE/SUBMISSION PROOF OF ARTICLES AND
MANUSCRIPTS P180-181

SEE ADDENDUM F: AUTHOR GUIDELINES FOR SUBMISSION P187-196

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Title: The development of education for learners with diverse learning needs in the South African context: a bio-ecological systems analysis

Abstract

Background: Prior to 1994, special education in South Africa was marginalised and fragmented, and therefore, the new democratic government promoted inclusive education as a means to transform education in general and diverse education in particular. However, transformation in diverse education is seemingly moving forward at a snail's pace; too slow to benefit all learners experiencing barriers to learning and development.

Objectives: This article serves a dual purpose: firstly, to apply a bio-ecological approach to highlight the historic development of diverse education and secondly, to explore the interactive processes within the systemic levels in the South African education system, which affects the learner on the person dimension of the bio-ecological approach.

Method: A document analysis was utilised to collect information by means of exploring a large body of research literature, which included academic articles, reports, policies and policy reviews. Data were categorised within the systems of the bio-ecological model to determine successes and challenges in each level.

Results: Results from the bio-ecological systems analysis of related literature revealed many successes but also many challenges that inhibit change, growth and development in the South African education system, even more so for the child experiencing barriers to learning.

Conclusion: The transformation process of change from *what was* to *what should be*, regarding diverse education, seems to be stuck at *what is* and not moving forward to what *could be*. It has not transformed significantly enough to fill the gap between reality and the envisaged aim or dream of quality education for all.

Introduction

Worldwide, the implementation of inclusive education (IE) has been problematic (Berlach & Chambers, 2011) and South Africa (SA) is no exception. Education for learners with diverse educational needs, embedded within the Inclusive model (Du Plessis, 2013), is still not conforming to the expectations envisaged in Education White Paper 6 (EWP6) (DoE, 2001) concerning equal education for all (Engelbrecht, Nel, Smit & van Deventer, 2016). By creating opportunities for effective learning, the Constitutional right of every child of school going age in SA (Geldenhuys & Wevers, 2013; Pillay & Di Terlizzi, 2009), including those learners with barriers to learning and development (DoE, 2001), can be addressed.

The Department of Basic Education (DBE (formerly DoE)) states that its goal is to minimise, remove and prevent barriers to learning and development in the educational setting by attending to the unique needs of the individual learner (DoE, 2001). This will be achieved by early identification and addressing the diverse needs of learners. However, the gap between reality and this ideal of IE is not attained (Engelbrecht et al., 2018). Despite the commitment of the department to take responsibility to create equal opportunities for all learners (DoE, 2001) and sustain effective learning in schools, general education remains poor (Donohue & Bornman, 2014), with the process of change being slow (Reddy, Juan & Meyiwa, 2013). In SA, as internationally, the attempts to minimise exclusion are ineffective, resulting in exclusion being more evident than ever (Kaur & Arora, 2014).

Twenty-four years into democracy, SA still cannot claim that all learners profit from quality education and service provision contrary to the vision of government to correct inequalities (Dreyer, 2017). The lack of appropriate service provision by the DBE impedes and obstructs their own set benchmarks for educational reform initiatives and generates even more challenges (Du Toit & Forlin, 2009). This situation evolves into what is described by Donohue and Bornman (2014:1) as a ‘crisis in education’, which influences the realisation of IE and jeopardises its success (Nel, Nel & Hugo, 2012). This brings about the question that guided this research, namely; from a bio-ecological perspective, which successes and challenges contribute to the current state of education for learners experiencing barriers to learning?

Methodology

The literature review included a search through academic articles, academic books, policies and reports on special education in SA, as well as Inclusive education in SA and internationally. Sources that did not address the history of special education, prior and post 1994 diverse education, or the bio-ecological model, were eliminated.

Keywords used were: special education in the South African context (and internationally), special needs education, diversity in education, DBE policy documents, DBE reports, problems in special education, challenges in special education, Inclusive education, implementation of Inclusive education – or a combination of the above-mentioned keywords.

A bio-ecological systems perspective: A person system within a contextual system

The inclusive approach is ‘consistent with a systemic and developmental approach to understanding problems and planning action’ (DoE, 2001:19). Bronfenbrenner’s bio-ecological Process–Person–Context–Time (PPCT) model (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998) provides a comprehensive framework reflecting both the systemic and developmental dimensions, making this model useful for the classification of phenomena related to the person-context interaction (Griffore & Phenice, 2016). Thus, the PPCT model will serve as a theoretical framework from which the various conceptions in the study can be explained and qualified. This framework facilitates the systemic explanation of the complex reciprocal interactions and proximal processes between the individual and the layers of systems involved in diverse education (Zimmerman & Kontosh, 2007).

The *Process* dimension in the PPCT model, is the core of the model and represents dual interactions between the *Person* dimension (the individual) and the *Context* dimension (the layers of environments) in a *Time* dimension (a period of time). This core initiates and sustains human development. In the *Process* dimension, the specific forms of interactions within the time period of the proximal processes, have the capacity to directly or indirectly impact on human development, resulting in the physical, biological, psychological, social and/or cultural development of the individual within systemic contexts (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998; 2006). Furthermore, internal and external reciprocal interacting factors between the processes of human development and the systems, result in change, growth and development or stagnation, withering and underdevelopment for both the individual and the systems (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998). Proximal processes extend to multifaceted relationships and interactions between the individual’s personal and interpersonal processes, other individuals, objects or symbols. These proximal processes occur in the immediate environment and relate mostly to the *Micro* environment (Swart & Pettipher, 2016). For the processes to activate and sustain development (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994), regular occurrence of specific events over a period of time is a prerequisite (Jackson, Zhao, Fitzgerald, von Eye & Harold, 2006).

The capacity of the proximal processes are determined by personal inherent qualities or characteristics (See Diagram 1), as well as both the direct and distant environments (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998; 2006). Personal inherent qualities, such as attributes of the individual, interact with each other.

These qualities are determined by force, resource and demand characteristics that directly influence the proximal processes in order to either support or interrupt development. Force characteristics are aspects such as temperaments and personalities that activate and support proximal processes, for example, motivation and persistence, or characteristics that unsettle proximal processes, such as impulsivity, distractibility and aggression (Swart & Pettipher, 2016; Zimmerman & Kontosh, 2007).

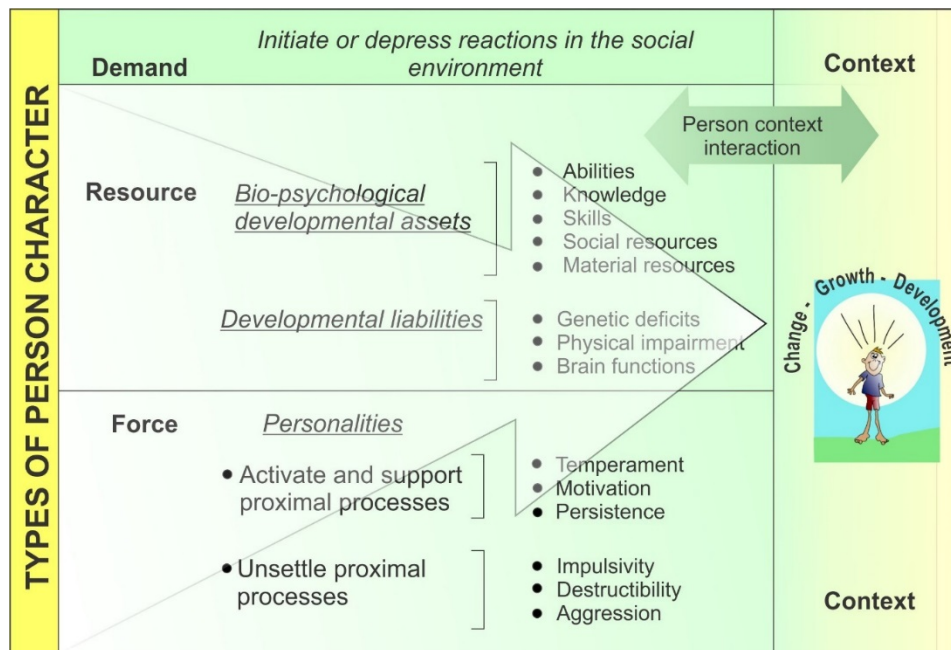


Diagram 1: The application of the PPCT in child development

In addition, force characteristics (locus of control and self-control) encompass the belief systems of the individual in relation to the larger systems (Jackson et al., 2006). Resource characteristics determine whether the individual is able to interact successfully during the proximal processes. Resources are defined as biopsychological developmental assets (abilities, knowledge, skills, experiences, and social and material resources) or developmental liabilities (genetic deficits, physical impairments and damage to brain function) (Jackson et al., 2006). Demand characteristics are actions that initiate or depress reactions from the social environment (Swart & Pettipher, 2016) to enable or interrupt proximal processes, e.g. ‘age, gender, skin colour and physical appearance’ (Tudge, Mokrova, Hatfield & Karnik, 2009:200).

The *Context* dimension in the PPCT model refers to the direct and distant environmental levels that influence the learner’s life directly or indirectly and assist or constrain the proximal processes.

Features like political climate, policies and attitudes (Jackson et al., 2006) are good examples of influences on the proximal process regarding the context dimension. Levels in the direct and distant environments are the *Micro*, *Meso*, *Exo* and *Macro* systems that function within a *Chrono* system.

The *Microsystem* is the direct or immediate environment of the individual; the *Meso* system embodies the linking interactions between one or more *Microsystems* enclosing the developing individual.

The *Exosystem* is the larger social system that involves the connections and processes between two or more settings where at least one does not encompass the developing individual (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994). The *Macro* system as the outermost layer comprises of cultural values, customs and laws (Berk, 2000). The environments function within the *Time* dimension of the PPCT, capturing the changes and duration of the interactions between all the above-mentioned systems (Geldenhuys & Wevers, 2013). This can be reflected in the changes in structure of education for learners experiencing barriers to learning.

Individuals and groups in different levels of environments link through changing, interdependent and interacting relationships (Onwuegbuzie, Collins & Frels, 2013). The interdependence that exist between organisms and their physical environment should be considered holistically in order to understand how each system and sub-system contributes to the support and sustainment of the larger system (Donald, Lazarus & Moolla, 2014). Events in one part of a system affect other systems, demonstrating the reciprocal nature of the relationships, often influencing the whole larger system (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994).

From Special Education (prior to 1994) to education for learners experiencing barriers to learning (post 1994)

History enables us to consider events from the past and to reveal their influence on the management of current capabilities or problems within the educational system. In addition, history also highlights the importance of the nature of social interactions between education and other systems, which creates a holistic approach to teaching and learning (Donald et al., 2014). Therefore, analysing the contextual factors of an education system assists in understanding the nature, structure and functioning of the education system in two historic timeframes (prior and post 1994). Since a systems theory approach like the PPCT model can accommodate changes in any dimension of the model (Zimmerman & Kontosh, 2007), it is the model of choice.

Contextual factors empower or prevent an educational system from 'moving forward'. Contextual factors can firstly be historic in nature, secondly relate to the communal relationships between layers in contexts and thirdly concern the governance of an educational system (Steyn, Wolhuter, Vos & De Beer, 2017).

Although the bio-ecological model was not a consideration in education practices before 1994, the social model of disabilities (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) gained recognition; however, it lacked recognition of the *Person* characteristics (Swart & Pettipher, 2016).

The discussion of both the pre- and post-apartheid era education for learners experiencing barriers will be based on the PPCT perspective to reveal the effect on the learner within the *Person* dimension. The two eras in history represent different *Time* dimensions in the history of the SA educational system, specifically education for learners experiencing barriers to learning.

With the move towards the inclusive model, the applicability of the PPCT model (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998) is pertinent in explaining the successes and challenges that contributed to the current state of education for learners with diverse educational needs.

For the purpose of this article, the *Person* dimension is reflected in the learner experiencing barriers, requiring diverse education. The *Context* dimension represents the environmental levels in which the education system and sub-systems, directly or indirectly, influence the education of the learner, assisting or constraining proximal processes.

Special Education prior to 1994 viewed from a bio-ecological systems perspective

From a PPCT perspective, considering the reciprocal interactive proximal processes between the *Person* dimension and the *Context* dimension in the *Macro* and *Exo* levels (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006), there was no equality in the education system. Past laws and legislations were marginalising and discriminatory (Engelbrecht, 2018) limiting or erasing any forms of equality.

Prior to 1994, the education system was renowned for inequity, separate development, fragmentation, lack of transparency and lack of clarity in policy (DoE, 1997:1). Furthermore, the ideology and belief system of that era influenced and mirrored inequality in the systemic layers (Rosa & Tudge, 2013) of the SA education system.

In 1910, when the Union of SA was founded, no uniform national education system existed and each province (*Exo* level) governed its own education system. On this *Exo* level, fragmented education departments, the lack of support provision and the lack of education of mother tongue tuition, resulted in the exclusion of learners and even more so, for learners with barriers to learnings (DoE, 1997). According to the constitution of that time, the medium of instruction was Dutch, later replaced with Afrikaans and English. Education only reached few learners of the Black population (Fataar, 1997) and it ignored the African culture (Mphahlele & Mminele as cited in Steyn et al., 2017).

Moreover, the social context of separate development and the exclusion of learners led to limited access to support and resources for many (Pillay & Di Terlizzi, 2009), and also isolation, bringing about contextual disadvantage and multiple social problems (Donald et al., 2014; Dreyer, 2015).

This influenced the interactions between *Microsystems* in the *Meso* system within the South African educational system.

On the *Exo* level, SE was overseen by each provincial education department (Steyn et al., 2017) which caused a fragmented education system exacerbated by uneven access to SE and distribution of resources (DoE, 1997). In the *Meso* system, both psychosocial features and physical context contribute to underlying proximal processes (Krishnan, 2010) between the *Microsystems* involved with the learner. The absence of the learner from school (*Micro*), due to exclusion and/or placement policies (*Macro and Exo*), meant that the school experience, as an agent in proximal processes, was non-existent.

This inhibited ability, experience, knowledge and skills development in a school environment (*Micro*) as contributing factors to interactive proximal processes (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998; 2006). Engeström (2016) explains in the *Activity-theoretical approach* to developmental research that the lack of mediation of mental processes in the teaching and learning environment restrict conveyance and increase of knowledge and skills, leading to undesired outcomes.

Furthermore, the ‘disability’ vs ‘normal’ classification according to the medical deficit model (Swart & Pettipher, 2016) labelled learners. The term ‘disability’ (Swart & Pettipher, 2016) had a narrow scope of SE needs because the environmental influences as contributing factors to barriers to learning, was not considered. White learners with special needs had access to more specialised interventions and better resources, resulting in the neglect of support services to the majority of the black population (DoE, 1997). This situation of separate development and support in SE continued until 1994 (Steyn et al., 2017).

Accepting that the medical model matched the era, the move towards the social model highlighted that the first mentioned did not consider the cultural, social, economic, political and psychological systems’ influences on the individual adequately (Nel, 2013). When viewed from a PPCT perspective, the medical model falls short of demonstrating the complex reciprocal interactions and interrelationships (Swart & Pettipher, 2016) that take place in the contexts (extrinsic barriers) of the education system by only focussing on the intrinsic barriers of the learner. In a ‘one fits all’ approach to remedial intervention (Du Plessis, 2013), personal and interpersonal processes (Jackson et al., 2006) (see Diagram 1) were not fully explored, therefore some learners did not develop to their full potential. This past approach contradicts the current holistic view to intervention (DBE, 2014), where support is individualistic (the ISP) and uniquely tailored.

Considering the school as *Micro* level, the medical model of disability-based evaluations on medical testing (Ferguson, 2008). Medical professionals, therapists, specialists and remedial teachers provided remedial intervention (Pillay & Di Terlizzi, 2009).

Furthermore, teaching and learning was teacher centred, using direct teaching methods (Schunk, 2012). Interventions highlighted what the learner lacked and did not concentrate on the *Person* or *Context* characteristics and/or assets (King & Madsen, 2007), or learner strengths, advocated by EWP6 (DoE, 2001).

Bronfenbrenner and Morris (2006) state that human development should not only be perceived objectively, but also include an experiential or activity element (Engeström, 2016), whereby the learner perceives the environment through personal feelings or opinions, resulting in the learner becoming an active participant in their own development. Thus, the learner should have been participating in constructing of the *Micro* environment through *Person-Context* interactions (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006).

Yet, in past cases, where the personal attributes of the learner were ignored, retaining the learner and keeping the learner dependent (Maguvhe, 2015) on other individuals and systems resulted in slowing down or the stagnation of '*change*', '*growth*' and '*development*'. In turn, the development of *Person* characteristics was constrained and *Person-Context* interactions gradually became dysfunctional (Bronfenbrenner & Evans, 2000). This implies that the past education system did not consider a holistic approach to addressing learners' needs and although there was development of the *Person*, the *Person-Context* interaction was overlooked, which led to the deprivation of human and social development (Bronfenbrenner & Evans, 2000) of the learner.

Post 1994 education for learners experiencing barriers to learning

Considering the historical influences up to 1994, education for learners experiencing barriers is portrayed as being of poor quality – specifically for the disadvantaged population (Daniels, 2010). The outcomes of these historic events lead to transformation, changing laws, policies and structures (Steyn et al., 2017). The expectation that the democratic government would provide better living conditions for the larger part of the population, in line with the basic human rights principle (Fataar, 1997), endorsed an anticipation that, with the move away from apartheid education, education for learners experiencing barriers would flourish within the inclusive paradigm.

Based on the findings of the National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI) (NECC, 1993) and the value framework of democracy, suggestions were made on policy issues concerning areas of education related to support services on *Macro* level (NECC, 1993).

The transition to IE unlocked a new value system of inclusion, opening new opportunities (Dalton, McKenzie & Kahonde, 2012) for the education of learners experiencing barriers, yet the implementation thereof remains problematic (Daniels, 2010; Engelbrecht, 2018). A notable mind-shift implied that the individual no longer has to 'fit into' the educational system, but that the educational system needs to adapt to meet the needs of the individual child (Kaur & Arora, 2014). Intervention now focused on learner strengths and capabilities, considering the contextual influences (King & Madsen, 2007).

The NEPI recommendations had an extensive influence on adaptation of the education system on *Macro* and *Exo* levels, resulting in the drafting of policies and a commendable number of guideline documents (DoE, 1997), such as the Education White Paper 6 (EWP6) (DoE, 2001); the Conceptual and Operational Guidelines for the implementation of Inclusive Education: Full-Service/Inclusive Schools (DoE, 2005a) and Guidelines for Support Schools as Resource Centres (DoE, 2005b); and the National Strategy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS) (DBE, 2014) which outlines the implementation of EWP6.

The target actions of EWP6 (DoE, 2001) outlines activities for education transformation to improve the quality of education. It was widely supported that the government's intentions were to place high priority on the minimising, removal and prevention of barriers to learning and development in the educational context by means of prioritising the restructuring and improvement of education support services (Du Plessis, 2013; DoE, 1997). The SIAS policy (DBE, 2014) serves as a framework for procedural standardisation to screen, identify, assess and provide individual support programmes (ISP's) for all learners, specifically vulnerable learners who require additional support to increase their participation and inclusion in the school. Over and above a strategic plan to implement IE (DoE, 2001), further aims for intervention were to adapt the curriculum to provide for the specific needs of the learners through the availability of a safe and supportive learning environment (DoE, 1997). To support the move away from the segregation and marginalisation of learners with diverse educational needs and the strive towards inclusion for all, EWP6 (DoE, 2001) and SIAS (DBE, 2014) stipulate that learners must be assessed and placed in accordance with the level and nature of support needed and not placed in schools according to categorisation of the type of disability, as was previously the norm.

The reality of the current education system for learners experiencing barriers to learning from a PPCT perspective

The layers of systems and parts within each layer – according to the PPCT perspective – provide a holistic picture of the functioning of the education system, illustrated in Diagram 2. A closer look at the interrelationships between systemic layers and governance reveal the strengths and challenges contributing to the problematic implementation of IE and education for learners with barriers in all the system layers (King & Madsen, 2007).

Challenges are experienced in all the system layers, but then even more alarming are the consequences of the interplay between *Person-Context* and the resulting outcomes that seep down between the layers of systems to the learner in the classroom, affecting child development, exactly what EWP6 (bullet 1.5.3) (DoE, 2001) does not advocate.

Acknowledging the influence of legacies of the previous dispensation, the factors that empower or constrain communal relationships in the current educational context and governance of the educational system, are highlighted from the PPCT perspective to make suggestions why education for learners experiencing barriers to learning has not moved forward more rapidly.

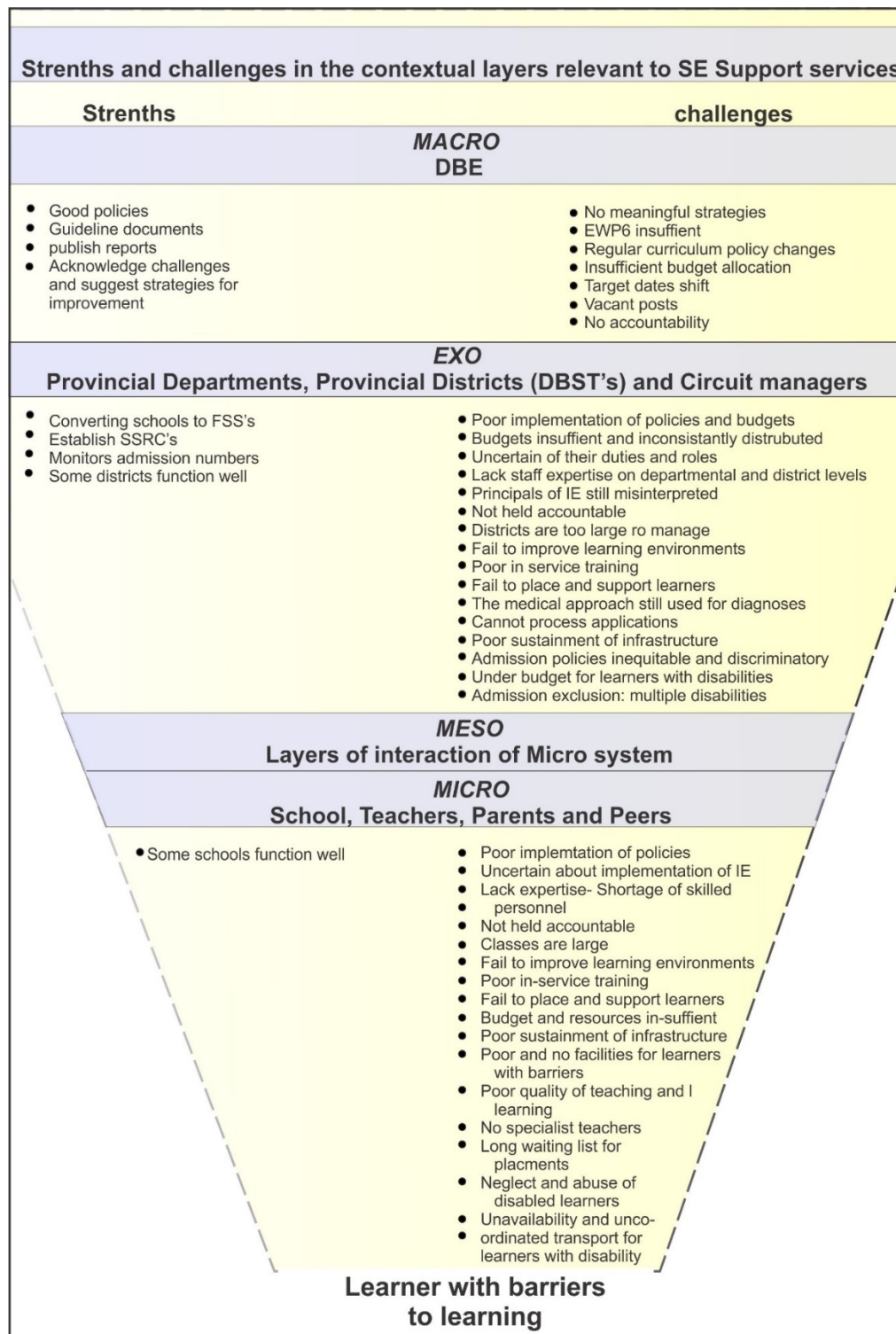


Diagram 2: Learner with barriers to learning

The DBE as a *Macro* system portrays the ideologies and value system of IE (Nel, 2013), representing the larger governing system of education responsible for laws, legislation, policy drafting, strategic planning, coordination of planning and funding for education for learners experiencing barriers to learning (Daniels, 2010; DBE, 2012a).

Top-down governance, starting at the distal *Macro* system, subsequently determines the outcomes of interactions in the system layers to portray the successes and challenges of the governing system (Steyn et al., 2017). Furthermore, embedded in IE, each system and sub-system network to initiate interactive processes with the *Person* (learner experiencing barriers to learning), who is functioning as a system within the education system (Swart & Pettipher, 2011).

An encouraging achievement is that the DBE is reaching the target for converting ordinary schools to full service schools (FSSs) and establishing special schools as resource centres (SSRCs), which resulted in the removal of segregation, enabling more children to attend school than pre-1994. Although the department regularly publishes progress reports in which they acknowledge weaknesses and, in many cases, suggest strategies to minimise the challenges (DBE, 2015a; DBE, 2015b) there are still too many eminent challenges (See Diagram 2). There are still too many children with barriers or disabilities that are not yet accommodated in any school because admission policies for ordinary and SSs remain inequitable and therefore, discriminatory; infrastructure is poor and the lack of knowledgeable personnel contributes to the implementation problem (DWCPD, 2013).

The DBE is under serious criticism for the poor implementation of IE and it appears that education for learners experiencing barriers starts to disintegrate in the *Macro* system, where the DBE controls the factors influencing and contributing to the current status. Therefore, I take the stance that the top-down governance causes the strengths and challenges to accumulate in each layer of the system (Diagram 2), causing a ‘funnel’ effect downwards through the other systems to the learner-*Person* system (Diagram 2). This is based on the assumption that processes in one particular system do not necessarily cause challenges in that system alone (Swart & Pettipher, 2011), but due to constant interactions between many systems, a circular feedback loop arises, creating the situation that currently exists.

The *Exo* is an influential system in education, as it provides a bridging area between the nine Provincial Departments (the second layer of government) (Steyn et al., 2017) and the *Meso* system. The departments liaise with district-based support teams (DBSTs), to function in accordance with national and provincial legislation (DBE, 2010). The DBSTs include staff from provincial, regional districts and SSRCs (DoE, 2001), directed by the decisions made in the *Macro* system.

The Provincial Departments and the DBSTs oversee and implement the strategic plans for support service provision to schools, for example, investment in whole school development by assisting and supporting principals (Mafuwane & Pitsoe, 2014), teachers and learners (DoE, 2001).

To further illustrate this systemic perspective, one must bear in mind that, understandably, the challenges already identified in the *Macro* system create difficulties when the implementation of policies and budgets are executed on the *Exo* level. For example, the Policy on the Organisation Roles and Responsibilities of Education Districts (DBE, 2012b:11) contains a distressing remark: ‘there has been no common formulation of what a district education office should be or do.’ The report confirms that only some district offices understand their roles, leading to a low level of efficiency of DBSTs. If this is the case, how can one expect the school sub-system to function effectively? Furthermore, some districts are too large to accommodate visitation and support to all schools (DBE, 2012b). Considering this, there is no certainty that the district teams adequately contribute to improving learning environments for learners by refining the abilities of principals and teachers.

Collaboration (*Process*) between systems is fundamental to the success of IE (Nel, Nel & Lebeloane, 2016). Therefore, if there is insufficient collaboration between the *Exo* and the *Meso* systems, the *Process* will be interrupted in the *Meso* system, resulting in the education to learners with barriers being further fragmented, due to lack of service provision and communication between the DBE, DBSTs and schools. Even though the DBE promised that ordinary schools, FSSs and SSRs, in collaboration with DBSTs, would become solid support structures to learners with learning breakdown and disabilities (DoE, 2005b), this is not evident in reality. It appears that not enough has been put in place concerning schooling in general and education for learners with diverse learning needs, to counteract the high proportion of repetition figures, school dropout percentage and quality of teaching and learning (Smit, Wood & Neethling, 2015). There are still about 70% of children with disabilities not accommodated in schools (DoE, 2005b), whether it be in ordinary, FSSs or SSRs.

In the *Meso* system, *Microsystems* interact, acknowledging that the learner-*Person*, as a developing individual (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994), is concurrently involved with different *Microsystems* (e.g. school, family, peers & community). *Meso* systems support developmental characteristics in the form of *Processes* (teaching, interventions, learning & counselling) (Engeström, 2016). Activities, roles and relationships taking place across settings (Rosa & Tudge, 2013), emphasise exposure and active participation of the learner in these settings, resulting in learning experiences (experiential learning) (Rosa & Tudge, 2013). When the learner is denied these opportunities to partake in activities, outcomes (the result of activities) are not reached.

The effects of proximal *Processes* (outcomes) can be more influential on the developing person than the interactions themselves (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994), especially when we consider, for example, resilience (Pearson, Pearce & Kingham, 2013) and coping skills (King & Madsen, 2007). It should be noted that the dynamism of the proximal *processes* varies according to the *Person* characteristics and the environmental *Context* (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006).

The school is a *Micro* setting where activities, interpersonal roles and relations should be supportive of developmental characteristics (Rosa & Tudge, 2013). The learner is part of strengths and challenges in this setting, which will either protect or place the learner at risk (King & Madsen, 2007). Teachers have an important role in reinforcing the development of *Person* characteristics in the teaching and learning environment to influence *Processes* to determine positive developmental outcomes. *Person* characteristics, for example, a teacher or objects and/or symbols, direct the course and influence on *Processes* (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006) (computers; textbooks). Force characteristics lead to ‘exploration, manipulation, elaboration and imagination’ (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006:823), which in turn, all leads to progression in interactions underpinning learning (Evans, 2003). The latter is hampered by aspects such as the lack of teachers’ expertise in education for learners requiring additional education or support (*Person* factor); this may be due to poor qualifications and insufficient in-service training (Dreyer, 2017) or the unavailability of resources and sustenance of infrastructure (DWCPD, 2013).

Participation in *Processes* develop the learner’s biological resources of ‘ability, motivation, knowledge and skills’ (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006:797) to participate in interactions with other persons in the school *Context*. Within these supportive interactions, the learner builds independence (O’Toole, Hayes & Mhathúna, 2014) and becomes a mediator and creator of their own development. However, in the absence of these resource characteristics, mediation does not take place, slowing down developmental outcomes (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006).

Considering this, I reason that the teacher, SBST and DBST play an important supportive role (Nel, Tlale, Engelbrecht & Nel, 2016) in assisting the learner to develop resources. If this support is lacking it will inhibit the onset and sustenance of force characteristics, because demand characteristics attract or dampen interactions with the environment, which in turn nurture or interrupt the *Processes* (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). In the absence of force and biological resources, there is ineffective interaction from *Person* to *Context*. However, ineffective interaction from *Context* to *Person*, contributes to the absence of force and biological resources (Tudge et al., 2009). In other words, the learner with barriers does not benefit from teaching and learning, because the teacher has no experience in teaching or supporting the learner with barriers, resulting in the learner not being supported in strengthening of *Person* characteristics.

The opposite is also true – in case of stability of regular service provision, functional education structures and good physical environment, positive developmental outcomes as a dual *Person-Context* interactive relationship will occur. Even in disadvantaged schools, competent outcomes can outweigh dysfunction if stable environments are in place (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006) to support proximal *Processes*.

I am of the opinion that due to the lack of accountability and optimal interaction between many of the DBE systems, a large gap is evident between the governing systems directly affecting the *Person* system.

As interactions between systems are of a reciprocal nature, many of the problems experienced in the *Micro* level originate in the *Macro* system, with other influences such as poor teaching and poor family circumstances, placing additional pressure on the support systems in the *Micro* and *Exo* systems. Although there are many other reasons why *Microsystems* become dysfunctional, poverty and unemployment (Donald et al., 2014) to name a few, insufficient support systems (Engelbrecht, Oswald & Forlin, 2006) are considered a major contributing factor in the school environment, in hampering effective teaching and learning. To add to this, insufficient school governance and poor teaching, especially in the rural areas (DWCPD, 2013) are noted.

Bronfenbrenner and Morris (2006) emphasise in the PPCT model that the *Process* of interaction between *Person-Context* for learning outcomes are more important than the *Person* characteristics or the *Context* factors, viewed separately. Yet, noting that systemic assets or weaknesses from the *Macro* and *Exo* environments definitely create positive or negative interactive processes within the school environment, resulting in a ‘funnel effect’ regarding the problems directly channelled down to the learner. Acknowledging that the education system is not the only causal factor, I reason that instability and changes in the education system are influencing factors, directly or indirectly, on the *Person-Context Process*, influencing developmental outcomes (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006).

Conclusion

There is much blame, not without reason, attributed to *what was* in the South African educational system but it seems that too few lessons were learnt from the past mistakes – and *what should be*, has not realised. This article ventured into the terrain of many challenges with fewer achievements. Ameliorating efforts to implement inclusive education successfully in developed and developing countries are being noticed (Ahsan, 2013). The situation in SA (a developing country), clearly reflects that the transformation process in education for learners experiencing barriers is progressing too slowly (R2ECWD, 2016), even though the necessity of advancement to equalling international targets is the ideal (The Millennium Development Goal of universal primary education by 2015 and Education for All by 2015) (Kaur & Arora, 2014).

Nonetheless, the reality in SA suggests that the road to educational transformation has been a problematic and bumpy one, which by now should have had a greater and wider impact on learners experiencing barriers to learning and development (SAHRC, 2012; DBE, 2011). Furthermore, if the implementation strategy of IE (DoE, 2001) had played a more prominent role in the inclusion of all learners, a definite movement away from the conditions of SE before 1994 would have been more prominent. As inclusive education has not optimally been realised in SA, there is evidence of many factors that still negatively affect the development of the *person* in the PPTC model. The lack of inclusive transformation ranges from scattered incidents of exclusion to situations of gross neglect regarding learners within the educational system.

Recommendations

It would be unfair to compare development of education for learners experiencing barriers to learning in SA to other developed and leading countries (America). However, there is no harm in following these examples (Nel et al., 2012). Being a democratic country, the main objective of the SA education system should not be to merely provide education, but quality education for all learners (Du Plessis, 2013; DoE, 2001). Simply providing a service does not make it accessible or worthwhile to at risk children (DBE, 2012a), thus the focus must mainly be on the teacher to bring change to SE teaching and learning, and perhaps have more vigorous campaigning to make changes in the *Macro* and *Exo* education systems, setting the stage for quicker change and encouraging people to take individual responsibility.

In reflecting on education for learners experiencing barriers to learning in SA, I firstly suggest that better and closer collaboration between the DBE and higher educational institutions could benefit SE, in the sense that more focussed specialised teacher training could be provided by these higher education institutions, resulting in enhanced quality of teaching and learning. Secondly, inclusion of learners and the success of SE services are dependent on the functionality and effectiveness of the support systems and therefore, transformation and change in education can only be achieved if the full range of education and training support services are provided and aligned (DoE, 2001:26), working together to pool their resources. This must be initiated from the bottom up and the top down all the way through to all the bio-ecological systems layers within the PPCT model, ensuring that diverse education speedily moves from *what was* to *what should be*, and is freed from what is and moves to *what could be*.

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CHAPTER 3
ARTICLE 2 / MANUSCRIPT 18 ARABPS VOL 8
TRAINING QUALITY LEARNER SUPPORT POST-GRADUATE TEACHERS AT A HIGHER
EDUCATION INSTITUTION TO MEET THE EDUCATIONAL CHALLENGES IN SOUTH
AFRICA: PERCEPTIONS OF UNIVERSITY LECTURERS

Accepted as a book chapter in Teaching and Learning Research in Higher Education.
ARAPBS vol 8 manuscript 18

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MANUSCRIPTS P182-183

SEE ADDENDUM F: AUTHOR GUIDELINES FOR SUBMISSION P197-200

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Training quality Learner Support post-graduate teachers at a higher education institution to meet the educational challenges in South Africa: Perceptions of university lecturers

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ABSTRACT

The diverse needs of learners in South African schools require higher education institutions to prepare pre-service and post-graduate teachers to be able to address a wide range of barriers to learning and development. The purpose of this research is to explore the quality of Learner Support training that post-graduate students should acquire at higher educational institutes, as seen through the perceptions of university lecturers.

Therefore, this article explores the perceptions of university lecturers of Learner Support modules in the BEd honours programmes at three higher education institutions, concerning their perceptions regarding current practices used for curriculum development, as well as teaching and learning strategies. By reflecting on Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological-systemic framework, this qualitative study followed an interpretivist paradigm and used a purposefully selected sample to generate data. Semi-structured interviews were recorded, transcribed, thematically coded and analysed. Two main themes that emerged from the data, highlighted, firstly that the current curriculum must be developed in a more practical manner, and secondly, that the context of teachers and learners must be pertinently considered.

Findings regarding this study indicate that lecturers are aware of their roles as student educators who are responsible for preparing students to cope with these diverse educational needs; however, they also acknowledge the existing gap between theory and practice.

KEYWORDS

Bio-ecological systems perspective, higher education institutions, barriers to teaching and learning, curriculum development, lecturer perspectives, Learner Support specialist; post-graduate teacher training

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Even though in-service human capital development is the responsibility of the Department of Basic Education (DBE), as stated in Education White Paper 6 (2001), pre-service and post-graduate teacher training (further on referred to as the specialist Learner Support teacher) still remains the exclusive responsibility of higher education institutions (HEIs). Therefore, as the university lecturers remain responsible for the professional development of postgraduate students (from now on forward referred to as specialist students) at HEIs, they must continually adapt to new trends and development that often arise regarding inclusive education (IE). To realise this, paradigm shifts have been made regarding education for learners with barriers, by shifting the focus from a remedial and intervention emphasis, to a more holistic approach (DBE, 2014). The implications of this shift necessitated HEIs to make adaptations in initial and specialist teacher training (Landsberg & Matthews, 2016) to accommodate these new requirements. Furthermore, continuous changes in the school curriculum also necessitated regular adaptations in professional teacher development curricula (Swart & Pettipher, 2011). This was achieved by adapting HEIs' curricula (Landsberg & Matthews, 2016) and/or by adding revised or specialised modules. Such adaptations should be done continuously in order to ensure that the HEIs' training remains dynamic and relevant.

However, teacher training still does not seem to meet the outcomes and expectations provisioned in EWP6 (DoE, 2001) and the National Strategy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS) policy (DBE, 2014).

To date, no other research study has specifically explored the perceptions of lecturers responsible for the professional development of specialist Learner Support Teachers at HEIs on how to enhance the quality of the training offered to teachers. Accordingly, the aim of this qualitative investigation was to explore the perceptions of Learner Support lecturers at three South African (SA) HEIs to provide guidelines for curriculum development to enhance the quality of the training being delivered to Learner Support post-graduate students.

Inclusive education challenges in practice

Ainscow and Miles (2008) regard the teacher as a vital principal element in the application of inclusive educational practices; however, currently in SA, the teacher is being targeted unmercifully in literature about the poor quality of teaching (R2ECWD, 2016). Within the current situation in schools, where the educational needs of many learners are not met (Dreyer, 2017), challenges are attributed to various issues; some being teachers' lack of knowledge and skills, and teacher attitudes towards the implementation of IE (DoE, 2001). Most initial pre-service teacher training programmes include at least an introduction to education of learners with barriers (European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 2016). However, due to the complexity of the South African context regarding the various socio-economic cultural, language and other barriers, more than an introduction is needed; therefore, the importance of specialised training becomes evident. Despite these and many other challenges being mentioned in the EWP6 (DoE, 2001), this is presently not evident in the SA schooling system. Along with these SA educational complexities and an even wider expectation of role players and systems, good, applicable and appropriate training is indispensable (DoE, 2001).

Fair or unfair, the issue is that the lack of adequate training for diverse education is occurring. This situation should inspire special needs education lecturers at HEIs to reconsider their own teaching practices (Esau, 2013), re-evaluate the specialist students who are being trained, and re-visit the curriculum, in order to acknowledge and attempt to rectify the situation. Allen (2013:412) is of the opinion that that universities have become 'regulatory practices', with the academics within these universities often placing an emphasis on 'results', without considering the impact that the teacher has on the community or the values associated with the community in which these teachers function.

Furthermore, critique against educators at HEIs suggests that the training courses offered are knowledge-based, underpinning the principles of the medical model of “one intervention fits all” (Pillay & Di Terlizzi 2009; Swart & Pettipher 2016), along with the antiquated attitudes and styles. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the individual lecturers at HEIs to deliver good training through nurturing educational practices that promote inclusion, personal support and create a space in which the specialist Learner Support teacher can comfortably explore their own abilities, ideas and personalities.

A fair amount of literature is available on initial teacher training; however, very little information is available on post-graduate, specialised teacher training in Learner Support within the SA context. In general, teacher education and training programmes at HEIs should adequately prepare specialist students for the teaching and learning practices in inclusive classrooms (Baglieri, 2008). A BEd honours programme should aim to provide the post-graduate student with more advanced knowledge and skills at a higher professional level than that of a fourth-year qualified teacher (Shulman & Shulman 2004) to provide specialised support to learners. This could place the BEd honours student in the same category of expertise as the, now phased-out, remedial teacher. Therefore, the BEd honours programme should empower the post-graduate student to function above the prescribed undergraduate BEd exit level for teachers. This qualification therefore places these individuals in a higher category of professionalism, implying that the honours student must be a specialist in the implementation of EWP6 (DoE, 2001) and the SIAS policy (DBE, 2014). The SIAS document guides the implementation of EWP6 and aims to provide guidelines for the identification of barriers to learning, assessment strategies, the intervention needed, as well as highlighting the development of the individual support plan (ISP) (DBE, 2014). Even though these guidelines are evident, it seems that teachers and specialist teachers do not have the ability to provide the specialised support (Aziz, 2016). The lack of appropriate knowledge can be seen as a gap between theory and practice. This results in the levels of support provision specified by the SIAS policy (DBE, 2014) as being perceived as vague, with very little guidance to the teacher (see Table 1).

The various levels of support that are specified in Table 1 denote that the specialist teacher must be seen as a role player who can function on any of these levels, equipped with adequate knowledge, skills and abilities to support learners, however necessary. Although the SIAS policy provides clear guidelines on the process of planning the ISP (DBE 2014, 2), it does not, however, provide the *how to do* aspects that are required. It is therefore evident that many teachers lack these practical skills to identify and assess learners, creating a situation where the specialist teacher can fulfil an important educational role. Therefore, specialist training should entail enough knowledge and skills to fully equip these post-graduate students, enabling them to identify, assess and cope with any barrier to learning or developmental challenge that a learner may experience (DBE, 2014).

Table 1: Levels of support provision as specified by the SIAS policy (DBE 2014)

Levels of support provision	Explanation of levels	Involved persons/ systems
Low	Preventative and proactive support provided in general departmental programmes, policies, line budgets, norms and standards for public schools.	Ordinary/mainstream school; The teacher, school-based support team (SBST) & district-based support team (DBST); Support & loan system from full service schools (FSS) and/or special schools as resource centres (SSRC)
Moderate	Support provisions over and above low-level, once-off, medium-frequency, intermittent short-term basis or through the loan of physical devices, within ordinary classroom or FSS, loan system from FSS or SS.	Ordinary school or FSS; Teacher; SBST & DBST; Support & loan system from FSS and/or SSRC
High	High-level support, specialised, specialist class/school, facilities and personnel available, high-frequency and high-intensity basis, not site restricted, also learner in need of high-support provision, accommodated in ordinary school.	SSRC; Specialist personnel; DBST

Therefore, over and above routine scholastic assessments, the specialist teacher needs knowledge and skills to assess the learning of an individual, as specified by the DBE: “assess the level of functioning and participation of learners to determine support needs” (DBE, 2014:8). Therefore, these specialist teachers must have the ability to do specialised evaluations for learning barriers (Landsberg & Matthews, 2016), develop structured interventions with the ISP, as well as actually providing the necessary applicable and appropriate support. This implies that specialist teachers must be able to differentiate within a lesson and apply scaffolding, in order to accommodate learners with educational barriers (Dednam & Du Plessis, 2016). As a result, essential training for specialist teachers implies that HEIs should include, among others, training in knowledge and skills to adapt curriculum content, the learning environment (psychosocial and physical), teaching methods, assessment strategies, provision of specialised teaching and learning support materials and supportive technologies (Jacobs, 2016; DBE, 2011). The above should be underpinned by training in diversity in multicultural education to prepare pre-service teachers for practices and experiences in multicultural classrooms (Sotuku & Duku, 2015).

Furthermore, in order to attain a high level of essential training for these specialist teachers, collaboration in the education of learners with barriers is crucial (Friend *et al.*, 2010) (See collaborative roles of involved persons and systems in Table 1). Effective collaboration skills could overcome challenges resulting from any curriculum changes and will support multi-level differentiation, resulting in collaborative partnerships and support structures (Nel, 2013). Nonetheless, this seems a neglected area worldwide, in both initial and specialist teacher training. Collaboration is found to be lacking between many of the role players within the educational system and with other government departments (Donohue & Bornman, 2014). This phenomenon was already identified as far back as 2003 by Carroll, Forlin and Jobling (Wysocki, 2016) and is still prominent today. Consequently, teacher training on a specialised level should include preparation of teachers to liaise with support systems, the parents and the community (Donohue & Bornman, 2014).

Changing teacher perceptions about IE is another essential aspect for specialist teacher training, as identified by the DBE (2014).

Misunderstandings and misperceptions surrounding the concept of inclusion (Ainscow & Miles, 2008; Berlach & Chambers, 2011) often create negative reactions. Therefore, good specialist teacher training would produce professional specialists who are positively inclined towards IE.

Therefore, to manage the present South African situation regarding the specialisation knowledge that teachers are expected to have, one must acknowledge the state of general teacher student training and conclude that it is inadequate and, furthermore, in reality, specialised teacher training in South Africa (Engelbrecht *et al.*, 2016) is equally inadequate and only a pipe dream. Looking through the lens of a bio-ecological systems perspective, it is noted that the lecturer at an HEI is an important element of the person dimension within this model. Consequently, the specialist Learner Support lecturers at HEIs can actively contribute to more comprehensive teacher training for specialist Learner Support students, who will be more equipped to deal with the various daily challenges that are encountered in the classroom. Therefore, by exploring the perceptions and current thoughts of these Learner Support lecturers, an overall perspective of current practices can be established, as well as perspectives on guidelines to facilitate quality teacher training of Learner Support specialist teachers.

Conceptual and theoretical framework

The bio-ecological systems perspective was applied as research framework and as research lens through which the qualitative findings of our study were examined, interpreted and discussed. The bio-ecological systems perspective, specifically the process-person-context-time (PPCT) model (Figure 1), represents a person system within a contextual system, with interdependent and interacting reciprocal relationships, between individuals and groups of individuals in different levels of environments, having an effect on all the systems involved (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998, 2006).

In applying the bio-ecological model within an HEI post-graduate teacher training programme for special needs education, the following aspects can be aligned within the HEI system: The **process** is the core of the model and characterises interactions between the **person** (with demand, resource and force characteristics) and the **context** (direct and distant environmental levels) within a **time** dimension (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998, 2006).

The lecturer in the HEI can be seen as the **person** dimension, who is capable of initiating change and growth, or permitting stagnation and underdevelopment (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998) of specialist students. The model endorses reciprocal interactions between the child, the teacher and the environmental system's varied contexts (Swart & Pettipher, 2011). Furthermore, this model creates a comprehensive scaffold in which the study can be superimposed, facilitating a logical explanation and in-depth understanding of the South African education system.

The PPCT model will serve as a theoretical framework to report on the perceptions of BEd honours lecturers of programmes concerning the training of quality Learner Support Teachers to meet the educational challenges in SA. Furthermore, the PPCT model (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998) provided a framework that reflects both the systemic and developmental dimensions in the person-context-process and time interaction (Griffore & Phenice, 2016), directly connecting the specialist teacher to the SA schooling system.

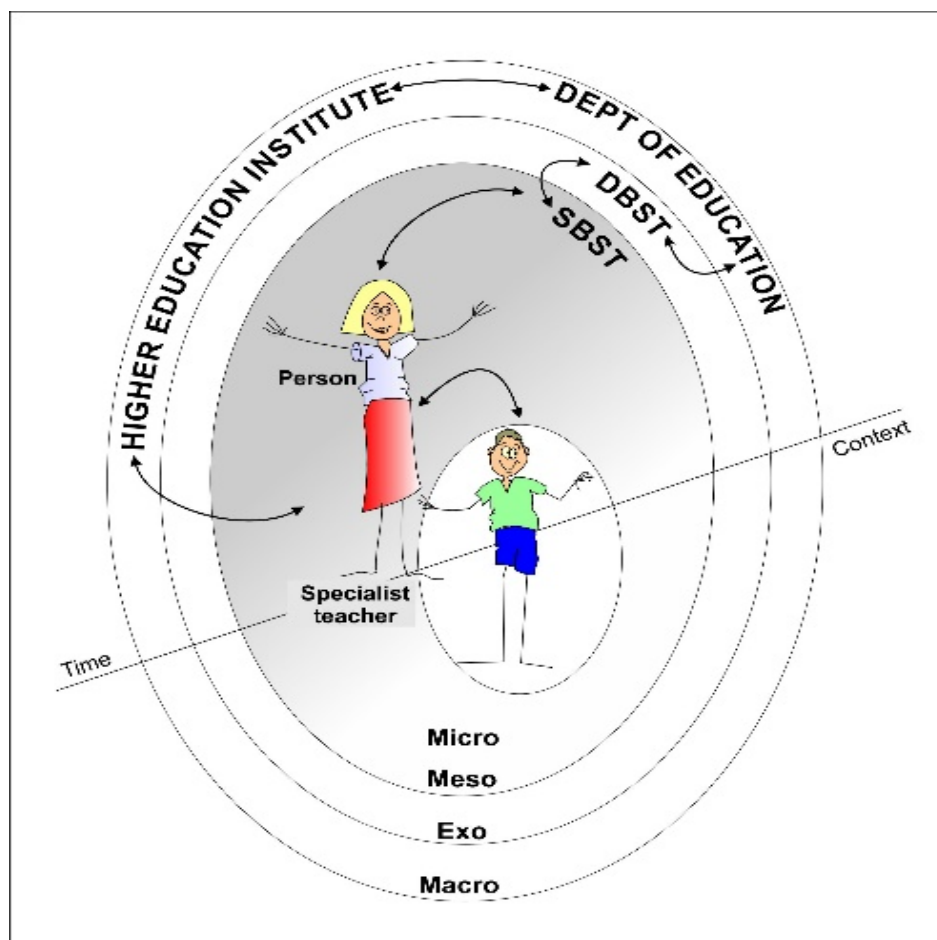


Figure 1. The bio-ecological systems perspective applied to the HEI

Lecturers at higher education institutions have a responsibility to train BEd honours students to be equipped with specialist knowledge and skills to prepare them for the support provision to learners with diverse educational needs in South African schools. With no remedial teachers being trained in the new dispensation in SA, there seems to be a gap that has developed between the theoretical training and the reality that teachers experience in practice. Training specialists in Learner Support could assist in addressing this gap.

Methodology

The exploratory nature of this research justified an interpretivist (Creswell, 2013; Denzin & Lincoln, 2008) descriptive qualitative approach (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). The interpretivist research paradigm draws from the lecturers' subjective experiences (Blignaut & Els, 2009) of their involvement (De Vos *et al.*, 2011) in BEd honours Learner Support programmes. Ethics clearance was obtained from the Ethics Committee of the North-West University (NWU-00022-13-S2).

Purposefully selected sampling was done since university lecturers from four universities were asked to participate in the study. The lecturers were asked to participate due to their involvement with the design and/or teaching of specialist Learner Support programmes at BEd honours level or in inclusive education. Eight (n=8) lecturers from three universities participated and it should be noted that one university declined the offer to participate. The non-specific inclusion criteria regarding gender or age reflected an equal opportunity for participants to be included in the research. Participants gave written consent for participation (Strydom, 2011) on a form that provided full information about the study (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010).

Qualitative data was generated through recorded, semi-structured, open-ended qualitative individual interviews (Nieuwenhuis, 2007; Botma *et al.*, 2010) at a time and venue that suited the participant. By using open-ended semi-structured questions, the researcher could explore the participant's perceptions and views (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015), and thereby ensured that rich data was obtained. The semi-structured open-ended questions were carefully compiled from literature and personal experience.

These questions were designed to generate rich, thick and descriptive data (Thorne, 2016), which was aimed at facilitating the understanding of the perceptions of the participants about the researched phenomenon.

Furthermore, the open-ended questionnaire was validated by a Learner Support expert who is a colleague and expert in the Learner Support subject group. In qualitative research, the researcher is viewed as the data generating instrument (Maree & van der Westhuizen, 2007). During the interviews, probing questions were posed when the researcher felt that more in-depth information was needed. This indicates a personal involvement during the interviews by both researcher and participant, facilitating validity and trustworthiness (Maree & van der Westhuizen, 2007). Care was taken not to be biased, specifically during formulating the probing questions, so as not to try to influence the participants' answers in any specific way. The interviews were recorded and transcribed, enhancing the validity of the study as the content could then be read and re-read by the researcher and the co-coder (Merriam & Tisdell 2015), and consequently ensured that rich data was obtained.

An inductive data analysis method was chosen, as it was suited to the interpretative paradigm and inductive analysis assists in the identification of multi-faceted views and realities that were present in the data (Maree & van der Westhuizen, 2007; Nieuwenhuis, 2007). A qualitative thematic data analysis was performed to organise and group data into related themes and sub-themes for data interpretation and discussion. This was done according to Tesch's (1990) eight steps in data analysis (Creswell, 2013) (see Table 2). An independent co-coder also coded the data (Nieuwenhuis, 2007), which contributed to the validity, as the results were verified and compared with the researcher results.

The criteria in Guba's model assisted in the assessment of trustworthiness: truth value (credibility), applicability (transferability), consistency (dependability), and neutrality (confirmability) (Guba 1981). Furthermore, Tesch's (1990) eight steps in data analysis (Creswell 2009) were supportive of the exploratory approach to make conceptual links and networks between the coded data. Findings were also compared to relevant literature (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011).

Table 2: Tesch's (1990) eight steps in data analysis, adapted from Creswell (2009)

STEPS	APPLICATION
1. Read the questionnaires and the transcripts in order to get an overall picture of the data.	Read and re-read through the transcribed interviews.
2. Begin by working from one document, to determine the emerging topics that must be clustered according to similar subjects. Repeat with all the other documents and list the results.	The researcher read through the eight transcribed interviews individually. The emerging topics were highlighted with different colour highlighters according to re-occurring subjects. These results were listed.
3. Categorise the topics in columns: major topics, unique topics, and outlying topics.	Topics were categorised according to importance and relevance.
4. Refer back to the data. Code each topic, and write the codes next to relevant parts in the text. New topics/codes and categories could emerge.	Topics were coded, keeping the colours as in step 3. A few new topics emerged and these were noted.
5. Place topics in categories. Reduce the number of categories by placing topics that relate to each other in groups. Draw lines between categories, so as to show any interrelationships.	Topics were grouped to form categories (sub-themes) and different coloured lines were drawn to connect categories. This action resulted in two main categories or themes emerging.
6. Make a final decision on the abbreviation that will be used for each category, then list the abbreviations in alphabetical order.	The researcher did not find this step necessary as the colours (highlighters) were used.
7. Data from each category must be placed together, to enable preliminary analysis.	The colour coded data was placed together under each category and sub-category for analysis.
8. Recode the data if necessary.	This step was not necessary.

Findings

The findings that are reported from the qualitative analysis focused on a bio-ecological systems viewpoint, as related to specialist teacher training perspectives. The views and perceptions of the participants (lecturers of Learner Support modules in the HEIs) were considered from the *person* dimension, their responses reflect their ideas of teacher training (the *process*), which could initiate change or passively condone stagnation (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998) of other *persons* (students) in this specific micro-environment (classes).

Two main themes emerged whereby lecturers in the HEI put forward their views and comments; these were curriculum development and current practices used in teaching and learning (Figure 2). The first main theme of curriculum development revealed three related data sub-themes, namely practical application, consideration of the context of specialist students and of learners, and collaboration. Under the second main theme, current practices used in teaching and learning, a further four sub-themes were identified. These were creating an enabling environment, relevance, responsiveness and awareness. It was repeatedly mentioned by many of the participants, that these aspects were well within the HEI lecturer's capability and can be considered strategies to bear in mind when looking at training quality Learner Support Teachers to meet the educational challenge in SA.

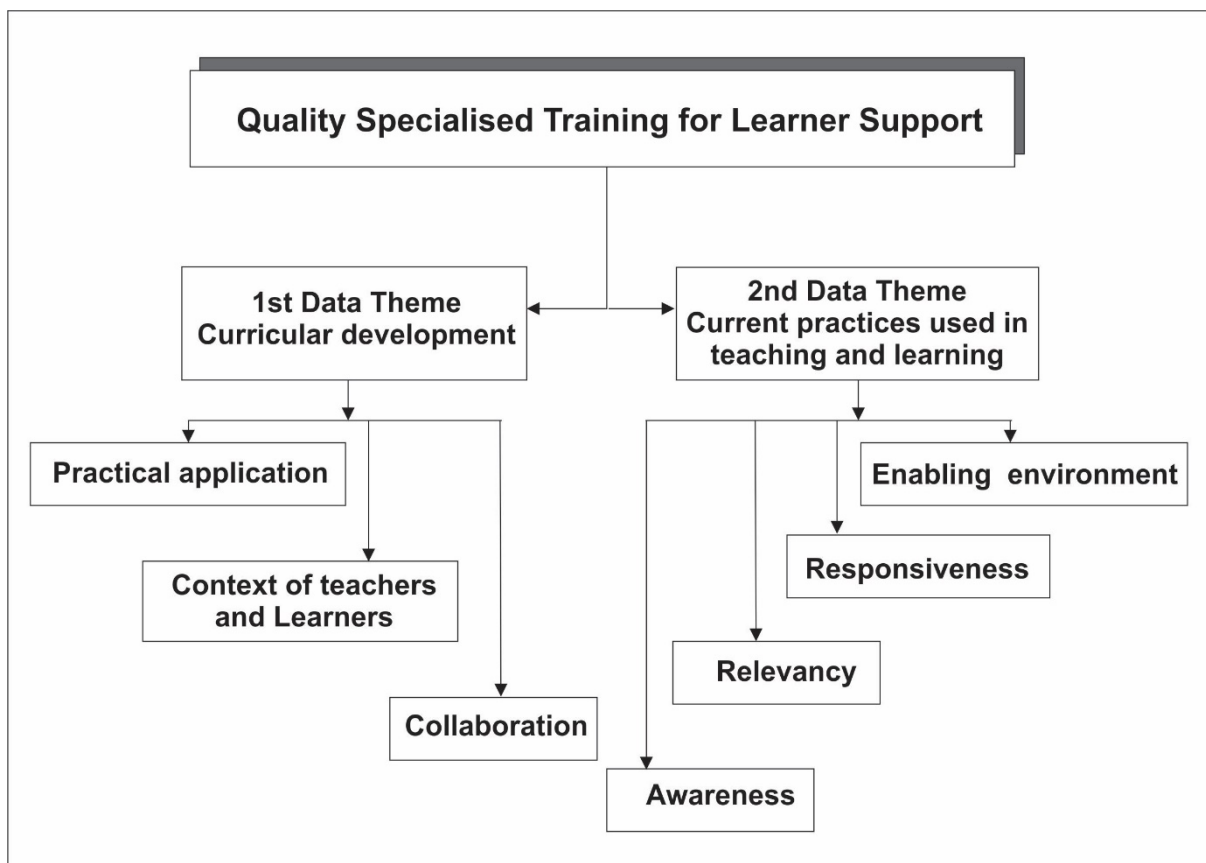


Figure 2: Data themes and sub-themes identified through the qualitative thematic data analysis

Discussion of themes from the person dimension in the bio-ecological perspective

From the PPCT perspective, the lecturer, considered on a *person* dimension, conveys his/her own demand, resource and force characteristics during the *process* dimension to specialist students in the classroom environment. The demand, resource and force characteristics impact on the educator's own abilities, knowledge, skills, as well as social and material resources (Jackson *et al.*, 2006), temperament, motivation, persistence, perceptions and worldviews (Swart & Pettipher, 2016; Zimmerman & Kontosh, 2007).

Theme 1: Curriculum development

A curriculum should accommodate all specialist students primarily, as learners themselves; therefore, to begin at the level of HEI, an accommodating curriculum would, according to participants, “...*allow individuality and enhance responses to learner diversity.*” Furthermore, as learners are different, an accommodating, collaborating curriculum will, “...*cover the whole spectrum...learning diversity and different ability levels,*” facilitating knowledge and experience of the specialist students in coping with a diverse audience. This is in accordance with literature that also suggests that curriculum development should be flexible (Dalton, McKenzie & Kahonde, 2012) and mindful of diversity (Berlach & Chambers, 2011).

Therefore, in considering the lecturer on a *person* dimension, this approach to curriculum development can be seen reflected in their personal perspectives, as the participants' comments revealed that they are aware of the current situation in schools and aim towards training better prepared specialist teachers. However, they are also aware that a definite gap between what is taught and what occurs in reality is evident. This gap has also been highlighted in literature, as it reveals that teachers are not adequately prepared to adapt the curriculum for diverse learners' needs (Dalton, McKenzie & Kahonde, 2012; Du Plessis, 2013; R2ECWD, 2016). Therefore, through HEI lecturers setting the example, specialist students could be equipped to apply these principles when they consider curriculum development and differentiation in their own classrooms.

Generally, many of the participants mentioned strategies they implement for teaching and learning to firstly accommodate specialist student diversity; and secondly, to prepare them for the diverse needs of learners.

As one participant commented: *"...it is needed for our inclusive schooling system but those contexts are so different from one another.... I am trying in my practice.... trying to focus on students giving them a little bit of understanding of the different context we are going to work in and that we also need always to consider that ..."*

The findings in this main theme suggest that the specialist student lecturers seem to be very aware of what they are aiming for in specialist student training and it is evident that this is reflected in the curricula that they present to their specialist student. This general discussion of the curriculum development theme included training specialist Learner Support Teachers and the development of a curriculum that supports optimal training and functioning of the novice teacher in the classroom, as seen from the perceptions of the HEI lecturers. More specifically, it is aimed at preparing teachers to optimally function in the specialised position in which they are placed.

Under this main theme, three data sub-themes emerged, namely a more practical orientation, context of teachers and learners, and collaboration. These will now be discussed.

Sub-theme 1.1: Introducing more practical aspects. The need for practical application was evident in most of the participants' responses, as one participant commented, *"... the practical application of learning support is something that is in great need and must be focused on"*. This was justified because we *"need more than just to empower the students."* This theme suggests, theoretically, that knowledge is adequate, but practically, *"...we are not preparing teachers for the real world, they are overwhelmed with real life experiences and do not know how to handle children in an inclusive environment."* This data category reflects one strong sentiment, that *"...we have to become more practical,"* emphasising the need for more practical experience. There is the realisation that what we are currently doing in specialised teacher training does not seem to be adequate to fully equip the specialised student for the diverse needs of learners. These perceptions are in line with literature, which also suggests that the practical application of support needs more emphasis (Engelbrecht *et al.*, 2017). Many of the participants also reflected that some of the full-time teachers in their classes reported that they are not adequately prepared, further indicating a gap between training and reality, and theory and practice. Therefore, practical aspects of specialised teacher training and development should be seriously considered and addressed (Spratt & Florian, 2013) in the HEI.

To further elaborate on this theme, participants specified what they thought were applicable practical activities that they would like to see incorporated in the curriculum if they were beginning a career as a specialisation teacher: “...*I would want to know how to complete the SIAS document, how can I ...develop a support plan, how do I do an interview with a parent...how do I start with a child, how do I get the shortfalls of the child – I really would say the honours...must be very practical.*” These are very noteworthy points, which must be considered.

Allan (2010:414) suggests “a move away from idealised versions of classroom life” and textbooks that only support theory, with no practical application, which seems to be the general trend with many of the participants. This concept has already been implemented with many of the participants, as they made some comments on strategies they use to facilitate the aspect of introducing more practical aspects: “*a portfolio of evidence must be compiled by the students, so we are presenting a little bit of theory in a very practical manner*”; “*...in the lecture room, we engage in discussions, we have...a lot of open discussions about curriculum design and curriculum content with our students... think about methodology, think about case studies you know what could be applicable in terms of training*”. Many of the participants also revealed their technological strategies with comments such as: “*...what I’ve been doing is to put a conversation going online... I give them a section to read and then I ask them to comment on it...respond to at least two of their colleagues...and after a certain period of time I open it up...to keep the discussion going ...*”

As teachers teach within different contexts, they would benefit from more participatory approaches (Spratt & Florian, 2013) in teacher training, making the urgent need for in-service and pre-service teachers evident in necessitating the acquisition of practical tools to implement in the everyday classroom situation. Luckily, this is acknowledged by the HEI lecturers and seen as imperative to a positive path forward.

Although theoretical aspects must form part of the course, responses suggest that even these theoretical aspects must be made ‘real’ to the teacher, in order for them to be able to execute, integrate, perform and apply these theoretical aspects in practice; as one participant suggested when commenting on theoretical aspects: “*...students do that in their undergrad training...but now the focus should be on practical.*”

Sub-theme 1.2: Consideration of the context of teachers and learners. In considering the context, reference was made to both the specialisation student context and the context of learners in the classroom. *"In terms of education...we need to contextualise our training of teachers, we need to contextualise in terms of the resources that we use, we need to contextualise the methodology...aha I know I am repeating myself but I cannot stress this enough, we need to contextualise"*. Therefore, the contextualisation of teachers and learners also strongly presents as a second data category. In acknowledging and reinforcing inclusive aspects, such as understanding and addressing the needs of all learners, catering for diversity and accommodation, contextualising is absolutely necessary. One participant pertinently stated, *"...if you understand the context within which you are training a teacher...you will innovate in such a sense that you address the needs, and may I bring in the concept diversity as well"*.

The literature also highlights this aspect, as Frisk and Larson (2011) stress the importance of considering the context of teaching and learning, and supporting the accommodation of learner diversity (Engelbrecht *et al.*, 2013). Many participants were very aware of the importance of context of the learner in the classroom, and sensitivity towards these issues was acknowledged and highlighted, *"...accommodating diversity of the students with 'extra time' or 'concessions' is one way but when it comes to teaching a diverse group of students, it's not just about their learning abilities or disabilities, it's also about cultural diversities, their language diversity and age."* Consequently, creating an inclusive environment would imply that a teacher has to *"...acknowledge these differences as the situations arise," "understand the context and consider the systemic background for creating an enabling environment."*

Therefore, to achieve an enabling environment will help us to better understand barriers to learning and to support empowerment (Ainscow & Miles, 2008), and make teachers better gatekeepers of education (Donohue & Bornman, 2014).

Sub-theme 1.3: Collaboration. Ainscow and Miles (2008) suggest that for IE to be successful, we do not necessarily need new or more techniques – only more collaboration. The importance of collaboration was mentioned by the participants: *"...it is very critical to empower teachers through the curriculum on how to develop interagency collaboration."*

This was noteworthy, as many of the participants commented that many of their students were able to identify learners with challenges (apply the theoretical aspects), but they did not have the practical experience or knowledge, or were not in the position to be able to make decisions regarding the learner. As one participant remarked when quoting her student's experiences, "...so *who do we need to consult, who would deal with these specialised areas, where care and support is needed.*" These questions are very relevant to a teacher who has to function in a real-life world situation. It was also suggested that "...*the learner and teacher can intervene and decide together what is necessary to support the specific learner or group of learners,*" however, it is evident that there remains the need for a specialist who can take the lead and drive the entire process, a specialised teacher who has the ability to drive the process.

Although collaboration is a crucial factor in the success of IE, collaboration is neglected due to inaccessible support systems and ignorance on the part of teachers (Swart & Pettipher, 2016); therefore, teacher training can be the force that bridges the gap that rectifies this situation, by teaching all role players to work together through closer collaboration with the parent, the teacher, the SBST and the DBE.

Theme 2: Current practices used in teaching and learning

The second main theme, current practices used in teaching and learning, revealed a further four data sub-themes, namely creating an enabling environment, relevance, responsiveness and awareness. As one participant commented, "*Learning should cater for everyone,*" a powerful statement and one that sums up the entire school environment, educational system and all the role players involved. This simple statement was further collaborated on by a participant defining it as "...*diverse learning, backgrounds, identities and experiences.*"

Sub-theme 2.1: Creating an enabling environment. Berlach and Chambers (2011) support this sentiment that teachers should encourage and design a teaching environment where IE will prosper and proliferate, especially in HEIs. This would grant the specialist student the opportunity to develop their own 'teaching identity' (Clarke, 2009). This enabling environment links very closely to the inclusive model presently mandatory in the SA school system.

As one participant states, *"inclusivity must in a sense, be able to accommodate all learners irrespective of their context or challenges."* Therefore, to create an enabling environment would be a very big step in the right direction regarding inclusivity. This aspect can easily be developed if the HEI lecturer is, firstly, consciously aware of the environmental influences, and secondly, focused creatively and innovatively on ways in which students could overcome any obstacles that could occur within a teaching environment. Once again, the data sub-themes that were highlighted in the first main theme are touched on, namely following a more practical teaching route, bearing in mind contexts and collaboration with other support systems.

Sub-theme 2.2: Relevance. Bearing in mind that the paradigm shifts from the medical model to the inclusive model, shifts in thinking about the diverse needs of learners were required. This new paradigmatic lens should intimidate HEI lectures, by inhibiting them from discarding old methods (Allan, 2010), but should encourage them to embrace 'the new', in order to stay relevant in teaching and learning.

This second data category was also mentioned by some of the participants, *"...we are beginning to understand that there are different narratives to education ...these different narratives or stories matter in terms of what is important in education."* Therefore, in contemplating this aspect we must be aware of the relevance of our own actions and our teaching, *"...what is important in terms of the new South African citizen? Who is the new citizen?"* Relevance covers all aspects from understanding situations, relationships and individuals, to knowing and having the knowledge to recognise what is needed to be imparted to a learner in order to create a fully functioning individual who can fulfil his/her place in the society in which he/she finds him-/herself. Succinctly put by one participant, *"...I look at strategies, I look at knowledge, is it relevant?"*

Sub-theme 2.3: Responsiveness. Responsiveness to diversity eradicates exclusion and underpins one of the main aims of IE (Ainscow & Miles, 2009). In many ways, being enabling regarding the environment and making the curriculum and the teaching practices relevant is a good step in the right direction; however, to go a step further and generate responsiveness in the student, can be considered the ultimate sign of 'approval' from the specialist students, which indicates that they have heard, assimilated, processed and now give feedback regarding the information they were given, *"...so does the learning that we present to young people resonate with them, does it make sense to them?"*

Sub-theme 2.4: Awareness. Awareness leads to responsiveness and change, indicating responsibility (Agezo, 2009) and accountability (Mafuwane & Pitsoe, 2014). Awareness would therefore contribute to sustainability in education (Frisk & Larson, 2011; Rowe, 2007). Respondents indicated: *“I try and create an awareness among my students through understanding the realities of people who experience one or other barrier to learning, something that prevented them from accessing the knowledge and experience...”* If all else is absent from the HEI lecturers’ practices and approaches to teaching and learning, hopefully awareness will be evident. Just being aware will heighten one’s sense of empathy and being able to at least *“...live in the shoes of the other person.”*

Summary of the discussion of the person dimension in the bio-ecological perspective

In summary, educators seem to be aware that these efforts are not sufficient enough to cope with the diverse educational needs of learners, since many learners are not reaching their full potential. On the other hand, this could implicate that the specialist students are not utilised effectively in schools. Therefore, to contemplate the SA education system regarding the training of specialist teachers, such as Learner Support Teachers, through the lens of a bio-ecological systems perspective (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998), one can only conclude that the skills and knowledge that should be gained from specialised training will enable the specialised teacher to influence the entire education system by simply being an adequate inclusive teacher who is a knowledgeable agent of change.

Conclusion

The researcher concurs with Avalos (2008) that teacher education is an ‘unfinished business’. From the side of HEIs, universities could consider training better-equipped specialist teachers to meet the educational challenges within the varying SA contexts. Furthermore, lecturers in HEIs will have to continue to produce suitable educational programmes in order to satisfy the continual need for dynamic, well-trained specialisation teachers, who are versatile and able to cope within the diverse SA context. Therefore, the researcher feels that it is the duty of institutions to deliver programmes of quality, which will narrow the gap between theory, training and the complex interactions evident in the educational system (Spratt & Florian, 2013).

This new focus openly suggests that universities should move away from overstressed theoretical training in pedagogical strategies by questioning the influence of theoretical training in practice (Mulkeen 2010); a main motivation of this study and a major finding of the research.

Recommendations

Although HEIs need not take sole responsibility for teacher training and development, a close partnership formed with the DBE could result in balanced theoretical and practical-based programmes. In looking for solutions, the DBE can (and should) be involved in discussions about specialist teacher training programmes at HEIs. A balanced programme between theory and practice would assist and promote educational reform, with benefits to the DBE regarding specialist trained teachers who would be more confident and have more self-efficacy and higher personal beliefs in their ability to deal with the diverse needs of learners (Mafuwane & Pitsoe, 2014). This liaison between the HEI and the DBE would be of a reciprocal nature, as the DBE would be seen as another source of valuable in-service training available to neonate teachers. This being said, it is imperative to mention that HEI should remain pro-active and begin to immediately address the challenges that presently exist in initial teacher training, as well as specialised training by addressing and contributing towards educational challenges. Therefore, it can be suggested that thorough specialised teacher training, change regarding the current wave of negativity about IE, and teaching, in general, within the SA context, could be circumvented.

Finally, in ending, we would like to direct further research and focus on a question posed by Engelbrecht (2018):

What knowledge and skills are needed by teachers? In the case of this article: What knowledge and skills are needed by specialist Learner Support Teachers?

Therefore, we recommend that future research should investigate this aspect while bearing in mind the following that was so aptly noted by one of the participants:

“All strategies are not readily available and they are not always one size fits all, however to coach your students in how to be creative in strategies that facilitates enabling environments, creates relevant responsiveness and awareness, regarding different narratives or stories that matter regarding what is important in education” can be seen as a way towards effective inclusive classrooms, which will, in turn, promote effective changes in society. Let us lead in HEIs!

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CHAPTER 4
ARTICLE 3
DO ALUMNI STUDENT TEACHERS WHO COMPLETE THE LEARNER SUPPORT BED
HONOURS PROGRAMME AT HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS MEET THE
EDUCATIONAL CHALLENGE?

Submitted to South African Journal of Education (SAJE).

SEE ADDENDUM E: ACCEPTANCE/SUBMISSION PROOF OF ARTICLES AND
MANUSCRIPTS P184-185

SEE ADDENDUM F: AUTHOR GUIDELINES FOR SUBMISSION P201-201

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Do alumni student teachers who complete the Learner Support BEd Honours programme at Higher Educational Institutions meet the educational challenge?

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ABSTRACT

In the South African context, reality reveals that teachers are confronted with educational challenges on a daily basis. These challenges require an able teacher who can practically identify, assess and support the learner who is encountering scholastic difficulties. With this in mind, any research that focusses on investigating specific relevant components of the education system, would necessitate obtaining information directly from alumni student teachers themselves, as they are able to relate their viewpoint from an alumni student perspective. South African research regarding the practical relevance of professional development for teachers delivered through post-graduate training is usually derived from deductive research. That is, research which reflects the existing body of knowledge pertaining to programme design, study content and learning outcomes.

Therefore, in line with the inductive research approach, this study obtained qualitative data from N=16 alumni students, which focussed on their views regarding the applicability and relevance of the professional development they received through their participation in the BEd Honours (BEd Hons) programme.

A thematic data analysis was then conducted on the integrated qualitative dataset, which resulted from the alumni students' responses to the semi-structured, open-ended questionnaire. This resulted in information becoming evident, which could assist in aligning the training and professional development of teacher-students, to the educational challenges that they encounter at grassroots level.

In conclusion, it can be noted that current literature consulted also reflects this study's findings, consolidating the results; and with the consideration of the bio-ecological systems theory, it was possible to make specific recommendations and suggestions regarding future revision of the BEd Hons programme in Learner Support.

KEYWORDS

Bio-ecological perspective; Educational challenges; Inclusive Education; Learner Support; Special educational needs; Specialist teacher training

1. Introduction and Problem Statement

The South African (SA) Education System has undergone a major paradigm shift, from a deficit-based medical approach to educational challenges, towards a more inclusive-based learner-centred educational approach (DoE, 2001). This shift has resulted in a noteworthy transformation in the support that teachers needed, when they were required to assist learners with diverse educational needs (Bouwer, 2011). In order to achieve this, a radical reformation and restructuring of the educational policies was required. Subsequently, the National Policy on Special Needs Education, i.e. Education White Paper 6 (EWP6) (DoE, 2001) and the Policy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS) (DBE, 2014) was instated. These policies advocated and embraced the accommodation of learners with diverse needs in ordinary classrooms (Ashman & Elkins, 2009; Forlan, 2011; Sharma & Nuttal, 2016; DoE, 2001).

The EWP6 (DoE, 2001), which represents a commitment made by the SA Government towards the maximising inclusion and participation of all learners in the National Education System (Nel & Grosser, 2016) as part of their constitutional right to inclusive, equal, non-discriminatory basic education (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996), underpinned this inclusive-based learner-centred educational approach (DoE, 2001). The SIAS policy (DBE, 2014), in particular, was an initiative implemented by the DBE to act as both a preventative measure (Lartec, Bustos, Carpio, Casiano, De Guzman & Tongyofen, 2015) and a supportive approach. This policy can also be seen as an effort by the DBE to deal with and support the individual, their diverse educational challenges and the needs of the learner, throughout their school career. This shift also triggered an inclination towards a more collaborative approach to the individualised screening, identification, assessment and support delivered to learners, as outlined by the SIAS policy (Lindqvist, Nilholm, Almqvist & Wetso, 2011; Nel, Engelbrecht, Nel & Tlale, 2014; DBE, 2011; DBE, 2014; Strogilos, Lacey, Xanthacou & Kaila, 2011).

Therefore, this major paradigm shift, from a deficit-based medical approach to a more inclusive-based learner-centred educational approach, proved to have major implications for the education system in general and more specifically for the initial, specialised and continuous development and training of teachers.

In particular, the individual is also affected by the influential role that teachers play in the successful implementation of inclusive education (Campbell, Gilmore & Cuskelly, 2003; Forlin & Chambers, 2011; Forlin, Keen & Barrett, 2008). In acknowledging this, there was an obligation to utilise schoolteachers more effectively with specialised support strategies, skills and competencies, in order to meet the individual and diverse educational challenges of learners in SA inclusive classrooms (Forlin & Chambers, 2011; Lartec et al., 2015). Thus, this task is placed at the door of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) that deliver trained teachers. Although universities continuously adapt their education practices to align with curriculum changes from the DBE (Yusuf, Priyono & Yeagerb, 2011), no assurance can be given that the HEI are training specialist Learner Support Teachers, who are able to meet the continually changing educational challenge. When considering the requirements of teacher training to address the diverse educational needs of learners in ordinary, full service or special schools; no distinction is made between the skills and knowledge that is required for teachers serving these schools. Furthermore, no clear guidelines exist on what should be included as part of specialised training programmes for teachers. Although there is a South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA), the body that advises Higher Education and Training according to the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Act 67 of 2008, each HEI designs, develops and implements their own individualised programme.

Within this broad context, the research problem notes that very little research exists on the practical relevance and applicability of professional teacher development delivered at major HEIs by means of a BEd Hons programme. This results in a knowledge gap that will be addressed by the current inductive qualitative investigation.

2. The Inductive Research Process

During the process of induction, one starts by collecting data through observations or measures (Crossman, 2019; Yin, 2016). Thereafter, categories, patterns and regularities are detected in the data and possible theories, which could explain why such patterns of findings are considered and determined. One then draws conclusions, makes broader generalisations, and finally develops theories, models, frameworks or guidelines (Crossman, 2019; University of Utah, 2014). The structure of the research on which this paper reports, follows accordingly.

2.1. Research Design and Methodology

As previously stated, an inductive qualitative research approach was followed in order to explore the perceptions of alumni teacher students who completed a Learner Support BEd Hons programme at one selected HEI. Thus, this article reports on the perceptions and personal experiences of the alumni student teachers who completed the Learner Support BEd Hons programme at this institute. The alumni student teachers' responses provided an indication as to whether the course they attended met the educational challenge. This inductively derived research served as the second of two research constituents, the first being an article, namely, *Training quality Learner Support Teachers for meeting the educational challenge in South Africa: Perceptions of university lecturers* (Smit & Preston, 2019). The two constituents eventually contributed to a suggested framework, which was considered for teaching and learning of teacher students who were undergoing training in the Learner Support BEd Hons programme at this major HEI, which was part of a PhD study.

Thus, the interpretivist research meta-paradigm (Burrell & Morgan, 1979) served as an underpinning for this qualitative research, which facilitated the understanding of the subjective responses from the participants. Ethical clearance was obtained from EMENTEL ethics committee of the North West University (NWU-00022-13-S2).

2.2. Sampling Strategy, Selection Criteria and Demographic Information of Participants

Initially, a randomly selected sample of alumni students, who successfully completed the BEd Hons programme, with specialisation in Learner Support, was considered. However, due to restrictions stipulated by the Protection of Personal Information (PoPI) Act (4 of 2013) (South Africa, 2013), the university denied this request, which necessitated the use of snowball sampling, an approach mostly used for studies in sensitive issues or where access to the study population is limited, (Lombard in Joubert, Hartell & Lombard, 2016). It is acknowledged that the sample drawn for this study was limited, nevertheless, useful data was obtained, which provided a starting point to increase the understanding of the perceptions of alumni teacher students who completed a Learner Support BEd Hons programme at this HEI.

The alumni students (N=16) that were successfully recruited, freely and anonymously participated in the inductive investigation. Participants completed an open-ended, semi-structured qualitative questionnaire that presented them with the following questions after written informed consent (Strydom, 2011), was obtained.

3. Detection of Data Themes, Patterns and Regularities in the Qualitative Integrated Dataset

After coding, grouping and organising the relevant themes and patterns (Yin, 2016), the integrated dataset revealed two data themes. The patterns that emerged from these two themes enabled the researcher to explore and establish regularities and interrelatedness between the identified themes (Yin, 2016). Although responses were brief and to the point, the researcher ensured that all possible precautions were considered and taken, so that the process did not lead to unreliable and inconsistent interpretation of the data. Thus, care was taken with observing patterns, identifying themes and grouping similarities and contrasts under the themes. The thick data obtained, enabled the identification of themes and sub-themes.

Over and above, a co-coder confirmed the two themes (Nieuwenhuis, 2007), namely the strengths and concerns. The assessment of trustworthiness was done according to Guba's model: truth value (credibility), applicability (transferability), consistency (dependability) and neutrality (confirmability) (Guba, 1981).

The bio-ecological systems perspective, the Process-Person-Context-Time (PPCT) model (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998; 2006), served as the research framework for examining, interpreting and discussing the inductive qualitative findings of the study. The *Process* dimension is reflected in the teaching and learning interactions in the Learner Support BEd Hons course. The teaching and learning interactions took place between the *Person* dimension (the teacher student) and other *Person* dimensions (staff who lecture the modules); all of which are embedded in the HEI *Context* dimension. Both the *Person* dimensions (the teacher student and the lecturers of modules), experience bi-lateral influences of many characteristics, such as abilities, knowledge, skills, social and material resources (Jackson & Rothmann, 2006), temperament, motivation, persistence, perceptions and world views (Swart & Pettipher, 2016; Zimmerman & Kontosh, 2007). (See Figure 1).

During the *Process* dimension, the student teacher (*Person*) gains knowledge and skills that will facilitate the education of learners with diverse needs; although the student teacher already has their own demand, resource and force characteristics, which they bring to the *Process* dimension. Furthermore, curriculum presenters also bring their own demand, resource and force characteristics to the *Process* dimension, therefore both student teachers, curriculum presenters and the BEd curriculum are also prominently influenced by the process dimension.

For the purpose of this article, the HEI will be considered as the *Context* dimension, a *macro* system reflecting the values and belief systems of the HEI. The Education department will be seen as the *exo* system; this is the encompassing educational world of the student, including the student's experiences, activities and contacts, making up an individual's life world. This scenario plays out during *the time* dimension, the actual period of time required by the BEd Hons Learner Support programme. Furthermore, the *meso* system can also be referred to as a *process* dimension, reflecting the interactions between curriculum and students. Finally, the *micro* system is seen as the teaching and learning experiences and activities that occur in the BEd Hons Learner Support programme. The micro and meso levels create and encompass the teaching and learning environment, where student teachers engage repeatedly in daily activities, which Bronfenbrenner considers the "engines of development" (Bronfenbrenner, 1995:620). These "engines of development" are exactly what is needed to become specialist Learner Support Teachers.

During the *Process* dimension, the student teacher (*Person*) gains knowledge and skills, which facilitates the education of learners with diverse needs. Although the student teachers already have their own demand, resources and force characteristics, which they bring to the *Process* dimension, the BEd curriculum is also prominently influenced by the interactions within the *process* dimension. Thus, the quality of the specialised training offered will undoubtedly influence the effectiveness and outcomes of the teaching and learning *process*, where the student teacher has to gain knowledge and skills to meet the educational challenge in SA.

4. Inductive Patterns and Discussion of Findings

The patterns derived from the qualitative data analysis were divided into two main themes, programme strengths and programme concerns (see Figure 1). Data themes and categories that were identified, were supported by English or Afrikaans quotes. (Own translation of Afrikaans quotes into English were done to enhance readability for English speaking readers). Additionally, the data themes and categories that were identified, were also supported by relevant literature.

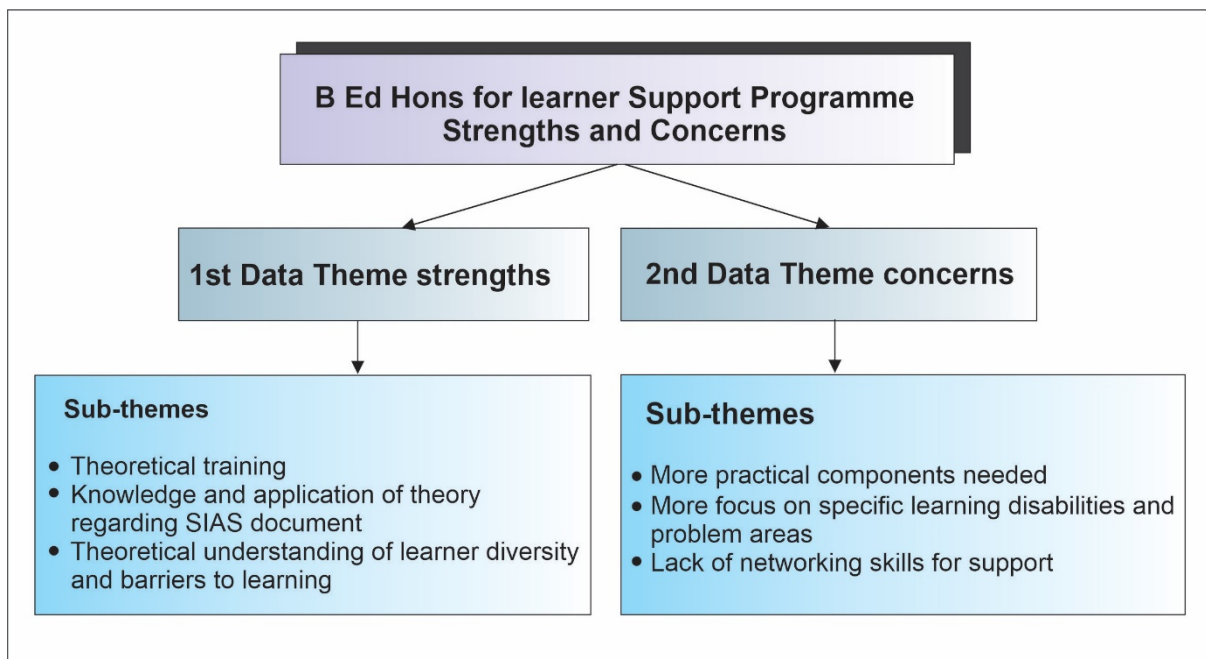


Figure 1. Data themes identified through the qualitative inductive analysis

4.1 THEME 1: Strengths of the programme

Within the theme, programme strengths (see Figure 1), the following sub-categories were evident. These can be considered as strengths: Theoretical training; Knowledge and application of theory and Theoretical understanding of learner diversity and identification of barriers. Subsequently, each theme and sub-theme will be discussed in an effort to ground the research findings in evidential data, enabling the researcher to assess whether the alumni student teachers who undertook the Learner Support BEd Hons programme, were meeting the educational challenge that confronted them.

To initiate this comparative discussion, one must first highlight the *Process* dimension of the theory, which refers to change and development of and in the *Person* over a period

of time (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998). To bring this into context with the study, the single main strength that can be emphasised is that over a period of time, by the sheer nature of the teacher's involvement in the educational environment and the processes of teaching and learning, teachers acquire and establish a level of competence. This aspect must be considered as it either influences or inhibits the *Process* dimension. In layman's terms, it can be explained as obtaining skills and knowledge through participatory learning. This participatory learning can assist teachers in accommodating a wide range of diverse learning needs in their classrooms, ranging from low to high intensity required support (DBE, 2014).

4.1.1 Sub-theme: Theoretical training.

The first sub-theme reflects that a strong theoretical grounding was evident when the students underwent training. Students were satisfied with this training, as they said it equipped them with a sufficient foundation and grounding in policies and theoretical knowledge, enabling them to support learners who presented with special needs. As reflected in one participant's comment, "... *goeie onderbou gegee om inklusief te dink tydens die aanbied van lesse, asook altyd te dink hoe leerders moet ondersteun word in verskeie aspekte van onderrig*" [Good foundation for thinking inclusively when offering lessons and always thinking of how learners should be supported in various aspects of teaching]. Furthermore, participants also indicated that they were satisfied with the theoretical content "... *die inhoud was voldoende*" [The content was sufficient] and this led to the student feeling that the comprehensive theoretical aspects provided them with a good grounding and adequately prepared them in understanding the educational environment, "... *dit het my goed voorberei*" [... it prepared me well]. This being noted, it was also evident that the deep theoretical knowledge helped the students to think critically and try to address some of the classroom problems that they were faced with, "...*dit my ongelooflik baie gehelp om probleme in die klaskamer aan te spreek*" [... it helped me incredibly to address problems in the classroom].

Even though there was a general consensus that the theoretical aspects of the training were good, one participant did comment on the knowledge that they acquired being too general, "... *I did gain additional knowledge, rather more general knowledge and it was not specific*". One participant pertinently added, "*I know the theory of inclusion, but*

struggle to apply it practically.” This again emphasises that theoretically, the programme is sound but practically, there are elements lacking.

The findings in this study were also in accordance with literature, which propagates the importance of teacher training for the successful implementation of Inclusive education (Forlin & Chambers, 2011), including the support for learners with barriers to learning.

4.1.2 Knowledge and application of theory

Another sub-theme regarding the strengths of the programme was the specific focus on the knowledge, use and theory of South African policy documents, specifically the Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support document (SIAS). This theoretical understanding of the policy documents underpins the rationale and understanding of inclusive education as well as providing guidelines for the student to effectively function in the classroom, enabling them to follow the South African educational policies and practices. One participant stated, “... *Die SIAS document is baie goed met ons behandel, wat 'n positiewe bydrae gelewer het aangesien ons deurgans die SIAS document gebruik het in die klaskamer*” [The SIAS document was very well discussed with us, which made a positive contribution as we consistently used the SIAS document in the classroom]. Therefore, the general satisfaction with basic theoretical training was evident and further strengthened by participants' comments on the applied training in the use of the SIAS document, which took place as classroom exercises. These sentiments were endorsed by various participants, “... I understand and can apply SIAS; I am positive about the SIAS; *Ek verstaan die SIAS*” [I understand the SIAS]. As well as being positive regarding this theoretical training, one response stated that “*opleiding in SIAS, maak maklike identifisering van barriers*” [Training in SIAS makes easy identification of barriers].

These training exercises were seen as positive, as it provided students with insight into the use and rationale regarding the SIAS process, thus strengthening their personal connections between theory and practice. Thus, students who were “... positive” about the SIAS, commented that they, “... *ek verstaan die SIAS*” [... I understand the SIAS] and “I understand and can apply SIAS”. Furthermore, these activities enabled the students to link the theory to the real-life situations that they were faced with and this facilitated their “... easy identification of barriers”, thus improving their effectivity in the classroom. However, those who did not fully understand the theoretical aspects (policy training)

tended to struggle to connect aspects of the theory to their own teaching needs. This was reflected in two of the participant's responses, as they seemed to feel that the policies were not dealt with sufficiently.

Their opinions suggested that the need for more in-depth, as well as varied policy instruction, could have been provided. It is thus seen that students relied heavily on the theoretical aspects to assist with their teaching practices and those students who, for whatever reason, did not have the theoretical foundation either, requested “... *meer inligting rondom inklusiewe onderwys*” [...more information about Inclusive education], or sought further knowledge regarding these topics, “... what are the different policies that are needed in inclusive schools”. Yet, there was still a need for even more practical experiences over and above the theoretical instruction of the policy documents, like the SIAS document.

4.1.3 Theoretical understanding of learner diversity and identification of barriers

Accordingly, the strengths of the programme, which clearly manifest in the strong theoretical framework driven by SA policies, empowered the students in understanding and applying the knowledge that they acquired regarding many aspects of learner diversity and the barriers experienced by learners. A participant responded, “... *Dit het my gehelp om elke leerder as uniek te sien en te akkomodeer gebaseer op sy/haar behoeftes*’ [It has helped me to see and accommodate each learner as unique, based on his/her needs] because “... inclusive classes in the school have more barriers and with more factors that you need to keep in mind”.

Thus, the strong theoretical training led to a better knowledge and understanding and the ability of the student to apply the theory to the practical situation when dealing with learner diversity and barriers to learning. This reinforced the aim of the Department of Education, to accommodate diverse learning needs of learners through addressing barriers to learning (DoE, 2001). Furthermore, this aim coincides with the major role of the Learner Support teacher. Hence, the HEI are required to, not only equip student teachers to identify and assess barriers, but also to acquaint them with intervention strategies to cope with the learner diversity in their classrooms.

In conclusion, regarding this study, participants indicated how the programme supported them in identifying learning barriers, "... I now understand barriers" and "... I understand and can identify barriers."

Other participant comments also reflected the practical application of the learned theory, *"Ons het ook geleer om leerhindernisse aan te spreek, wat ongelooflik getel het aangesien ek by 'n spesiale skool gewerk het waar meerderheid leerders sukkel met hindernisse, hetsy dit akademiese hindernisse of gedragshindernisse was"* [We have also learned to address barriers to learning, which means a lot, as I work at a special school where a majority of the learners are struggling with barriers, whether academic barriers or behavioural barriers].

As the mainstream classroom teacher has to adapt to the new outline for Special needs education as presented in Education White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001), a shift in focus from remedial intervention to a more holistic approach to intervention (DBE, 2014) is needed. Thus, the intense theoretical instruction as a grounding resonates well with the participants, especially regarding the satisfaction with the SIAS training. Therefore, the strong theoretical aspects of the programme empower students to be resourceful, and having this knowledge, they can apply the knowledge to their own teaching practice, making this theme a positive aspect for the programme.

4.2 THEME 2: Concerns about the Programme

The second main theme was programme concerns (see Figure 1). In considering a programme, it is favourable to highlight the strengths, however it would be unrealistic to not consider opposite aspects that cause concern. Within this theme, concerns about the programme were identified as factors causing concern: Sub-themes that were noted were: more practical components needed (training in assessment, psychological understanding, time and planning, and administration) more focus on specific learning disabilities and problem areas and on the lack of networking skills for support.

4.2.1 More practical components needed

Even though many of the students made their own connections between the theoretical and practical arenas, there were many who needed the re-assurance and encouragement that what they were doing was correct and acceptable.

This reaffirmed the fact that more practical aspects were required, which was also the request of the students, *“Praktiese ervaring het ontbreek in die praktyk”* [Practical experience was lacking in practice]. As one student explained, *“... ek sal graag meer praktiese georiënteerde modules wou sien wat meer gefokus is op die verskillende leer gestremdhede en hoe die leerders by spesiale skole, maar ook in die hoofstroom skole (inklusiewe onderwys) gehelp en ondersteun kan word”* [I would like to see more practically oriented modules that are more focused on the different learning disabilities and how the learners at special schools and also mainstream schools, (inclusive education) can be helped and supported]

In the drive for more practical exposure, some students suggested ways that they would like to be engaged in practical exposure, *“... ek sal wel voorstel dat daar meer praktiese geleenthede gegun word om prakties, verskeie hindernisse tot leer te ervaar”* [I would suggest giving more practical opportunities to practically experience barriers to learning], and *“... gevallestudies wat teorie maklik maak ...”* [... Case studies that make theory easier ...]. This comment suggests that the student would like to actually experience what they learn theoretically, with more *“... praktyk gerigte opdragte”* [... More practice-oriented assignments], and “theory directly linked with practical experiences.” Students specifically suggested, “... more practical case studies”; “more practical hints on discipline regarding certain barriers to learning” and in general, practical discipline strategies, which should include, “... classroom practices that support teachers with difficult learners, substance abuse, and practical discipline.” Finally, many respondents commented on the issues of “... not enough workshops or short courses for Support Teachers.”

This gap between theoretical and practical training is a worldwide phenomenon (Frisk & Larson, 2011) due to current education systems and problems experienced in specialised teacher training (Spratt & Florian, 2013). When contemplating training, results can be divided. Sufficient training can initiate change and development, however, insufficient training may hamper or even stagnate teaching and learning development (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998). Therefore, improper training can have a very negative effect on the ability of teachers who need to accommodate a wide range of diverse learning needs in their classrooms.

To further illustrate the importance of training in the South African context, diverse education did not reform at the expected pace (DBE, 2015) and the failures are, amongst other factors, attributed to insufficient teacher training, resulting in the unsuccessful implementation of IE (Forlin & Chambers, 2011). It is thus important that appropriate practical teacher training is of the utmost importance in the current South African educational system.

4.2.2 More focus on specific learning disabilities and problem areas

The concerns highlighted in this theme, were that of the impact the current programme had on the participants' teaching practices and styles. Participants reacted with comments such as, "... with general teaching, it has not made a difference or any impact ... but when one has to deal with referrals and concessions, I have more knowledge than other teachers, but still not enough." Furthermore, the impact the programme had was considered too broad, as "...the course did not focus on supporting learners with special problems. It was more general knowledge and not specific." This resulted in a few respondents commenting on their personal teaching style remaining the same, "... *dit het nie werklik 'n verskil gemaak aan my manier van skool hou nie*" [It did not really make a difference to my way of teaching], and "... it was only a tick in the box and did not really equip me to be a better teacher"; "... it did not really make a difference to my way of teaching."

These comments were really concerning as they reflect the participant's opinion of the course, which seemed to devalue the programme, inferring that there is no real significance or merit in doing this qualification. One response indicated a heartfelt wish: "*Ek het gehoop dat die BEd Honneurs in Leerderondersteuning my sou bemagtig om die uitdagings in 'n voldiensskool met kinders met verskillende leergestremdhede beter te ondersteun, maar was eintlik teleurgestel in die inhoud van die graad. Baie min van dit waarmee die onderwyser in die praktyk meet te doen kry is werklik aangespreek*" [I was hoping that the BEd Hons in Learner Support would empower me for the challenges in a full-service school with children with different learning disabilities, but I was actually disappointed in the content of the degree. Very little of what the teacher does in practice is really addressed].

The following pleas were also posed by the participants: “Give teachers in training a deeper knowledge about the issues that learners may have psychologically and how to help the learner accordingly” and “The course was very broad. More content on Learner Support and how to accommodate learners with specific problems in the class could be added to the course material.” This statement could be supported by Julie’s (2009) suggestion that lecturers should very carefully select course content for core knowledge, but that direction must also be given concerning the practical application.

4.2.3 General aspects to enhance teacher coping, which are lacking in the programme

Problems in the teaching profession have been well researched and it was not the intention of this article to delve into problems in practice, yet it is worth mentioning and considering the possible areas with which a Bed Hons programme could assist. Some of the problems teachers experience in classrooms can be debated as not being the responsibility of training at a HEI, yet they are worth mentioning and considering for inclusion in programmes. This sub theme will be divided into the following generalised, noteworthy aspects: administrative challenges, time management, classroom discipline and parental involvement, all of which are cause for concern in the specific programme.

In this study, some of the participants experienced problems with administrative tasks such as “basic admin duties that go with the profession.” Three of the participants just stated that administration is a problem without elaborating on the statements.

Another aspect, namely time and management of time were also mentioned as a problem, as they commented, “time is a big factor.” This aspect also indirectly influences other aspects of the daily routines, for example, “I know about ISP, but there is just not enough time to apply it properly.” Furthermore, another participant mentioned that lesson planning is timeous, “the admin of lesson planning takes time,” this results in a situation that is aggravated by “... inclusive classes in the school have more barriers and with more factors that you need to keep in mind; all taking up one’s time”; *“Leerders met barriers kort meer individuele aandag; veral as dit nie een van die mees algemeenste barriers is nie.”* [Learners with barriers need more individual attention; especially if it is not one of the most common barriers]. Many participants agreed that having some sort of time management component would have eased their teaching task tremendously.

The third aspect of this sub theme was the children's behaviour. This aspect caused noted concerns and this was an area that **could have been dealt** with in the programme. A participant noted that "learners' emotional mood swings" complicate the teaching and learning in the classroom, a comment strengthened by another participant's suggestion that there is a need for "more guidance for new educators regarding class discipline."

There is also a strong plea for more parental involvement, "involvement of parents (Lack of involvement), really makes things difficult." "*Leerders se gedrag. Afwesigheid van ouers. Dwelmmisbruik*" [Learners' behaviour. Absence of parents. Drug Abuse] are all features that create uncertainty with the teacher, especially the neonate teacher; these aspects cause concern and could be considered in a revised BEd Hons programme.

Discussion

From a bio-ecological perspective, the student teacher is seen as the *Person* dimension. The *Process* dimension involves two main interactive systems, namely the teaching and learning *Process* between the student teacher and the BEd Hons course, and the other *Process* of the application of the learned content in the classroom of the material learned in the BEd Hons course (See Diagram 1).

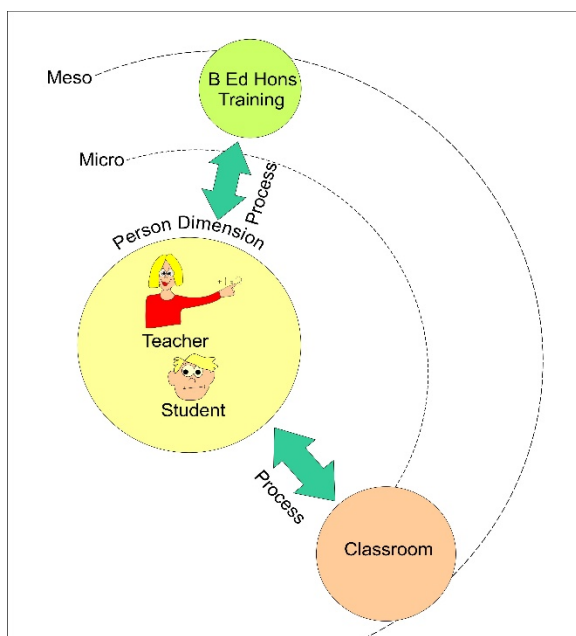


Diagram 1: The main interactive systems

Therefore, if the training processes are sufficient, the student teacher (*Person dimension* in the micro system) will be equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to meet the educational challenge that confronts them. This microenvironment (*Person dimension*) of interchangeable processes will thus reflect and prove to be a positive influence on student teachers themselves, as the training and development of the student teacher will provide the evidence of competence through their own teaching styles, their development and their coping BEd Hons training skills.

On the meso level, which includes the BEd Hons programme and the environment (classroom) in which the student teacher functions, the specialist training in the BEd Hons course will once again positively influence teaching and learning, as the student teacher will display evidence of positive processes in both these areas within the meso level.

From the findings of this study, it is clear that theoretical training facilitates teacher student learning and enhanced functioning in the IE environment. The theoretical aspects did support teachers, as they are able to address some classroom problems and were comfortable with the implementation of the policy documents. Furthermore, the ability of the student teachers to apply the theory in real-life situations in their classrooms, did enhance change, growth and development (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998; 2006) in learners. This, coupled with their degree of satisfaction with theoretical training, showed a positive attitude (Jackson, Zhao, Fitzgerald, von Eye & Harold, 2006) that was positively noted when considering the influence of the proximal processes regarding the context dimension (the classroom).

Additionally, strong theoretical training further assisted and empowered the students in identifying barriers experienced by learners, and in acknowledging and becoming aware of learner diversity. This enabled the student teacher to recognise *Person* inherent qualities (force, resource and demand characteristics) (Swart & Pettipher, 2016; Zimmerman & Kontosh, 2007) that directly influenced the proximal learning processes in the classroom, which is important for timely intervention so that development is not interrupted, but mediated (Swart & Pettipher, 2016; Zimmerman & Kontosh, 2007).

However, the void in the training of these student teachers was evident in the concerns regarding the BEd Hons programme. The gap between theory and practice, which is a worldwide problem, is no different in SA (Frisk & Larson, 2011).

The practical gap in the training *Process* influenced the teacher-classroom *Processes*. This was evident in the comments of participant student teachers that the training did not really influence their teaching practices and methods, reflecting a tendency of the individual to follow their own entrenched teaching practice. However, although students did cope fairly well with the application of theoretical knowledge, more practical experience were requested, indicating this requirement. More specifically, the need for more focussed teaching of different learning disabilities and ways in which to support these learners was evident, as the participants stated that they were not fully prepared for the challenges they encountered in their day-to-day teaching routines. Student teachers also mentioned some general aspects that they felt could be dealt with in the programme, for example, aspects that touched on time management, and classroom and individual discipline.

On a more theoretical note, the results of this study also highlighted the interactive reciprocal interactions between the educational systems, how these systems influence each other and how these systems globally influence the greater educational environment, including the DBE policies.

Conclusions

The quality of teachers training received will undoubtedly have an impact on teaching and learning experiences in the classroom (Mestry, Hendricks & Bisschoff, 2009), and the personal development of the student teacher. Insufficient training may cause the teacher to become the main barrier to learning and development in the classroom (Sharma & Das, 2015). Although a lot of emphasis is placed on the extension of diverse education (Sharma & Das, 2015), the quality of training impacts on teacher preparation and the standard of learning taking place in the classrooms (Avalos, 2011). Sibaya and Sibaya (2008) reported that BEd qualified novice teachers regarded the education programme, as proposed by the Norms and Standards for Educators (DoE, 2000), as inadequate. This raises the possibility that there are similar views concerning specialised education for the diverse learning situation, even though it is generally accepted practice that specialist Learner Support Teachers should fulfil this role. Thus, the debate regarding the need for effective training in order to have more impact on teaching and learning in the classroom continues (Carroll, Forlin & Jobling, 2003; Clarke & Phelan, 2015; Florian & Linklater, 2010; Julie, 2009).

Therefore, I concur with a statement already made in 2004 by Richter, Van der Walt and Visser, that “teacher education cannot continue as in the past ...”, (2004:3) yet somehow we seem to still struggle to ‘get it right’.

Regarding this research, the BEd Hons course can on the one hand (the strengths) initiate change, create growth and initiate development in student teachers, however, on the other hand, the concern regarding the programme is the constraint on teacher training and development, therefore these two themes must be finely balanced. It must be remembered that for effective training and development of student teachers, this reciprocal *Process* between the teacher and the learners in the classroom and the specialist training that is obtained in the BEd Hons course, could result in advantages of change, growth and development of all role players; or, it could alternatively serve as a constraining, superfluous, meaningless qualification, of wasted time and effort.

In conclusion, we would like to suggest that further research is necessary for HEIs to reconsider their aims, goals and values concerning training quality Learner Support Teachers, so that the qualification becomes meaningful in the new South African inclusive educational environment and becomes truly supportive of inclusive education, the teachers and the learners. Furthermore, perhaps it is now an appropriate and convenient time for lecturers and students to communicate better and to re-open discussions on the needs of the present day learner, situational training requirements, government policies and expectations, and the individual who has to perform the teaching task.

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CHAPTER 5
ARTICLE 4 / MANUSCRIPT 19 ARABPS VOL 8
A HIGHER EDUCATION FRAMEWORK FOR TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
IN LEARNER SUPPORT

**Accepted as a book chapter in Teaching and Learning Research in Higher Education.
ARAPBS vol 8 manuscript 19**

SEE ADDENDUM E: ACCEPTANCE/SUBMISSION PROOF OF ARTICLES AND
MANUSCRIPTS P186

SEE ADDENDUM F: AUTHOR GUIDELINES FOR SUBMISSION P197-200

To the examiners: Please note that the article was language edited before peer review. The comments were addressed and the article was resubmitted, but final language editing will only be done after notification of final acceptance of the article is received. We are still awaiting the notification and unfortunately the PhD had to be submitted.

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Cover Page

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Title: A Higher Education framework for Teacher Professional Development in Learner Support

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A Higher Education Framework for Teacher Professional Development in Learner Support

Abstract

During the previous dispensation specialised remedial teachers were trained to teach particular categories of disabilities. In the current dispensation of Inclusive education, it is required from generally trained teachers to accommodate and support learners with diverse barriers to learning in the ordinary mainstream classroom. Therefore, applicable, effective teacher training in Learner Support is needed to meet the special education needs of learners within the diverse South African context. The BEd Honours in Learner Support can be seen as a specialist course to better equip already qualified teachers to face the reality in schools concerning the support for learners with barriers to learning. There is currently no research and development framework for specialist training in Learner Support, therefore the main purpose of this study was to construct a framework for training quality Learner Support Teachers in South Africa to meet the educational challenge. For the purpose of this study we took on an inductive stance with the conviction that, in order to successfully develop a research and development framework for Teacher Professional Development in Higher Education, it should be derived from alumni postgraduate students and University lecturers themselves. Accordingly, we purposively collected qualitative data from alumni postgraduate students (n=16), as well as from University lecturers (n=8), with regard to core curriculum requirements in order to deliver effective Learner Support Teacher Professional Development in Higher Education. The qualitative data analysis, performed on an integrated qualitative dataset, revealed six data themes related to the curriculum requirements are Context sensitivity; Understanding of learner diversity; Cultivating an Inclusive educational approach; Collaboration and networking; Establishing administrative support; Assessment and Balancing theoretical and practical training. From the findings, a research and development framework is proposed for effective training of Learner Support Teachers. The proposed framework is a starting point for research and discussions around the development of a standardised framework for effective Learner Support training. The framework is flexible to accommodate the diverse teaching and learning contexts in South African universities.

Keywords: Learner Support ; Teacher professional development; Curriculum requirements; Research and development framework; Higher education.

1. Orientation, Problem Statement and Aim

Prior to 1994, education for learners with specific and diverse educational needs was anchored within a paradigm based upon the medical deficit model (Swart & Pettipher, 2011), offered by racially segregated education departments (Engelbrecht, Forlin, Eloff & Swart, 2001). A paradigm shift in the early 1990s, towards a social ecological model, preceded the recent post 1994 paradigm shift to Inclusive education (Swart & Pettipher, 2011). By means of Inclusive education, the Education department adopted a preventative and supportive approach in order to provide additional support to learners who are at risk of not succeeding in their education (DoE, 2001). The Department of Education records the following principles of Inclusive education: that “*all children and youth can learn and that all children and youth need support*” and aims to “*enable education structures, systems and learning methodologies to meet the needs of all learners*” (DoE, 2001:6). Inclusive education offers solutions to by-pass the educational challenges inherited from the previous dispensation, yet, notwithstanding the idealistic aims of Inclusive education, there is great concern surrounding the underachievement of learners in SA schools (Zuze, 2014). The problematic implementation of Inclusive education (Spratt & Florian, 2013; Engelbrecht et al., 2016) is a worldwide phenomenon (Frisk & Larson, 2011) and SA schools are not exempted from this problem.

In the SA context the poor implementation of Inclusive education leads to the inefficiency to sustain transformation in education (Spratt & Florian, 2013; Engelbrecht et al., 2016). The delays stemmed from postponements in policy formulation of special education from 1994 to 2001 which impacted on the launching and implementation of Education White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001). A further causal factor was the delayed launch of the first Policy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS) document (DBE, 2008). These delays contributed to diverse education not conforming to the set expectations of the Department to provide quality education to all children (DBE, 2015). The outcomes and expectations provisioned in White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001) and the SIAS policy (DBE, 2014), seem to not be fully realised, since the current situation in schools results in the educational needs of many learners with barriers to learning not being met (Dreyer, 2017).

The delays caused by policy implementation created many new obstacles to be overcome, amongst others, to overcome the gap between the remedial teacher and the new concept of Learner Support teacher (Bojuwoye, Moletsane, Stofile, Moolla & Sylvester, 2014). In the previous political dispensation, learners with special educational needs (now referred to as “learners with specific or diverse educational needs”) were taught by specially trained remedial teachers, qualified to teach learners in specific categories of disabilities (Bouwer, 2011). Remedial teachers and/or other professionals, e.g. counsellors and psychologists evaluated learners with diverse needs to determine placement in schools that specialised in accommodating various disabilities (Swart & Pettipher, 2011). In the current inclusive approach learners with mild to moderate barriers to learning must be accommodated in ordinary, mainstream classrooms or in full service schools where they are taught by the classroom teachers. Only learners with high intensity needs (e.g. learners who are deaf) are accommodated in special schools (DoE, 2001; DBE, 2014).

The Department of Education acknowledges that learners are different, that they have different learning needs and should therefore be given the opportunity to receive individualised support in order to optimise their learning and development (DBE, 2014; DoE, 2001). The requirements of the ordinary class teacher to be an inclusive expert, replacing the specialist remedial teacher, have had major implications for the teacher and the education system in general. The Inclusive approach implies a more holistic approach to Learner Support considering both intrinsic and extrinsic barriers to learning (Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana, 2014). This requires of the teacher to be able to screen and assess learners’ barriers, to draw up an individual support plan (ISP) for each learner and have the skills to implement the support plan (DBE, 2014). However, individualised support is complicated by the wide scope of learner needs ranging between contextual disadvantages, social problems, disabilities and learning difficulties (Donald et al, 2014). Although Education White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001) provides a basic outline to the establishment of a National education and training system to meet the diverse and specific learning needs of learners in South African (SA) schools, the document is not clear on how it should be implemented. An additional policy document, i.e. the Policy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS) (DBE, 2014) serves as a supporting tool towards the system wide implementation of White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001) in ordinary mainstream, full service and special schools.

The SIAS document (DBE, 2014), together with the National Curriculum Statement for Grades R–12 (DBE, 2011), offers a structure for schools to determine the needs and requirements of learners, to manage teaching and learning processes and to provide the necessary learning support and assistance to learners. Yet once again it is clear *what* should be done, but there is very little guidance on the *practical* implementation of the guidelines. Although there are various prospects and idealistic perceptions around the implementation of inclusive education in SA schools, the implementation of inclusive educational practices, becomes questionable for the reality of the current situation, and set against the expectations, they do not meet (Engelbrecht, Nel, Smit & Van Deventer, 2016).

Another main contributing factor attributed to the current situation in schools where the educational needs of learners with barriers to learning are not addressed, is the teachers' lack of knowledge and skills. This is acknowledged by the Education Department (DoE, 2001) and confirmed by Spratt and Florian (2013) that insufficient teacher training and teacher professional development (TPD) are contributing factors to the lack in quality support to learners with educational needs. The lack of teaching knowledge and skills related to teacher training, points a finger at teacher training at HE institutions (Allen, 2010), where teachers is supposed to be equipped to be able to support learners with diverse educational needs (Swart & Pettipher, 2011).

The diverse range of cultures and learner needs in the SA school context necessitates teachers to become specialists in Learner Support. The specialist teacher, (for the purpose of this study the alumni postgraduate BEd Hons in Learner Support student), must be sufficiently trained to support learners with barriers to learning by means of the SIAS process (DBE, 2014). Furthermore, they must also be able to implement the ISP with progressive and continual support. Specialist, applicable training must be well-thought-out and planned to find constructive and innovative solutions to educational challenges (Rowe, 2007; UNESCO, 1997). In order to meet the challenges, effective educational reform in education and training is needed (Frisk & Larson, 2011) whereby a proposed framework for training quality Learner Support Teachers in SA could be the first step in practically addressing such educational challenges.

The Department of Basic Education has to take responsibility for the in-service human capital development (DoE, 2001), while HEIs should take responsibility for the training of specialist Learner Support students. This implies that HEIs need to make adaptations in initial and specialist Learner Support training to accommodate existing and any new requirements in TPD (Landsberg & Matthews, 2016). For HEIs to effectively equip specialist students to address the challenges in the SA educational system, essential training for specialist students implies that HEIs should include certain aspects. These aspects include, among others, training in knowledge and skills to adapt curriculum content, the learning environment (psychosocial and physical), teaching methods, assessment strategies, provision of specialised teaching and learning support materials and supportive technologies (DBE, 2011; Jacobs, 2016). The above requirements for essential training of specialist students should be supported by training in diversity in multicultural education to prepare teachers for practices and experiences in multicultural classrooms (Sotuku & Duku, 2015). Furthermore, the requirements should be underpinned by the bio-ecological systems perspective (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998, 2006). The bio-ecological systems perspective was applied as the research lens through which the qualitative findings were analysed and interpreted.

Even though most initial teacher training programmes include at least an introduction to education of learners with barriers (The European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 2016), more than an introductory course might be needed in the SA context to narrow the gap between the remedial teacher and the Learner Support teacher (Bojuwoye et al, 2014). Frisk and Larson (2011) pose that insufficient teacher training is worldwide problem due to ineffective education systems. A foremost difficulty experienced in specialised teacher training, is the existing gap between theory and practice (Spratt & Florian, 2013). This also seems to be evident in specialised teacher training in SA (Engelbrecht *et al.*, 2016) as the gap between theory and practice, leading to inefficiency of the education system in SA, are continuous debated topics. Developing a framework for training quality specialist Learner Support Teachers (as in the BEd Hons in Learner Support qualification) in SA might initiate working towards a solution to address these concerns.

The new requirements for training Learner Support Teachers as well as the constant changes in the school curriculum, necessitated universities to adapt (Sunardi, Gunarhadi & Yeager, 2011), and continuously keep adapting their education practices. Therefore, it is the duty of institutions to deliver programmes of quality to equip specialist Learner Support Teachers to be able to competently face the reality in schools to succeed in the educational world (Donald *et al.*, 2010). There is a dire need for a framework for the research and development of effective Learner Support TPD in HEIs.

To date, no such framework exists specifically for specialist Learner Support training in SA. Frameworks that merge theory and practice is used internationally with noted success e.g. at the University of Aberdeen (Scotland), students who enrol for a *Professional Graduate Diploma in Education* (PGDE) complete a theoretical Professional Studies unit comprising of lectures and workshops. The student then applies the theoretical knowledge to practice in the school context (Spratt & Florian, 2013).

Accordingly, the following research question came to mind: Is it possible to propose a research and development framework for effective TPD of specialist Learner Support Teachers? Searching the available corpus of knowledge, no such specialised framework, or guidelines, could be found. Furthermore, no clear guidelines exist on what should be included as part of specialised training programmes for post graduate students. Considering that such a framework should be context sensitive to the educational context of SA and should address the unique educational challenges of specialist Learner Support Teachers. Our personal impression as qualitative researchers was that the establishment of such a framework should be informed by lecturers responsible for delivering training to specialist Learner Support students as well as alumni specialist Learner Support students who completed a BEd Hons Learner Support. Accordingly, the purpose of the current investigation was to inductively derive a research and development framework for effective specialist Learner Support TPD.

3. The Inductive Research Process and Reporting Structure

During the inductive approach, one starts by collecting data through observations or measures (Babbie, 2001). Thereafter, categories, patterns and regularities are detected in the data and possible theories that could explain such patterns of findings, are considered and determined.

One then draws conclusions, makes broader generalisations, and finally develops theories, models, frameworks or guidelines (Crossman 2014; Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy 2014). The structure of the current research report, follows accordingly.

3.1. Research Design and Methodology

An inductive qualitative research approach was followed in order to explore the perceptions of University lecturers, as well as alumni teacher-students, who completed a Learner Support BEd Hons programme at a major HEI in South Africa. A qualitative case study research design was followed, and data was collected by means of two qualitative research methods of data collection, i.e. by means of semi-structured, open-ended individual interviews with n=8 university lecturers who are involved with teaching Inclusive education and/or diverse education, as well as through administering an open-ended, semi-structured qualitative questionnaire to n=16 alumni Learner Support teacher-students of one major HEI.

3.2. Sampling Strategy and Selection Criteria

Initially a randomly selected sample of alumni students, who successfully completed the BEd Hons programme, with specialisation in Learner Support, was considered, however, due to restrictions stipulated by the Protection of Personal Information (PoPI) a formal request to receive a name list and contact details of alumni BEd Hons Learner Support students who completed the programme was denied by my HEI.

This necessitated the use of snowball sampling, an approach mostly used for studies in sensitive issues or where access to the study population is limited (Strydom, 2011). Sixteen (n=16) alumni students were recruited to freely and anonymously participate in the inductive investigation by completing an open-ended, semi-structured qualitative questionnaire, while individual interviews were conducted with n=8 university lecturers. Ethical clearance was obtained from the HE's Research Ethics Committee before commencement of the research. Signed informed consent was obtained from all participants (Strydom, 2011) and participants were informed about their right to withdraw from the research at any time and stage.

4. Detection of Data Themes, Patterns and Regularities in the Qualitative Integrated Dataset

Data obtained from both the questionnaires and interviews were combined into an integrated qualitative data set. The qualitative data was coded, grouped and organised into interrelated data themes (Yin 2016). Accordingly, the integrated dataset revealed various data themes pertaining to the core curriculum requirements that are necessary to deliver effective TPD to Learner Support Teachers through HE. The patterns that emerged enabled me to explore and establish regularities and interrelatedness between identified themes (Yin, 2016).

5. Inductive Patterns and Discussion of Findings

The qualitative thematic data analysis, performed on the integrated dataset, revealed various data themes and patterns of findings pertaining to a research and development framework (Figure 1), to deliver effective TPD to Learner Support Teachers through Higher Education training programmes. Although specialist teacher training and development is not the sole responsibility of HEIs, a balanced theoretical and practical based programme will contribute to specialist teacher excellence and success in practice to enhance holistic child development. Data themes that were identified are supported by verbatim Afrikaans quotes, translated to English or English quotes when the comment was made in English. The data themes identified were also supported by relevant literature.

Six themes that relate to the curriculum requirements for effective TPD of specialist Learner Support Teachers were identified from the qualitative data analysis, i.e.: (i) Context sensitivity; (ii) Understanding of learner diversity; (iii) Cultivating an Inclusive educational approach; (iv) Collaboration and networking; (v) Establishing administrative support; (vi) Assessment and (vii) Balancing theoretical and practical training. The themes (presented and further on referred to as curriculum requirements) are interwoven and should not be seen as separate entities, but rather entities that, together, compose the requirements for TPD of Learner Support Teachers.

Curriculum Requirement 1: Context sensitivity

The first curriculum requirement identified for effective TPD of Learner Support Teachers is context sensitivity (Figure 1). The contextualisation of both the specialisation student teacher context and the context of learners in the classroom were mentioned by lecturer participants “...*in terms of education...we need to contextualise our training of teachers, we need to contextualise in terms of the resources that we use, we need to contextualise the methodology...aha I know I am repeating myself but I cannot stress this enough, we need to contextualise*”. This requirement was strongly supported by another lecturer participant “...*in terms of education...we need to contextualise our training of teachers, we need to contextualise in terms of the resources that we use, we need to contextualise the methodology...aha I know I am repeating myself but I cannot stress this enough, we need to contextualise*”.

An enabling teaching and learning environment links very closely to the principles of the inclusive model as one participant states, “*inclusivity must in a sense, be able to accommodate all learners irrespective of their context or challenges.*” Lecturers in HEIs should encourage the specialist student teacher to develop their own ‘teaching identity’ (Clarke, 2009) within the inclusive teaching environment (Berlach & Chambers, 2011). The HEI lecturer should therefore not only be aware of the environmental influences on their own teaching and learning situation as a curriculum requirement, but also focus on creative and innovative ways in which students could be equipped to overcome any obstacles that could occur within their teaching environment.

The consideration of the environment is part of the focus on creative and innovative ways, thus, according to a lecturer participant, creating an inclusive environment implies, that a teacher has to “...*acknowledge these differences as the situations arise, ...understand the context and consider the systemic background for creating an enabling environment*”.

Creating an enabling environment will assist the student teacher to better understand barriers to learning and diversity.

A lecturer participant elaborated as follows on teaching and learning strategies to be implemented to prepare student teachers for the diverse needs of learners in their own classrooms: “...it is needed for our inclusive schooling system but those contexts are so different from one another.... I am trying in my practice.... trying to focus on students giving them a little bit of understanding of the different context we are going to work in and that we also need always to consider that ...”. When teachers become more skilled, it will empower them (Ainscow & Miles, 2008), and make them better guardians of Inclusive education practices (Donohue & Bornman, 2014).

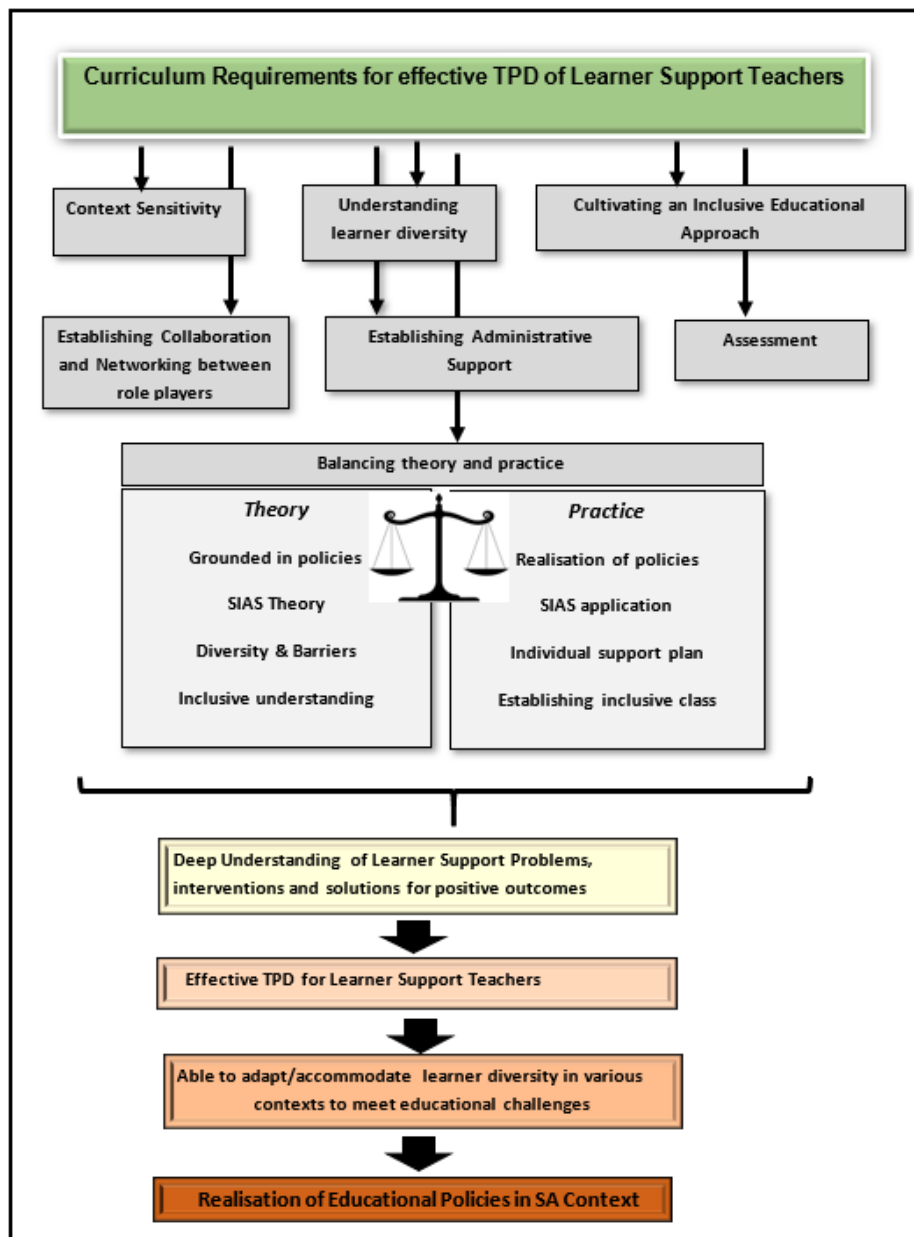


Figure 1: Inductively Derived Research and Development Framework for Effective Learner Support TPD

Curriculum Requirement 2: Understanding learner diversity

A second curriculum requirement identified for effective TPD of Learner Support Teachers is to understand the complexity of learner diversity. Most lecturer participants acknowledged and highlighted an awareness of the interrelationship between the teaching and learning contexts of learners in their classrooms and the diversity of learners' needs *"...accommodating diversity of the students with 'extra time' or 'concessions' is one way but when it comes to teaching a diverse group of students, it's not just about their learning abilities or disabilities, it's also about cultural diversities, their language diversity and age"*. Therefore, student teachers should have access to a HE curriculum that will primarily accommodate diversity. Lecturer participants mentioned teaching and learning strategies they implement for teaching and learning to accommodate specialised student teacher diversity, like being learners themselves by allowing *"...individuality and enhance responses to learner diversity."* Literature confirms that curriculum development should be flexible (Dalton, McKenzie & Kahonde, 2012) and mindful of diversity (Berlach & Chambers, 2011) so as to accommodate and *"...cover the whole spectrum...learning diversity and different ability levels"*, as pointed out by another lecturer participant.

In acknowledging and reinforcing inclusive aspects, such as understanding and addressing needs of all learners, catering for diversity and accommodation, contextualising is absolutely necessary. One participant pertinently stated, *"...if you understand the context within which you are training a teacher...you will innovate in such a sense that you address the needs, and may I bring in the concept diversity as well"*. Furthermore, when accommodating learner diversity during the support offered to a learner in the school classroom (Engelbrecht, Savolainen, Nel & Malinen, 2013), the consideration of the teaching and learning environment is crucial (Frisk & Larson, 2011). This emphasises the necessity of training quality specialist Learner Support Teachers to also cope with the diversity in their own classes. Responsiveness to diversity eradicates exclusion and underpins one of the main aims of Inclusive education (Ainscow & Miles, 2009). The strong theoretical training in SA policies, discussed in Requirement 6, empowers student teachers to apply the knowledge that they acquired regarding many aspects of learner diversity and barriers to learning.

Being able to identify barriers to learning is linked to recognising learner diversity. One of the student teachers who projected a positive attitude about the SIAS, commented that: “...ek verstaan die SIAS” [...I understand the SIAS]. Teacher students’ effectivity in the classroom improved as a result of being able to link the theory to the real life classroom situations and this facilitated their “...easy identification of barriers”. One response of a teacher student’s positive attitude regarding the theoretical training stated that “*opleiding in SIAS, maak maklike identifisering van barriers*” [Training in SIAS makes easy identification of barriers].

Curriculum Requirement 3: Cultivating an Inclusive educational approach

Cultivating an Inclusive educational approach was the third curriculum requirement identified for effective TPD of Learner Support Teachers. Creating an enabling environment could be the first step in cultivating an Inclusive educational approach in teaching and learning of learners with diverse educational needs. Although strongly linked with context, an enabling environment is more comprehensive than just the immediate context (Themane & Osher, 2014) and comprises, amongst others, a learner friendly well managed classroom (Sánchez, 2011). According to a lecturer participant: “*Learning should cater for everyone,*” a statement that encompasses the whole aim of the Inclusive educational approach, further elaborated on by a lecturer participant, describing it as considering “...*diverse learning, backgrounds, identities and experiences*”. To set the example, lecturers in HE should encourage and design a teaching and learning environment where Inclusive education will prosper (Berlach & Chambers, 2011). This would encourage the specialist student teacher to develop, firstly, their own ‘teaching identity’ (Clarke, 2009) and secondly, develop creative and innovative ways in which student teachers could overcome obstacles that could occur within their teaching environment. Maintaining discipline in the school classroom is an aspect of classroom management. Discipline problems, however, hamper effective classroom management and is a major obstacle mentioned by student teacher participants in very brief statements: “...*Behaviour problems*” and “*Leerders se gedrag*” [Learners' behaviour], and the request of one participant for “*More guidance for new educators on class discipline*”.

Cultivating an Inclusive educational approach furthermore implies considering the relevancy of teaching and learning practices in order to stay relevant (Allan, 2010), as mentioned by some of the lecturer participants, “...*we are beginning to understand that there are different narratives to education ...these different narratives or stories matter in terms of what is important in education.*” Considering the latter statement, lecturers must have an awareness of the relevancy of the curriculum they convey to student teachers “...*what is important in terms of the new South African citizen? Who is the new citizen?*” Briefly put by one lecturer participant: “...*I look at strategies, I look at knowledge, is it relevant?*”

This places a high premium on the flexibility and relevancy of the curriculum (Allan, 2010), covering all aspects needed to be imparted to a student teacher in order to create a fully functioning individual who can fulfil their place in the society in which they find themselves as teachers.

Education White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001) is clear on the aim of the Department to accommodate the diverse learning needs of learners through addressing barriers to learning, so requirement three links with requirement two (understanding learner diversity). One lecturer participant indicated how the programme supported him/her in identifying learning barriers: “...I now understand barriers” and “...I understand and can identify barriers”. An Inclusive educational approach does not only underpin observation and identification of barriers, but also focuses on enabling the response to the barriers “...*Dit het my gehelp om elke leerder as uniek te sien en te akkomodeer gebaseer op sy/haar behoeftes*’ [It has helped me to see and accommodate each learner as unique based on his/her needs]. Furthermore, student teacher participant comments reflected the practical application of the learned theory, “*Ons het ook geleer om leerhindernisse aan te spreek, wat ongelooflik getel het aangesien ek by ‘n spesiale skool gewerk het waar meerderheid leerders sukkel met hindernisse, hetsy dit akademiese hindernisse of gedragshindernisse was*” [We have also learned to address barriers to learning, which counted a lot as I worked at a special school where majority of learners are struggling with barriers, whether academic barriers or behavioural barriers].

Thus, the awareness and accommodation of diverse learner needs could contribute to cultivating an Inclusive educational approach, which in turn, supports sustainability in education (Frisk & Larson, 2011; Rowe, 2007).

Respondents indicated: *"I try and create an awareness among my students through understanding the realities of people who experience one or other barrier to learning; something that prevented them from accessing the knowledge and experience..."*

Awareness cultivates taking responsibility (Agezo, 2009) and fosters accountability (Mafuwane & Pitsoe, 2014) for sustainability in education (Frisk & Larson, 2011; Rowe, 2007), as indicated by a lecturer respondent: *"I try and create an awareness among my students through understanding the realities of people who experience one or other barrier to learning, something that prevented them from accessing the knowledge and experience..."* Furthermore, awareness awakens empathy to *"...live in the shoes of the other person."* This just about summarises one of the major roles of the Learner Support teacher to support learners with barriers to learning. This is in accordance with literature that propagates the importance of teacher training for the successful implementation of Inclusive education (Forlin & Chambers, 2011), including the support for learners with barriers to learning.

Curriculum Requirement 4: Collaboration and networking

The fourth curriculum requirement for effective TPD of Learner Support Teachers is to identify the importance of collaboration and networking. The importance of collaboration was mentioned by a lecturer participant: *"...it is very critical to empower teachers through the curriculum on how to develop interagency collaboration."* Lecturer participants commented that, although some of their students had the theoretical knowledge to identify learners with barriers, they did not have the knowledge or practical skills to make informed decisions regarding the learner, or did not know who to consult for help: *"...so who do we need to consult, who would deal with these specialised areas, where care and support is needed."* The lack of collaboration between the school and parents were mentioned as a concern *"Afwesigheid van ouers..."* [Absence of parents...] which leads to the absence of parents as collaborators in education.

Yet, on the level of collaboration for referral, a student teacher participant affirms how the programme assisted with knowledge and skills to do so *"When having to deal with referrals and concessions I have more knowledge than other teachers"*.

Collaboration is a central factor in the success of the implementation of Inclusive education, yet it is neglected due to inaccessible support systems and ignorance on the part of teachers (Swart & Pettipher, 2016). This poses a gap that can be bridged through specialist teacher training and closer collaboration with the parent, the teacher, the School based support team and the District based support team. This conclusion is supported by Ainscow and Miles (2008) who suggest that we do not necessarily need new or more techniques for Inclusive education to be successful, only more collaboration.

Curriculum Requirement 5: Establishing administrative support

Establishing administrative support was the fifth curriculum requirement identified for effective TPD of Learner Support Teachers. This requirement was only voiced by student teacher participants. Issues that are problematic to student teacher participants are some basic administrative responsibilities the student teacher participants have to deal with in the school “*Basic admin duties that goes with the profession*” and “*Admin lesson planning*” which can be linked to the complaint about the time factor involved with teaching and learning “*Time is a big factor*” and “*Time management*”. The lack of time influences the daily teaching and learning outflow as student teacher participants complain about “*Leerders met barriers kort meer individuele aandag; veral as dit nie een van die mees algemeenste barriers is nie*” [Learners with barriers lack more individual attention; especially if it is not one of the most common barriers] and this of course can become very time consuming. Another participant states “*...know about ISP, not enough time to apply it proper*”.

Although the administration around completing the SIAS and referrals are dealt with by lecturers, the wider administrative duties of teaching do not seem to be considered as part of the curriculum.

Curriculum Requirement 6: Balancing theoretical and practical training

The sixth curriculum requirement identified for effective TPD of Learner Support Teachers is to balance theoretical and practical training. Both theoretical and practical training contributes to an enabling environment which cultivates an Inclusive learning approach to teaching and learning.

Although theoretical aspects must form part of the course, lecturer responses suggest that even these theoretical aspects must be made “real” to the teacher, in order for them to be able to execute, integrate, perform and apply these theoretical aspects in practice; as one participant suggested when commenting on theoretical aspects, “...*students do that in their undergrad training...but now the focus should be on practical.*”

The findings in this theme indicate that lecturer participants are clear on the outcomes they envisage for specialist student teacher training to generate responsiveness in the student and that it is reflected in the curricula they present “...*so does the learning that we present to young people resonate with them, does it make sense to them?*”. According to lecturer participants, the conveying of knowledge (theory), is adequate. This perception is confirmed by student teacher participants “...*goeie onderbou gegee om inklusief te dink tydens die aanbied van lesse asook altyd te dink hoe leerders moet ondersteun word in verskeie aspekte van onderrig*” [Good foundation for thinking inclusively when offering lessons and always thinking of learners should be supported in various aspects of teaching]. The satisfaction with the theoretical content was mentioned “...*die inhoud was voldoende*” [The content was sufficient], further supported by student satisfaction of good grounding and adequate preparation towards the understanding of the educational environment “...*dit het my goed voorberei*” [it prepared me well]. The deep theoretical knowledge reinforces critical thinking and help with problem solving when the student teacher participants address problems in the classroom “...*dit my ongelooflik baie gehelp om probleme in die klaskamer aan te spreek*” [it helped me incredibly much to address problems in the classroom].

A strength mentioned as part of this curriculum requirement is the knowledge and application of the policy documents, specifically, the SIAS document. One student teacher participant stated, “*Die SIAS document is baie goed met ons behandel wat ‘n positiewe bydrae gelewer het aangesien ons deurgans die SIAS document gebruik het in die klaskamer*” [The SIAS document was very well discussed with us, which made a positive contribution as we used the SIAS document consistently in the classroom]. A good theoretical understanding of the policy documents strengthens the rationale and understanding of inclusive education and enables them to follow the South African educational practices and policy. The general satisfaction with basic theoretical training as well as the functional training in the use of the SIAS document, made application easier, even if it was just during a classroom exercise.

However, two student teacher participants who had difficulty in making a connection between the theoretical training, including policy training, and their own teaching needs, voiced their struggle as “...*meer inligting rondom inklusiewe onderwys*” [more information about Inclusive education] or sought further knowledge regarding these topics “...*what are the different policies that are needed in inclusive schools*”. Their views suggested a need for more in-depth instruction, including varied policy instruction. A request is put forward by one student teacher participant for “...*more focus on specific learning disabilities and problem areas*”.

This sentiment about the need for practical application is shared by some lecturer participants in that one participant expressed the need for “... *the practical application of learning support is something that is in great need and must be focussed on*”. Another participant viewed an opinion that we “*need more than just to empower the students*”, supported by the perception of a concerned participant that “...*we are not preparing teachers for the real world, they are overwhelmed with real life experiences and do not know how to handle children in an inclusive environment*”, and one strong statement that briefly summarises the current teaching and learning practice “...*we have to become more practical*”, emphasising the dire need for more practical experiences for specialist student teachers. Some student teacher participants request more “...*practical training in assessing barriers to learning; a deeper psychological understanding of learners*”.

These sentiments on the current stance of diverse education confirms some concern about the present specialised teacher training not adequately equipping the specialised student teacher for the diverse needs of learners in the school system. These sentiments can be supported with literature which suggests that the practical application of support or intervention needs more emphasis (Engelbrecht, Savolainen, Nel, Koskela & Okkolin, 2017) in teacher training. Many of the lecturer participants also reflected that, by word of mouth, some of the full-time teachers in their classes reported that they are not adequately prepared for the occurring situation in their classrooms. This could indicate that there is a gap between training specialist Learner Support Teachers and reality. The gap between theory and practice in HE is confirmed in literature (Spratt & Florian, 2013). Furthermore, Allan (2010:414) suggests that there must be a transfer away from “idealised versions of classroom life” and study material e.g. textbooks that only support theory, neglecting practical application.

On the other hand, there is a clear indication that student lecturers implement strategies in an attempt to narrow the theory-practice gap. Lecturer participants indicated an awareness of what a beginner specialisation teacher would want to see incorporated in the curriculum “...*I would want to know how to complete the SIAS document, how can I ...develop a support plan, how do I do an interview with a parent...how do I start with a child, how do I get the shortfalls of the child – I really would say the honours...must be very practical*”.

Some other suggestions for strategies to include more practical aspects from lecturer participants were: “*a portfolio of evidence must be compiled by the students, so we are presenting a little bit of theory in a very practical manner*”; “*...in the lecture room, we engage in discussions, we have...a lot of open discussions about curriculum design and curriculum content with our students... think about methodology, think about case studies you know what could be applicable in terms of training*”. Some student teacher participants suggested “More practical case studies” and “*Gevallestudies wat teorie maklik maak ...*” [Case studies that make theory easy]. The use of case studies develops both theoretical and practical skills. Student teachers are actively engaged by not only theorising from the examples in the case study, but also developing problem solving skills (Penn, Currie, Hoad & O’Brien, 2016). Furthermore, the successful use of technological strategies contributes to narrowing the theory-practice gap: “*...what I’ve been doing is to put a conversation going online... I give them a section to read and then I ask them to comment on it ...respond to at least two of their colleagues...and after a certain period of time I open it up...to keep the discussion going ...*” The above participatory approaches in teacher training (Jacobs, 2016), as recognised by the HEIs lecturer participants, would be beneficial to in-service and pre-service teachers teaching in varied contexts (Spratt & Florian, 2013).

The realisation of the seven curriculum requirements as presented in the inductively derived research and development framework for effective Learner Support TPD, will conclude in a deeper understanding of diverse Learner Support problems, interventions and solutions for positive outcomes when specialist teachers support learners with diverse educational needs.

The effective TPD for Learner Support Teachers will enable specialist teachers to be able to adapt classrooms to be more enabling for Inclusive education environments where the accommodation of learner diversity in various contexts will be a move towards to meeting educational challenges.

One can only conclude that the skills and knowledge that should be gained from specialised training, will enable the specialised teacher to influence the entire education system by simply being an adequate inclusive teacher who is a knowledgeable agent of change towards the realisation of the Educational Policies in the SA Context.

Curriculum Requirement 7: Assessment

Assessment was the fifth curriculum requirement identified for effective TPD of Learner Support Teachers. This requirement was not directly voiced by any of the participants, but assessment is an important component of the curriculum (Jacobs, 2016), thus added assessment as a requirement for effective TPD. Assessment is part of the SIAS process (DBE, 2014), therefore I made the assumption that the theoretical training in the use and application of the SIAS document, according to the student teacher participants' perceptions (see discussion in Requirement 6) might have been satisfactory. Yet, there is a possibility that in practice, assessment could be problematic in that student teachers might not be adequately prepared for the assessment of the diverse needs of learners in their classrooms. I base this assumption on the request of some student teacher participants for more practical application and the lecturer participants' views that they need to include more practical experiences in TPD (See discussion in Requirement 6).

Based on the findings an inductively derived framework was proposed in Figure 1. Six themes identified from the qualitative data analysis relate to the curriculum requirements for effective TPD of specialist Learner Support Teachers i.e.: Context sensitivity; Understanding of learner diversity; Cultivating an Inclusive educational approach; Collaboration and networking; Establishing administrative support; Assessment and (vii) Balancing theoretical and practical training. The findings link with a previous statement made on requirements for a curriculum: training in knowledge and skills to adapt curriculum content, the learning environment (psychosocial and physical), teaching methods, assessment strategies, provision of specialised teaching and learning support materials and supportive technologies (DBE, 2011; Jacobs, 2016).

5. Limitations of the study

One limitation of the study was that only alumni students of one university were included in the study population. Due to the PoPI restrictions, the university did not give consent for access to the alumni student data base for students who completed the BEd Hons Learner Support specialisation programme. This restriction necessitated me to make use of snowball sampling which was a tedious process. A second limitation was that one university's lecturers involved with Inclusive education and/or diverse education, did not see their way clear to participate in the research. A third limitation was that there is limited literature available on specialist teacher training in Learner Support – the fact of the matter is that there are no clear descriptions of the qualifications required for being a specialist in Learner Support. A fourth limitation was that the Department of Education was not included in this research, although this framework is based on initial research and the department will be included in further research to be conducted.

6. Conclusion

Although teacher education is still an 'unfinished business, the proposed framework, inductively derived from the experiences and perceptions of university lecturers and Learner Support teacher students, may initiate research and discussions around the development of a standardised framework for effective Learner Support TPD in South Africa. Such a framework should be flexible to suit the diverse teaching and learning contexts in South African universities. Such a framework may further be applied to assess good, applicable and appropriate training for effective Learner Support TPD.

Training better-equipped specialist teachers to meet the educational challenges, is the responsibility of HEIs, and universities should continuously adapt and improve their educational programmes to narrow the gaps between firstly, balancing theoretical and practical curriculum requirements, and secondly training and the multifaceted interactions evident in the educational system. A balanced curriculum could promote educational reform by means of effective specialised Learner Support teacher training to facilitate change regarding the current tendency of negativity about the implementation of Inclusive education.

From Table 1, it becomes evident that the key findings of this study addressed the research question: Is it possible to propose a research and development framework for effective TPD of specialist Learner Support Teachers? The findings contributed towards proposing a framework for training quality Learner Support Teachers in order to meet the educational challenges in South Africa.

7. Recommendations

Higher education should accept the challenge and take the initiative to investigate their own teaching and learning practices concerning training specialist Learner Support Teachers. Implementing and evaluating the success of the initiated TPD framework inductively derived from the experiences and perceptions of university lecturers and Learner Support post graduate students, could be a starting point.

A further recommendation is that the framework must be tested so that it can be elaborated on as different HEIs may vary in contexts and student diversity, which may, through qualitative and quantitative enquiries, deliver similar, different or expanded results. Further research may assist in customising the framework for the unique HE and/or South African context.

It is recommended that a co-operative partnership between the HEI and the DBE be established as the DBE is seen as another valuable source of information on the requirements for effective TPD of Learner Support Teachers so that they will be equipped to meet the educational challenges.

Questions that came to mind during my research journey which call for further investigation are:

- Would a customised framework be of value in the SA context?
- Could such a framework address the challenges that presently exist in initial and specialised teacher training at HEIs?
- Would such a framework deliver more effective TPD?
- Could such a framework contribute towards educational change to meet the diverse needs of learners?
- What role could the Department of Education play in the development of a customised framework for effective TPD of specialist Learner Support Teachers?

In conclusion, this proposed framework could be tested by means of further research for the development of a standardised framework for effective Learner Support TPD in South Africa. The framework needs to be elaborated on considering student diversity studying in different HEI contexts.

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CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

In this final chapter I provide an overview of the study and a summary of the findings. I discuss the conclusions that have been drawn from the key findings of the study, and I show how they relate to the research questions. I then offer recommendations for teacher education and further research.

The main purpose of this study was to construct a framework for training quality Learner Support Teachers to meet the educational challenge in South Africa. The secondary aims and objectives of the study were:

- to qualitatively explore the current practices used for curriculum development in BEd Hons programmes in Learner Support;
- to explore the current practices used for teaching and learning in BEd Hons programmes in Learner Support;
- to explore the perceptions of lecturers teaching the modules in the BEd Hons programmes in Learner Support;
- to explore the perceptions of alumni teachers who completed the BEd Hons programme in Learner Support; and
- to use the information gathered to identify possible gaps in the BEd Hons Learner Support programme at the NWU.

6.2 Research questions

It is with this in mind, that the following primary research question was formulated:

What must a framework for training quality Learner Support Teachers entail in order to meet the educational challenges in South Africa?

In order to answer this question current practices used for curriculum development and teaching and learning in Learner Support specialised training in BEd Hons programmes were explored. This, coupled with the perceptions of lecturers teaching the modules and the teachers who completed the BEd Hons programme in Learner Support provided a good indication of the gaps that are evident in the BEd Hons Learner Support programme.

The motivation for the study was based on the following key aspects:

- Despite the good intentions of the Department of Education, the transformation process of diverse education in South Africa has not met expectations. The change from the medical model approach in the apartheid era to the inclusive approach post-1994 has been problematic, moving forward at an unacceptably slow pace, resulting in the transformation not being significant enough to fill the gap between reality and the envisaged aim or dream of quality education for all. This situation results in learners with barriers to learning and development not receiving the support envisaged in the policy documents
- Although there are many factors that contribute to the poor education and support given to learners with barriers to learning and development, teacher training is constantly mentioned in the literature as being a main contributing factor. Literature generally refers to the teaching of pre-service teachers, but does not address the specialist teacher training (BEd Hons). The Learner Support teacher is regarded as the replacement for the remedial teacher of the old dispensation, yet there is no clarity on the training that the Learner Support teacher needs to become a specialist in Learner Support.
- Higher education institutions are responsible for initial and specialist teacher training, and the Department of Education for in-service TPD. It is, therefore, the responsibility of HEIs to take the necessary steps to assure that teachers are trained to meet the educational needs of the diverse learners in their classrooms. Furthermore, the specialist teacher can be of utmost importance and value in the ISP in the SIAS process when learners are screened, identified, assessed and supported.
- In my capacity as a lecturer of Learner Support modules, I came to realise that students have good theoretical knowledge, but are very uncertain about the application of the theory. The gap between theory and practice was also voiced by teachers that I met during a community project at a full-service school.

6.3 Summary of the chapters

CHAPTER 1: Introduction, background to the study, problem statement, the aim and objectives of the study and overview of the methodology

Chapter 1 presented an overview of the study, comprising the background to the study. I referred to the changes in special education that occurred after 1994. The remedial teacher was replaced by the Learner Support teacher, yet there are no clear guidelines on who is qualified to be a

Learner Support teacher. The problem statement evolved around the inclusive approach that is underpinned by good policies, yet the implementation of the policies causes great concern. Thus far, the attempts to sustain transformation in education in order to address challenges, has actually caused challenges. The gaps created by this situation need to be bridged; amongst others, the gap between the remedial teacher and the new concept of Learner Support teacher.

Therefore, a solution for minimising the gap might be achieved by developing a framework for training quality Learner Support Teachers for the SA context. Such a framework should be designed to merge theory and practice to train specialist teachers who will be able to support learners in diverse contexts in SA.

In chapter 1, I also stated the main and secondary aims of the study and the related main and sub research questions. I elaborated on the theoretical framework that guided the study and provided explanation of key terminology. In the overview of the methodology I summarised the methodology applied in each of the four articles presented as chapters 2 to 5. The limitations of the study, contributions of the study and an outline of chapters, concluded the study. The current stance of the submitted article is presented in Table 1 of chapter 1.

CHAPTERS 2 TO 5

The 4 articles/manuscripts required for the fulfilment of the PhD degree were presented in chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5 of the study and are briefly summarised in this chapter to indicate each article's / manuscript's placement within the larger context of the study.

Chapter 2: Article 1:

The development of education for learners with diverse learning needs in the South African context: a bio-ecological systems analysis

Chapter 2 introduces, by means of Article 1 (Smit, Preston & Hay, 2019), a historic overview of the development of diverse or special education in SA. This article portrays a background, prior to 1994, when special education was marginalised and fragmented. The new democratic government made a paradigm shift to inclusive education to transform education, specifically diverse education, to meet the needs of the diversity of learning needs in the SA context.

The historic development of diverse education was highlighted and discussed from a bio-ecological approach to indicate the effects of the transformation on each level of all systems. Furthermore, it was the intention to show that the transformation in diverse education is moving forward too slowly to be beneficial to all learners experiencing barriers to learning and development. The bio-ecological approach was also applied to explore the interactive processes

within the systemic levels of the SA education system. This was done to show how the interactive processes benefit and/or disadvantage learners on the person dimension of the bio-ecological approach.

The method used was a document analysis to collect information by means of exploring a large body of research literature. The literature included academic articles, reports, policies and policy reviews. Data were categorised within the systems of the bio-ecological model to determine successes and challenges in each level. When seen from the bio-ecological systems perspective, the results indicated that many successes and also many challenges were revealed from the literature. When considering the person dimension, the challenges of the bio-ecological systems perspective inhibits change, growth and development for the child experiencing barriers to learning in the South African education system.

The conclusion derived was that diverse education has not transformed significantly enough to fill the gap between the reality and the envisaged aim or dream of quality education for all. The transformation process of change regarding diverse education from *what was* to *what should be*, is too slow and seems to be stuck at *what is* and not moving forward to *what could be*.

The recommendations acknowledged that education in SA, in fairness, cannot be compared to leading developed countries, yet we should learn from the examples they set. The Department should reconsider the accessibility of diverse education for learners who are at risk. Better and closer collaboration between the DBE and higher educational institutions could enhance better specialised teacher training at HEIs to enhance quality of teaching and learning in schools. On the other hand, functionality and effectiveness of the support systems will contribute to transformation and change education. This can be reciprocally initiated from the bottom up and the top down all the way through to all the bio-ecological systems layers within the PPCT model, ensuring that diverse education speedily moves from *what was* to *what should be*, and is freed from *what is* and moves to *what could be*.

Chapter 3: Manuscript 18 (Book chapter)

Training quality Learner Support post-graduate teachers at a higher education institution to meet the educational challenges in South Africa: Perceptions of university lecturers

To set the background to the study, the article highlights the responsibility of HEIs to train pre-service and post-graduate students to be able to address a wide range of barriers to learning and development in the diverse educational contexts in SA. The paradigm shift regarding special education, towards a holistic approach to Learner Support, necessitated HEIs to make adaptations in initial and specialist teacher training. Therefore, university lecturers, who remain

responsible for the TPD of teacher students at HEIs, must adapt their teaching and learning practices to suit the requirements posed by inclusive education.

The objectives of this manuscript were to explore the perceptions of university lecturers of Learner Support modules in the BEd honours programmes concerning their perceptions regarding current practices used for curriculum development, as well as teaching and learning strategies. The aim was to establish an overall perspective of the current practices used by the lecturers to enable quality training of Learner Support specialist teachers.

The qualitative study was guided by the bio-ecological-systemic framework, following an interpretivist paradigm. A purposefully selected sample was used to generate data through semi-structured interviews. The interviews were recorded, transcribed, thematically coded and analysed. Two main themes emerged from the data: Curriculum development and Current practices used in teaching and learning. Under the main theme: Curriculum development, three sub-themes categories emerged, namely a more practical orientation, context of teachers and learners, and collaboration. Under the second theme, Current practices used in teaching and learning, a further four sub-themes were revealed, namely creating an enabling environment, relevance, responsiveness and awareness. The themes and sub-themes were discussed from the person dimension in the bio-ecological perspective.

The two main themes that emerged from the data emphasised that the current curriculum must be developed in a more practical manner and that the context of teachers and learners must be considered. The findings suggest that the lecturers are fully aware that they are responsible for training postgraduate teachers to be equipped to deal and cope with the diverse educational needs. Yet, they acknowledge the existing gap between theory and practice.

In conclusion, it is stated that universities would have to continuously consider the training they offer to address the diversity of learner needs and varying contexts in SA schools. Lecturers will have to constantly adapt the programmes, move away from overloading theoretical training towards more practical-based quality programmes that will narrow the gap between theory, training and the complex interactions evident in the educational system. It is recommended that, to achieve a further narrowing in the gap between theory and practice, a closer, collaborative partnership should be formed with the education department. It would be to the benefit of both parties to gain more clarity on the role and expectations of the Learner Support teacher.

Chapter 4: Article 3

Do alumni student teachers who complete the Learner Support BEd Honours programme at Higher Educational Institutions meet the educational challenge?

Many challenges in education confront SA teachers daily. One of the main challenges is the diversity of learning needs that learners experience within the educational setting. Teachers need the knowledge and skills to practically identify, assess and support the learners who encounter barriers to learning and development. The support offered to learners underwrites both a preventative and supportive approach in order to provide additional support to learners who are at risk of not succeeding in their education. Yet, despite the idealistic goals of the inclusive education support approach, too many learners with barriers to learning in SA schools underachieve and do not benefit from the teaching and learning experiences they participate in at schools. Although there are many factors that contribute to the situation in schools where learners with barriers to learning do not receive the necessary support, teacher training is mentioned as a contributing factor. The Education Department (DoE, 2001) attributes this situation to teachers' lack of knowledge and skills to plan and implement interventions. The delays in policy implementation prevented timeous planning for teacher training to overcome the gap between the remedial teacher and the new concept of Learner Support teacher.

Most initial teacher training programmes include at least an introduction to inclusive education and/or education of learners with barriers to learning. Yet, in the SA context, more than a basic or introductory course might be needed to narrow the gap between the pre-1994 remedial teacher and the current Learner Support teacher.

With this in mind, the research aimed to obtain information directly from alumni student teachers themselves about their perceptions of the training they received in the BEd Hons programme, which we see as specialist training. We took an inductive stance in this research regarding the practical relevance of professional development for teachers delivered through post-graduate training. Qualitative data from N=16 alumni students were obtained regarding their perceptions about the applicability and relevance of the professional development they received through their participation in the BEd honours (BEd Hons) programme. A semi-structured, open-ended questionnaire was used to generate the data. A thematic data analysis was then conducted and the data revealed two data themes: Strengths and Concerns of the BEd Hons Learner Support Programme. Three sub-themes under the data strengths emerged: Theoretical training, Knowledge and application of theory and Theoretical understanding of learner diversity and identification of barriers.

Under the data theme Concerns, three sub-themes emerged: More practical components needed, more focus on specific learning disabilities and problem areas; and General aspects to enhance the coping of teachers, that are lacking in the programme. The findings were discussed from a bio-ecological perspective, where the alumni student was seen as the *person* dimension, who is interactively involved in two *processes*. The one *process* is the teaching and learning interaction in the BEd Hons classes and the other is the interactive *process* between the student, as teacher, and the teaching and learning in the school classroom.

The findings indicated that theoretical training is effective and facilitates student learning. Furthermore, the theoretical training enhanced functioning in the inclusive education classroom environment. The alumni students expressed satisfaction with theoretical training. On the other hand, the concerns regarding the BEd Hons programme suggested a gap between theory and practice, and more practical experience was requested.

The conclusions of the article suggest that the quality of teachers' training will impact the personal development of the teacher and influence the standard of teaching and learning that learners experience in the classroom. The strengths of the BEd Hons programme can initiate change, create growth and initiate development in alumni students, but on the other hand, the concerns regarding the programme are a constraint on teacher training and development. The recommendations are that there should be a fine balance between theoretical and practical training. Higher education institutions should further research to reconsider their aims, goals and values concerning quality training for Learner Support students. The BEd Hons qualification should be meaningful in the new SA inclusive educational environment to be supportive of both the alumni students and the learners they are teaching.

Chapter 5 Manuscript 19 (Book chapter)

A Higher Education framework for Teacher Professional Development in Learner Support

For the purpose of chapter 5, we took on an inductive stance towards the development of framework with the opinion that, if we wanted to develop a research and development framework for Teacher Professional Development in Higher Education, the perceptions of both alumni Learner Support students and University lecturers themselves need to be considered.

With the phasing out of the specialised remedial teachers of the previous dispensation of SA, it is required from generally trained teachers to accommodate and support learners with diverse barriers to learning in the ordinary mainstream classroom. The remedial teachers were trained to teach particular categories of disabilities.

Currently, in the new inclusive paradigm, there is an uncertainty of who is qualified, and what training is needed for the teacher that has to fill this gap in a supportive role in the ordinary classroom. The BEd Honours in Learner Support can be seen as a specialist course to better equip already qualified teachers to face the reality in schools and minimise the gap between the remedial teacher and the class teacher. It is thus of utmost importance that effective teacher training in Learner Support be delivered to meet the special education needs of learners within the diverse South African context.

If this intended framework would be of value to teacher training, the inductive research approach would assist in developing this framework from data findings from participants directly involved with Learner Support, i.e. alumni Learner Support students who are currently in teaching posts, and University lecturers who are involved in developing and teaching Learner Support modules. For that reason, we purposively collected qualitative data from n=16 Learner Support alumni students, as well as from n=8 University lecturers, concerning core curriculum requirements in order to deliver effective Learner Support TPD in Higher Education.

The qualitative data analysis, performed on the integrated qualitative dataset, revealed various interrelated data themes pertaining to the core curriculum requirements to deliver effective TPD to specialist Learner Support students.

Six themes that relate to the curriculum requirements for effective TPD of specialist Learner Support Teachers were identified from the qualitative data analysis, i.e.: (i) Context sensitivity; (ii) Understanding of learner diversity; (iii) Cultivating an Inclusive educational approach; (iv) Collaboration and networking; (v) Establishing administrative support; (vi) Assessment and (vii) Balancing theoretical and practical training. It should be noted that the themes are interlinked and should not be seen as separate requirements, but rather entities that, together, compose the requirements for TPD of Learner Support Teachers. From these findings, a research and development framework was proposed.

Universities should continuously adapt and improve their educational programmes to train better equipped specialist teachers to meet the educational challenges in SA. The gap between balancing theoretical and practical curriculum requirements is necessary to adhere to the multifaceted interactions that are evident in the educational system.

The authors concluded that although it was possible to inductively derive a framework, this proposed framework should further initiate research and discussions around the development of a standardised framework for effective specialist Learner Support TPD in South Africa.

The suggested framework could be a starting point to assess good, applicable and appropriate training for effective Learner Support TPD. Furthermore, the suggested framework seems to be flexible, to cater for the diverse teaching and learning contexts in South African universities.

It is recommended that the framework be tested so that it can be elaborated on by different HEIs, because of varied contexts and student diversity. Further qualitative and quantitative enquiries may deliver similar, different or expanded results on the current framework. Furthermore, future research may assist in customising the framework for the unique HE and/or SA context. A co-operative partnership between the HEIs and the DBE is seen as another valuable source of information on the requirements for effective TPD of Learner Support Teachers so that they will be equipped to meet the educational challenges.

6.4 CONCLUSIONS EMANATING FROM KEY FINDINGS

In conclusion, based on the qualitative key findings of the study, the research question was answered by obtaining insight into the topic via the sub-questions that were linked to the various articles and book manuscripts. Therefore, the framework for training quality Learner Support Teachers, in order to meet the educational challenges in South Africa, was addressed through these articles and manuscripts (See Table 6-1).

It must be noted that Article one, *The development of education for learners with diverse learning needs in the South African context: a bio-ecological systems analysis*, provided a background and aligned the study to the present reality of the special education environment. It can thus be seen as laying the foundation to the framework of teaching quality Learner Support Teachers. Therefore, to explore further educational training strengths and challenges, the related articles and manuscripts evolved, which is linked to answering the sub questions (See Table 6-1).

Table 6-1: Summary of the findings regarding a framework for training quality Learner Support Teachers that meets the educational challenges in SA

Article(s)/Manuscript	Secondary research questions that were addressed	Key findings and contributions towards establishing a framework
Article 1 The development of education for learners with diverse learning needs in the South African context: a bio-ecological systems analysis Phase 1 (see table 6.1)	See paragraph 6.3. Conclusions emanating from key findings Is it possible to apply a bio-ecological approach to highlight the historic development of diverse education? Is it possible to explore the interactive processes within the systemic levels in the South African education system, which affects the learner on the person dimension of the bio-ecological approach?	The main objective of the SA education system should be to provide quality education to all learners. Education services should become more accessible for learners with barriers to learning. Results from the bio-ecological systems analysis of related literature revealed many successes but also many challenges that inhibit change, growth and development in the South African education system, even more so for the child experiencing barriers to learning. Framework implications: This would imply that changes in all the systemic layers of education on an individual and a collaborative level are needed in an effort to improve the support for all learners who are at risk.
Article 2 (manuscript 18 Book chapter) Training quality Learner Support post-graduate teachers at a higher education institution to meet the educational challenges in South Africa: Perceptions of university lecturers Phase 2 9See Table 6.1)	What current practices are used for curriculum development in Learner Support specialised training in BEd Hons programmes? What are the gaps that are evident in the BEd Hons Learner Support programme?	The university lecturers' perceptions on current practices that are used for curriculum development, reflected in this manuscript and highlighted the importance of practical application, context and collaboration. Presently, in current practice, there is an element of practical application, however, it is felt that it is not sufficient to meet the challenges experienced by teachers in the present South African educational environment. Framework implications: Thus, the need for even more practical application is evident. This was significant, as there were repeated indications that the lack of sufficient practical application and/opportunities was identified as a major gap, which must be addressed. Framework implications: Collaboration was the other aspect that emerged in this manuscript. The

	How do the lecturers teaching the modules in the BEd Hons programme in Learner Support perceive the modules? What are the gaps that are evident in the BEd Hons Learner Support programme? What are the current practices used in teaching and learning in the BEd Hons programme in Learner Support?	importance of collaboration by and with teachers within the educational environment. The respondents (university lecturers) highlighted the fact that curriculum development in Learner Support specialised training in BEd Hons programmes was not really aligned with departmental requirements. Lecturers also voiced their opinion regarding the theoretical aspects of collaboration, which seemed to be sufficiently addressed, but a gap between theory and application skills was repeatedly mentioned. Framework implications: Therefore, to create a suitable framework for training quality Learner Support Teachers, these aspects need to be addressed. In doing so, quality Learner Support post-graduate teachers, at higher education institutions, will be able to meet the educational challenges in South Africa. The university lecturer's perceptions of the current practices used in teaching and learning highlighted an enabling environment, relevance, responsiveness and awareness. Framework implications: An enabling environment must be created to underpin and support inclusive education practices. An enabling environment, which includes relevancy and applicability of what is taught amongst other supportive structures, would assist in understanding barriers to learning and optimally support learners. Current teaching and learning practices do not, in many cases, create an enabling environment. Framework implications: Responsiveness to diversity was another aspect that was evident. Responsiveness acknowledges, supports and promotes an awareness of learning barriers. This results in the minimisation
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	A gap A gap How do the lecturers teaching the modules in the BEd Hons programme in Learner Support perceive the modules?	and hopefully the eradication of exclusion of learners with specific educational needs. The current efforts are not sufficient enough to cope with the diverse educational needs of learners, since many learners are not reaching their full potential. From this discussion, one can note that there must be a definite movement to more practical aspects that are needed to prepare specialist teachers more adequately. Framework implications: The aspects of contextualising and collaboration. These aspects are absolutely necessary for acknowledging and reinforcing inclusive aspects in order to understand and address the needs of all learners. Networking skills for better collaboration are vital, with the South African context always being kept in mind. Therefore, to create a framework for training quality Learner Support Teachers that would meet the educational challenges in SA, the skills and knowledge that should be gained from specialised training, should enable the specialist teacher to be an adequate inclusive teacher who is a knowledgeable agent of change.
Chapter 4: Article 3 Do alumni student teachers who complete the Learner Support BEd Honours programme at Higher Educational Institutions meet the educational challenge?	What are the perceptions of teachers who completed the BEd Hons programme in Learner Support?	Framework implications: Programme strengths. Strengths of the present training programme for Learner Support Teachers are reflected in the alumni student satisfaction regarding the theoretical training, which is grounded in applicable educational theories and policies. These participants (students) confirmed the valuable knowledge and application of theory concerning the SIAS process, they receive in their training. This training provided them with sufficient theoretical understanding of learner diversity and enabled them to

	What are the gaps that are evident in the BEd Hons Learner Support programme?	identify certain barriers to learning. Further strengths of the programme that were encouraging, were the fact that the training contributed to change, created growth and initiated development in the students' professional development. Framework implications: Concerns regarding the programme were firstly, that there was a need for more practical components (again noted) and secondly, that more focus must be placed on specific learning disabilities and problem areas. It was also noted that there was a need for more general training, which they thought would enhance the coping skills of teachers, for example, learners' behaviour and discipline, time management and general administration. The gaps (concerns) regarding the programme should thus be addressed as these short falls cause constraints on teacher training and development and must be considered when looking at the overall framework that the study wished to address. Therefore, to sum up, this article suggested that there must be a good balance between theory and practical application, if quality Learner Support Teachers are to be trained to meet the educational challenges in SA, avoiding a superfluous and meaningless educational qualification. Therefore, the quality of training received will definitely have an impact on the personal development of the postgraduate student and the teaching and learning experiences of learners in the classroom, avoiding the teacher who could become the main barrier to learning and development in the classroom.
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Chapter 5 Article 4 (Manuscript 19 Book chapter) A Higher Education framework for Teacher Professional Development in Learner Support	What must a framework for training quality Learner Support Teachers entail in order to meet the educational challenges in South Africa?	Manuscript 18 and article 3 provided insight and answers to the curriculum requirements for training quality Learner Support Teachers. The six curriculum requirements for effective TPD of specialist Learner Support Teachers were identified, in order to design a framework. Framework implications: Curriculum requirements within the parameters of contextual sensitivity. Framework implications: It was evident that there needs to be an in-depth understanding of learner diversity within the SA higher education context in order to cultivate an enabling and inclusive environment. Collaboration and networking by all role players is favoured and can be seen as vital, to support this inclusive environment. Framework implications: Furthermore, the knowledge of the available administrative support should be made part of the curriculum, so as to empower teachers in general administration and in assessment skills, including time management. This article once again highlights the previous issues in the above-mentioned articles, seeing these aspects as interwoven into the main theme of the framework. These aspects should not be seen as separate entities, but rather entities that, together, compose the requirements for TPD of Learner Support Teachers. It must be noted that there is the awareness that the current practices for curriculum development might not fully equip specialist students to impact on the education system as visualised by the policy documents but the strengths of programmes should be built upon, and the concerns revealed and dealt with. Furthermore, HEIs should thus be motivated to take
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		responsibility and revisit their curricula and teaching practices to train specialist teachers that are better equipped to address the existing educational challenges.
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From Table 6-1, it becomes evident that the key findings of this study successfully addressed the various secondary research questions identified in chapter 1. Valuable information was derived from the key findings to address the main research problem and the findings contributed towards proposing a framework for training quality Learner Support Teachers in order to meet the educational challenges in South Africa. Combining the various findings of the secondary research questions contributed towards answering the main research question: *What must a framework for training quality Learner Support Teachers entail in order to meet the educational challenges in South Africa?*

A preliminary framework was proposed in Article 4/Manuscript 19, comprising of phase 2 of the final research and developmental framework proposed below. The manuscript was peer reviewed and accepted for publication (with changes), yet, while drafting this concluding chapter, I realised that I could already expand on the preliminary framework. For a detailed discussion of the framework, refer to section 5 of article 4/Manuscript 19, in chapter 5.

Figure 6-1 presents the adapted research and development framework for Learner Support. This revised framework consists of two main phases.

Phase 1 represents a bio-ecological systems analysis of the current study context of the students enrolled for a specific programme, in this case the postgraduate Learner Support programme. This bio-ecological systems analysis of the current study context would include the micro, meso, exo and macro systems in the educational context of the postgraduate Learner Support students. For a comprehensive description of phase 1, refer to Article 1. The learner in Diagram 2 can be replaced by the student to determine the strengths and challenges in the contextual educational layers relevant in higher education. The strengths and challenges present in all the systemic layers might be the same, or different, depending on the context in which teaching and learning takes place.

A further motivation supporting the necessity of phase 1 is that this study was done in a particular HEI setting, relevant to the timeframe of this research. Educational settings and timeframes change, therefore, educational contexts may change. This leads to my conclusive argument that the student's positioning in phase 1 has to be determined first before the curriculum requirements (phase 2) can be determined.

Therefore, a bio-ecological systems analysis of the educational context of the student must be done to provide valuable pointers (strengths and challenges) to all role players across the educational systems spectrum, from macro to micro systems. The strengths and challenges could underpin the flexibility of the curriculum requirements for adaptations in the framework to cultivate an inclusive, enabling teaching and learning environment for post graduate Learner Support students.

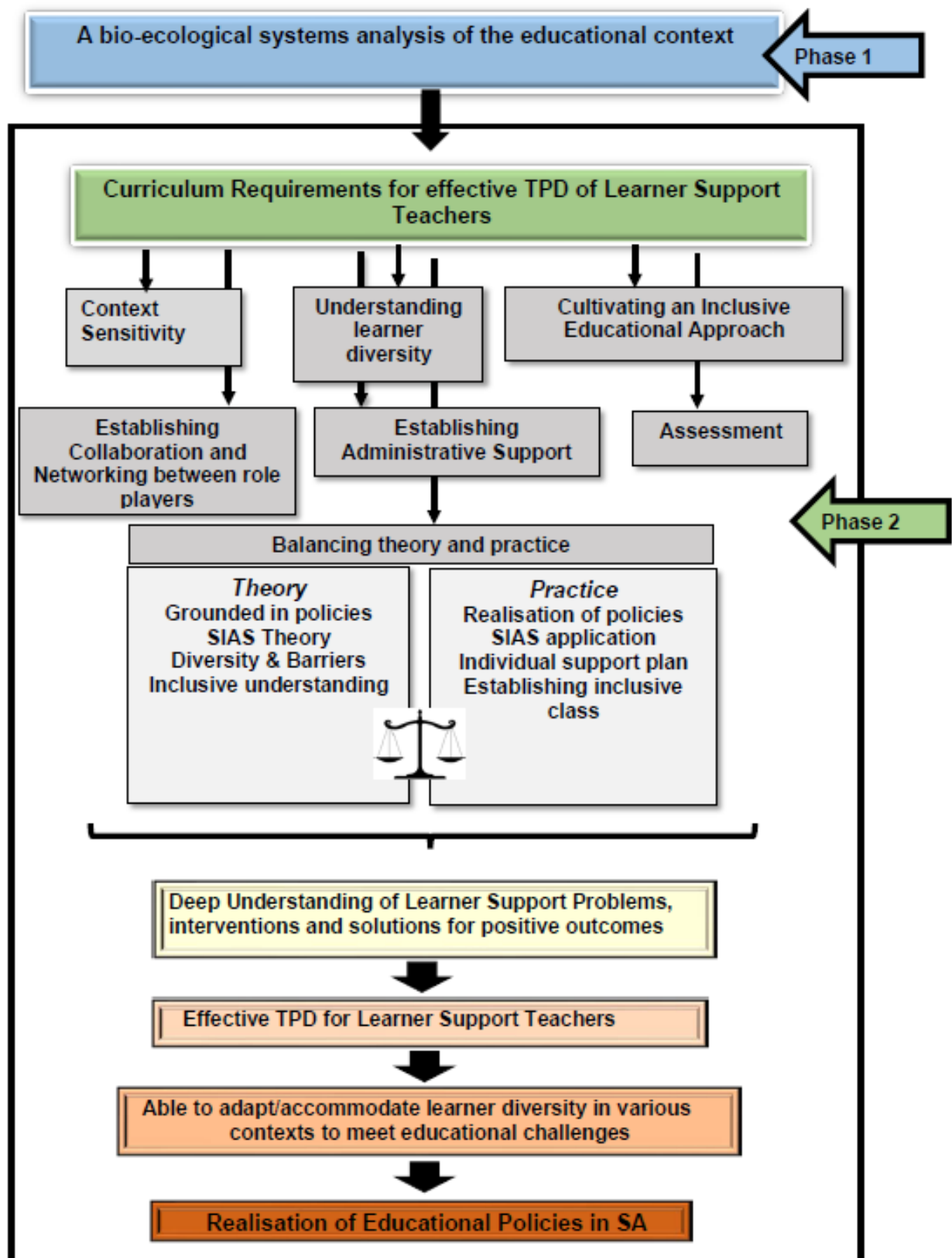


Figure 6-1: Proposed Research and Development Framework for Effective TPD in Learner Support

Phase 2 represents the curriculum requirements analysis as relevant to the contextual strengths and challenges identified in phase 1. The findings of Article 2 and Article 3 were applied in order to develop phase 2 of the proposed framework. For a comprehensive description of phase 2, refer to Article 4/Manuscript 19 Section 5. It should be noted that phase 2 is not indicated as such in Article 4. As declared earlier, the revised framework proposed in this chapter was only realised at the conclusion of this chapter and after article 4 was submitted and conditionally accepted.

The curriculum requirements analysis performed in my study is reported in Article 4/Manuscript 19. The research and developmental framework proposed in Figure 6-1 is not moulded in concrete, it merely provides recommendations as starting points and provides valuable pointers to move towards the establishment of a national research and development framework intended for the SA education system as well as possible policy development and reform.

The possible value contribution of the proposed framework for TPD of Learner Support Teachers to Learner Support as a discipline:

- To bring the objectives of IE to fulfilment to help establish IE across the educational system;
- To improve, develop and secure quality training of Learner Support Teachers to meet the educational needs of all learners, especially learners with barriers to learning and development;
- To enable HEIs to customise all Learner Support programmes to meet the educational challenges in SA;
- To assist programme revisers and evaluators in curriculum development;
- To develop learning outcomes and assessment strategies to support teaching and learning;
- To assist the department of education in human resource development and policy making; and
- To realise the constitutional right of every child to partake in education and to prevent the exclusion of the learners with barriers to learning from educational opportunities.

6.5 Recommendations

To ensure that diverse education makes a rapid shift from what was in the past to the possibilities of the current time frame, I offer some recommendations.

Effective teacher training can contribute effectively to improve the accessibility of educational services for learners with barriers to learning. Therefore, HEIs have the responsibility to deliver quality, context-related training to Learner Support students.

Assessing and maybe adjusting the programmes offered at HEIs will help set the stage for speedier change in diverse education.

There should be better and closer collaboration between HEIs and the DBE to benefit diverse education. A closer collaborative partnership could be beneficial to HEIs to provide more directed and specialised teacher training for Learner Support. Collaboration could align the full range of education and training support services that are provided, being profitable to the DBE, the teachers and the learners, as resources will be shared in and from a pool of expertise. Furthermore, collaboration partnerships might result in better balanced theoretical and practical-based Learner Support teacher training programmes at HEIs to assist and promote educational reform.

Effective, relevant specialised teacher training could contribute to the negativity about the problematic implementation of IE. Resulting from Insufficient training, the teacher may be a primary barrier to learning and development in the classroom. If teachers are more confident about teaching and learning, it may result in more self-efficacy beliefs in their ability to deal with the diverse needs of learners. Teacher confidence will impact on teaching and learning experiences in the classroom and a better learning environment for learners with barriers to learning. To conclude, further research is necessary for HEIs to reconsider their aims, goals and values concerning training quality Learner Support Teachers. The qualification should be meaningful to result in change, growth and development of all role players in the new SA inclusive educational environment. Further discussions between lecturers and students could open reciprocal discussions on the needs of the present day student as a learner, and contextual training requirements. Considering the framework on curriculum requirements for Learner Support training, it is important that HEIs direct further research and focus on what specific knowledge and skills are needed by specialist Learner Support Teachers, and how these skills and knowledge can be addressed within the framework.

A further recommendation is that the framework must be tested by means of further research for the development of a standardised framework for effective Learner Support TPD in South Africa. The framework needs to be elaborated on as different HEIs may vary in contexts and student diversity. The latter may, through qualitative and quantitative enquiries, deliver similar, different or expanded results. Resulting from further research, the framework might be customised for the unique higher education and/or South African context.

A final recommendation is that such a framework could also be tested by means of further research for the development of a standardised framework for effective Learner Support TPD in under graduate programmes.

6.6 Limitations of the study

The following limitations were experienced:

- Very little literature exists on the requirements for training specialist Learner Support Teachers.
- Access to alumni students' contact details were restricted due to the PoPI regulation, and the NWU denied my application for access to the contact details of the alumni students. Although the data was thick, and saturated, a more diverse participant population could have added to the richness of the data.
- Only alumni students of the NWU were participants and the research could be expanded to other universities' students.
- One university denied the request for participation, which is a pity.

In conclusion, suggestions regarding the proposed framework is a starting point for research and discussions around the development of a standardised framework for effective Learner Support training. The proposed framework allows for flexibility to suit the diverse teaching and learning contexts in SA universities. The framework can be applied by HEIs as a starting point to assess good, applicable and appropriate training for effective Learner Support TPD. This might contribute to narrowing the gap between theoretical and practical curriculum requirements, considering the multifaceted interactions evident in the educational system.

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ADDENDUM A: LETTER TO LECTURERS



Private Bag X6001
POTCHEFSTROOM, 2520
South Africa
Tel (018) 299 1111 / 2222
Web: <http://www.nwu.ac.za>
Date ()

Dear (Name of lecturer)

REQUEST FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION IN AN INTERVIEW

I am currently registered for a PhD degree, Learner Support at the North-West University (Potchefstroom Campus). My research title is:

Training quality Learner Support Teachers at North-West University: a framework for meeting the educational challenge

I have been granted approval to undertake the project by the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Education Sciences of the North-West University (EduREC) of the North-West University (Ethics no *NWU-00530-17-A2*).

The aim of this study is to construct a framework for training quality Learner Support Teachers at the North-West University to meet the educational challenge. The researcher will explore:

- the current practices used for curriculum development and teaching and learning in BEd honours programmes at your university and
 - the perceptions of lecturers teaching the various applicable modules at your University.
- The information gathered (see attached questions) will be used to identify possible gaps in the BEd Honours Learner Support programme at the North-West University and to design a framework for meeting the educational challenge.

Participants will not be requested to reveal the specifics of content of the applicable modules. Participation in the research will be entirely voluntary and participants are free to decline the invitation to participate. If participants decline, they will not be negatively affected in any way. Participants are free to withdraw from the study at any time, even after initially agreeing to take part.

On receipt of your consent, the researcher will contact you to schedule an appointment for data collection. The interview will be aligned with a time and premises suitable to you and therefore no interviews will interfere with your work related activities. The researcher will request a location in a quiet environment or separate room with a closed door in order to ensure privacy. It is anticipated that the interview will not exceed one hour.

There is no anticipated physical or emotional harm to the participant. All information obtained from the participant will remain confidential. The researcher will make use of data coding to ensure anonymity of the participant. Should there be any unforeseen emotional response during the interview, the interviewer will immediately refer the participant for counselling.

I, the researcher hereby request from you:

1. Signed permission to do the interview with you and
2. Method of preferred feedback of the research.

Any questions may be directed to me or to my supervisors, the contact details are declared in this letter.

Thanking you in anticipation,



S. Smit
Postgraduate Student

018 2994595



Dr L.D Preston
Supervisor

018 2994765

Section that will involve lecturers

Participants will be required to answer the following four questions that will provide insight into aspects regarding current practices of the curriculum development of Learner Support Teachers. Participants will be requested to be audio recorded in a 45 to 60 minute session. Transcription of the information will be done and the data thematically evaluated.

Questions for Semi-structured interviews of university lecturers who give Learner Support subjects to BEd Honours Learner Support students

1. When developing a curriculum for Learner Support Teachers, what would you consider the most important aspects that the course should impart to the students?
2. Presently, in the course you give students regarding Learner Support, what do you feel are the most important current practices that you emphasise to the students?
3. What are your perceptions of Learner Support Teachers being optimally and appropriately utilised by the Department of Basic Education (DBE) in your province?
4. Does the DBE in your province have any input into the training you give your students?
 - Probing question: Tell me about the nature of this input?

ADDENDUM B: LETTER TO ALLUMNI BED HONOURS LEARNER SUPPORT STUDENTS



Private Bag X6001
POTCHEFSTROOM, 2520
South Africa

BEd Tel (018) 299 1111 / 2222
Honours Web: <http://www.nwu.ac.za>
Date

Learner Support Alumni Student

Dear Sir / Madam,

REQUEST FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH

I am currently registered for a PhD degree in Learner Support at the North-West University (Potchefstroom Campus). My research title is:

Training quality Learner Support Teachers at North-West University: a framework for meeting the educational challenge

I have been granted approval to undertake the project by the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Education Sciences of the North-West University (EduREC) of the North-West University (Ethics no *NWU-00530-17-A2*).

The aim of this study is to construct a framework for training quality Learner Support Teachers at the North-West University to meet the educational challenge. The researcher will explore the responses to a survey which will be sent to all available alumni BEd Hons Learner Support students that have graduated from the North-West University. The information gathered will be used to identify possible gaps in the BEd Honours Learner Support programme at the North-West University and to design a framework for meeting the educational challenge. See the attached questions.

Participation in the research will be entirely voluntary and participants are free to decline the invitation to participate. If participants decline, they will not be negatively affected in any way. Participants are free to withdraw from the study at any time, even after initially agreeing to take part. The researcher will work through the Institutional Registrar of the North –West University as gatekeeper in order to obtain access to the participants.

On receipt of your consent, the researcher will forward the survey to you electronically. It is anticipated that data collection will not exceed 45 minutes and can be completed at a time and premises suitable to you.

There is no anticipated physical or emotional harm to you as participant. All information obtained from you will remain confidential. The researcher will make use of data coding to ensure anonymity of all participants. Should there be any unforeseen emotional response during the interview, the interviewer will immediately refer the participant for counselling.

I, the researcher hereby request from you:

1. The written and signed informed consent form.
2. Completion and return of the survey.
3. Method of preferred feedback of the research.

Any questions may be directed to me or to my supervisors, the contact details are declared in this letter.

Thanking you in anticipation,



S. Smit
Postgraduate Student

018 2994595



Dr L.D Preston
Supervisor

0183 2994765

Section that will involve BEd Honours Learner Support Alumni students

Perceptions of BEd Honours Learner Support Alumni:

1. Are you employed as a teacher?
2. How long have you been employed as a teacher?
3. How has your BEd Honours Learner Support year at North–West University assisted you in your present position?
4. What problems have you encountered in your every-day routines that your studies in your BEd Honours Learner Support year did not equip you for?
5. From your present experience in the teaching profession, what do you feel should be added to or eliminated from the curriculum (content) of the BEd honours course in Learner Support?
6. Are there any other comments that you would like to add (negative or positive) that would perhaps improve or enhance the quality of Learner Support Teachers?

**ADDENDUM B: BRIEF AAN ALLUMNI BED HONNEURS
LEERDERONDERSTEUNING STUDENTE**



BEd Honours Leerderondersteuning Studente

Privaatsak X6001
POTCHEFSTROOM, 2520
Suid Afrika
Tel (018) 299 1111 / 2222
Web: <http://www.nwu.ac.za>
Datum

Beste Alumni student

VERSOEK VIR JOU DEELNAME IN NAVORSING

Ek is tans geregistreer vir 'n PhD-graad in Leerderondersteuning aan die Noordwes-Universiteit (Potchefstroomkampus). My navorsingstitel is:

Training quality Learner Support Teachers at North-West University: a framework for meeting the educational challenge

Goedkeuring is aan my verleen deur die Etiek kommitee van die Fakulteit Opvoedingswetenskappe van die Noordwes-Universiteit (EduREC) van die Noordwes-Universiteit (Etiek nr no *NWU-00530-17-A2*) om die projek te onderneem.

Die doel van hierdie studie is om 'n raamwerk op te stel vir die opleiding van gehalte leerderondersteuningsonderwysers aan die Noordwes-Universiteit om die opvoedkundige uitdaging te kan bereik. Die navorser sal die antwoorde op 'n opname ondersoek wat aan alle beskikbare alumni BEd Hons Leerderondersteuningstudente gestuur word wat van die Noordwes-Universiteit gegradueer het. Die inligting wat ingesamel word, sal gebruik word om moontlike leemtes in die BEd Honneurs Leerderondersteuningsprogram by die Noordwes-Universiteit te identifiseer en om 'n raamwerk te ontwerp om die opvoedkundige uitdaging te ontmoet. Sien die aangehegte vrae.

Deelname aan die navorsing sal heeltemal vrywillig wees en deelnemers kan die uitnodiging om deel te neem van die hand wys. As deelnemers nie deelneem nie, sal hulle op geen manier negatief geraak

word nie. Deelnemers is vry om enige tyd van die studie te onttrek, selfs nadat hulle aanvanklik ingestem het om deel te neem. Die navorser sal deur die Institusionele Registrateur van die Noordwes-Universiteit as toesighouer werk om toegang tot die deelnemers te verkry.

By ontvangs van u toestemming sal die navorser die opname elektronies aan u stuur. Daar word verwag dat data-insameling nie 45 minute sal oorskry nie en op 'n tyd en perseel wat vir u geskik is, voltooi kan word.

Daar is geen verwagte fisiese of emosionele skade aan u as deelnemer nie. Alle inligting wat van u verkry is, sal vertroulik bly. Die navorser sal van data kodering gebruik maak om anonimiteit van alle deelnemers te verseker. Indien daar onvoorsiene emosionele reaksie tydens die onderhoud is, sal die onderhoudvoerder die deelnemer onmiddellik vir berading verwys.

Ek, die navorser versoek hiermee van u:

1. Die skriftelike en ondertekende ingeligte toestemmingsvorm.
2. Voltooiing en teruggawe van die opname.
3. Metode van voorkeur terugvoer van die navorsing.

Enige vrae kan aan my of my toesighouers gerig word, die kontakbesonderhede word verskaf.

By voorbaat dank,



S. Smit

S. Smit

Nagraadse Student

018 2994595



Dr L.D Preston

Dr L.D Preston

Studieleier

0183 2994765

Hierdie afdeling behels BEd Honneurs Leerderondersteuning Alumni-studente

Die persepsies van BEd Honneurs Leerderondersteuning Alumni:

1. Is jy in diens as onderwyser?
2. Hoe lank is jy as onderwyser werksaam?
3. Hoe het jy BEd Honneurs Leerderondersteuningsjaar aan die Noordwes-Universiteit u bystaan in jou huidige posisie?
4. Watter probleme het jy ondervind in jou daaglikse roetine wat jou studie in jou BEd Honneurs Leerderondersteuningsjaar jou nie voor toegerus het nie?
5. Vanuit van jou huidige ondervinding in die onderwysprofessie, wat moet by die kurrikulum (inhoud) van die Bed Honneurskursus in Leerderondersteuning bygevoeg of uitgeskakel word?
6. Is daar enige ander kommentaar wat jy wil byvoeg (negatief of positief) wat moontlik die kwaliteit van Leerderondersteuningsonderwysers sal verbeter of verhoog?



Private Bag X6001, Potchefstroom
South Africa 2520
Tel: 018 299-1111/2222
Web: <http://www.nwu.ac.za>

School of Psycho-Social Education
Tel: 018299 4757
Date

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM

You are hereby invited to take part in a research project that forms part of my degree *Doctor Philosophy in Learner Support* at the Potchefstroom Campus of the North-West University. Please take some time to read the information presented here, which will explain the details of this project. Please ask the researcher any questions about any part of this project that you do not fully understand. It is very important that you are fully satisfied that you clearly understand what this research entails and how you could be involved. Also, your participation is **entirely voluntary** and you are free to decline to participate. If you decline to participate, this will not affect you negatively in any way. You are also free to withdraw from the study at any point, even if you do agree to take part.

TITLE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT:

Training quality Learner Support Teachers at North-West University: a framework for meeting the educational challenge

ETHICS NUMBER: (Ethics no *NWU-00530-17-A2*).

POSTGRADUATE STUDENT: Suegnet Smit

ADDRESS: 103 Peter Mokaba Street, Potchefstroom, 2520.

CONTACT NUMBER: 082 553 2566

This study has been approved by the the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Education Sciences of the North-West University (EduREC) and will be conducted according to the ethical guidelines and principles of the international Declaration of Helsinki and the ethical guidelines of the National Health Research Ethics Council. It might be necessary for the research ethics committee members or relevant authorities to inspect the research records.

What is this research study all about?

The aim of this study is to construct a framework for training quality Learner Support Teachers at the North-West University to meet the educational challenge. The researcher will explore:

- the current practices used for curriculum development and teaching and learning in BEd Honours programmes in Learner/ing Support at the North-West University and other higher education institutions in SA (UNISA, Stellenbosch, Pretoria or University of Johannesburg);
- the perceptions of lecturers teaching the modules in the BEd Honours programmes in Learner/ing Support at the North-West University and other higher education institutions in SA (UNISA, Stellenbosch, Pretoria or University of Johannesburg); and
- perceptions of teachers who completed the BEd Hons Learner Support programme at the North-West University.

The information gathered will be used to identify possible gaps in the BEd Honours Learner Support programme at the North-West University and to design a framework for meeting the educational challenge.

Why have you been invited to participate?

You have been invited to take part in this research because you are:

- currently a lecturer in Learner/ing Support at the North-West University or another University in SA (UNISA, Stellenbosch, Pretoria or University of Johannesburg); or
- an alumni BEd Hons student in Learner Support from the North-West University.

You have also complied with the following inclusion criteria:

- you are older than 18 years;
- you can be of any gender;
- you understand the reason for this research and you know that interviews will be recorded and
- you can sign the consent forms and understand the implications of the informed consent.

You will be excluded if:

- You are not fully conversant in either English or Afrikaans.
- You feel at risk of being threatened, victimised or harmed in any way by participating in this research.

What will your responsibilities be?

- If you are currently a lecturer in Learner/ing Support at the North-West University or at another University (UNISA, Stellenbosch, Pretoria or Universiteit of Johannesburg), you will be asked to partake in an interview of approximately one hour.
- If you are an alumni BEd Honours student in Learner Support from the North-West University, you will be asked to complete a survey that should take about 45 minutes.

The above interviews will occur at a schedule a meeting with you at a convenient site for you between 1 June to 30 June 2018. The survey will be sent out on 1 June 2018 to be returned before or on 30 June 2018.

Will you benefit from taking part in this research?

There are no direct benefits for your participation in this research.

The indirect benefit will be:

This research will provide more insight into gaps in training specialised Learner Support Teachers. Therefore, taking part in this research could improve the experience and knowledge for teachers in the future as this research will help to identify gaps and establishing a framework for meeting future educational needs.

Are there risks involved in your taking part in this research?

The study focuses on your experiences as lecturer, student or responsible person at the department for Learner Support, and you will not be negatively affected by taking part in the research. Taking part in the study can in no way hurt you physically, and your personal details and information will be kept strictly confidential at all times.

The risks in this study are:

The risk of your identity being revealed will be prevented by doing interviews where no one else is present to ensure privacy, all your personal information will have a code, and only a few selected persons (myself, study leader and co-coder) will have access to your information.

What will happen in the unlikely event of some harm/form of discomfort occurring as a direct result of your taking part in this research study?

If you need to discuss anything after the interview, or if you feel emotional in any way, you will be referred for counselling.

Who will have access to your details?

Your information will be given a code and thus your personal particulars will not be used. All information will be kept safe and locked at all times and people who have access to your information must sign a form of confidentiality in which they declare not to share or use any of your information for anything else other than what you have signed for in this document. The findings of the researcher will be reported anonymously so that no one will know any of your details. Information will be kept safe and secure by keeping hard copies in locked cupboards in an office and electronic information and recordings will be protected by a password. As soon as your interview has been transcribed, the recordings will be deleted.

What will happen with the information?

This is a once off collection and the information will be assessed by the researcher, assisted by a co-coder who will also sign an agreement of confidentiality. After three years all your information will be destroyed.

Will you be paid to take part in this study and are there any costs involved?

No, you will not be paid to take part in the research.

Is there anything else that you should know or do?

- Enquiries to the researcher: Suegnet Smit at 018 2994595, study leader Dr Lynn Preston at 018 2994765, or co-supervisor Prof Johnnie Hay: 018-285 2026.
- You can contact the EduREC via Prof Jako Olivier at 018 2852246; jaco.olivier@nwu.ac.za if you have any concerns or complaints that have not been adequately addressed by the researcher.
- Participants will receive a copy of this information and consent form for your own records.

How will you know about the findings?

Before the interview you can indicate if you would like to receive feedback regarding the research or not. If so the researcher can be contacted for individual feedback by either email or personally.

Declaration by participant

By signing below, I agree to take part in a research study entitled:

Training quality Learner Support Teachers at North-West University: a framework for meeting the educational challenge

I declare that:

- I have read this information and consent form and it is written in a language with which I am fluent and comfortable.
- I have had a chance to ask questions and all my questions have been adequately answered.
- I understand that taking part in this study is **voluntary** and I have not been pressurised to take part.
- I may choose to leave the study at any time and will not be penalised or prejudiced in any way.
- I may be asked to leave the study before it has finished, if the researcher feels it is in my best interests, or if I do not follow the study plan, as agreed to.

Signed at (place) on (date) 2018

.....

Signature of participant

.....

Signature of witness

Declaration by Person obtaining consent

I (name) Suegnet Smit declare that:

- I explained the information in this document to
- I gave the opportunity for the participant to ask questions and given the time needed to decide if they would like to participate in the research.
- I am satisfied that he / she understands the aspects of this research as discussed above.
- I encouraged the participant to ask questions and answer them to the best of my knowledge.
- I did not use an interpreter.

Signed at (place) on (date) 2018

.....
Signature of Interviewer

.....
Signature of witness

PrivaatsakX6001,
Potchefstroom
Suid Afrika 2520

Tel: 018 299-1111/2222
Web: <http://www.nwu.ac.za>

Skool vir Psigososiale Onderwys
Tel: 018299 4709
Datum

DEELNEMER INLIGTINGSBLAD EN INGELIGTE TOESTEMMING VORM

U word hiermee genooi om deel te neem aan 'n navorsingsprojek wat deel is van my Doktorsgraad in Leerderondersteuning aan die Potchefstroomkampus van die Noordwes-Universiteit. Lees asseblief deur die inligting wat hier aangebied word want dit verduidelik die besonderhede van hierdie projek. Rig asseblief enige navrae aan die navorser oor enige deel van die projek wat u nie ten volle verstaan nie. Dit is baie belangrik dat u heeltemal tevrede is en verstaan wat hierdie navorsing behels en hoe u betrokke kan wees. U deelname is heeltemal **vrywillig** en u is vry om te weier om deel te neem. Indien u nie wil deelneem nie, sal u nie op enige manier benadeel word nie. Dit staan u vry om as deelnemer aan die navorsing te onttrek, al het u ingestem om deel te neem.

Titel van navorsingsprojek:

Training quality Learner Support Teachers at North-West University: a framework for meeting the educational challenge

Etieknommer: *NWU-00503-17-A2*

Navorser: Suegnet Smit

Adres: 103 Peter Mokaba Street, Potchefstroom, 2520.

Kontak nommer: 082 553 2566

Hierdie navorsing is goedgekeur deur die Etiek komitee van die Fakulteit Opvoedingswetenskappe van die Noordwes-Universiteit (EduREC) en sal uitgevoer word volgens die etiese riglyne en beginsels van die Internasionale Verklaring van Helsinki en die etiese riglyne van die Nasionale Raad vir Gesondheidsberoep se Navorsingsetiekkomitee. Dit mag moontlik nodig wees vir die etiek komitee lede of betrokke owerhede om die navorsingsrekords te ondersoek.

Waaroor gaan hierdie navorsingstudie?

Die doel van hierdie navorsing is om 'n raamwerk saam te stel vir gehalte opleiding van leerderondersteuning onderwysers by die Noordwes-Universiteit ter vervulling van die huidige opvoedkundige uitdagings. Die navorser sal die volgende ondersoek:

- die huidige praktyke wat gebruik word vir kurrikulumontwikkeling en onderrig- en leer in die BEd Hons program in Leer(der)ondersteuning aan die Noordwes-Universiteit en ander hoëronderwysinstansies in SA (UNISA, Stellenbosch, Pretoria of Universiteit van Johannesburg);
- die persepsies van dosente wat modules aanbied in die BEd Hons program in Leer(der)ondersteuning aan die Noordwes-Universiteit en ander hoëronderwysinstansies in SA (UNISA, Stellenbosch, Pretoria of Universiteit van Johannesburg); en
- persepsies van onderwysers wat die BEd Hons program in Leerderondersteuning aan die Noordwes-Universiteit voltooi het.

Die inligting wat ingesamel word sal gebruik word om moontlike gapings in die BEd Hons program in Leerderondersteuning aan die Noordwes-Universiteit te identifiseer en om 'n raamwerk te ontwikkel ter vervulling van die opvoedkundige uitdagings.

Hoekom is jy genooi om deel te neem?

U word genooi om deel te neem aan hierdie navorsing omdat u:

- huidig 'n dosent is in Leer(der)ondersteuning aan die Noordwes-Universiteit of ander Universiteite (UNISA, Stellenbosch, Pretoria of Universiteit van Johannesburg); en
- 'n vorige student in Leerderondersteuning aan die Noordwes-Universiteit.

Die volgende insluitingskriteria word ook gestel:

U voldoen ook aan die volgende insluitingskriteria:

- U is ouer as 18 jaar;
- enige geslag;
- u verstaan die redes vir hierdie navorsing en verstaan dat die onderhoude digital opgeneem gaan word; en
- u die toestemmingsvorme kan teken en die implikasies verstaan van ingeligte toestemming.

Uitsluitingskriteria:

U sal uitgesluit word indien:

- u nie Engels of Afrikaans magtig is nie; en
- indien u voel dat deelname aan die navorsing u bedreig, viktimiseer of aan gevaar blootstel.

Wat sal u verantwoordelikhede wees?

- Indien u huidig 'n dosent is in Leer(der)ondersteuning aan die Noordwes-Universiteit of ander Universiteit (UNISA, Stellenbosch, Pretoria of Universiteit van Johannesburg), sal u gevra word om deel te neem in 'n onderhoud van omtrent een uur; of
- Indien u 'n vorige student in Leerderondersteuning aan die Noordwes-Universiteit was, sal u gevra word om 'n vraelys in te vul wat ongeveer 45 minute sal neem.

Die bogenoemde onderhoude sal gevoer word tussen 1 Junie en 30 Junie 2018 na 'n geskeduleerde ontmoeting gereël is by 'n lokaal wat vir u gerieflik is.

Die opname (vraelys) teen 1 Junie 2018 uitgestuur word vir terugversending voor of op 30 Junie 2018.

Sal u voordeel trek deur deel te neem aan hierdie navorsing?

Daar is geen direkte voordeel vir u as u deelneem aan hierdie navorsing nie.

Indirekte voordele sal wees:

Hierdie navorsing sal meer insig voorsien ten opsigte van die gapings in opleiding van gespesialiseerde leerderondersteuning-onderwysers. Daarom sal deelname aan hierdie navorsing moontlik die ondervinding en kennis van toekomstige onderwysers verbeter, omdat die navorsing gapings wil identifiseer en 'n raamwerk saamstel om toekomstige onderwysbehoefte aan te spreek.

Wat is die risiko's verbonde aan deelname aan hierdie navorsing?

Die navorsing fokus op u ondervinding as dosent, student of departementele verantwoordelike persoon in Leer(der)ondersteuning en u sal nie negatief geraak word deur deelname aan die studie nie. Deelname aan die studie kan u geensins fisiek beseer nie en u persoonlike besonderhede en inligting sal ten alle tye as vertroulik hanteer word.

Die risiko's van hierdie studie is:

Die risiko dat u identiteit bekend gemaak sal word, word voorkom deur onderhoude te voer in 'n private omgewing waar niemand anders teenwoordig is nie. Al jou persoonlike inligting sal gekodeer word en slegs geselekteerde mense wat 'n konfidensialiteitsooreenkoms geteken het (myself, studieleiers en hulpkodeerder), sal toegang hê tot die inligting.

Wat sal gebeur as u ongemak ervaar as gevolg van deelname aan hierdie navorsing?

Indien die behoefte ontstaan om enigiets na die onderhoud te bespreek, of indien jy emosioneel voel, sal u verwys word vir berading.

Wie sal toegang tot u inligting hê?

Inligting sal gekodeer word en u persoonlike besonderhede sal nie gebruik word nie. Alle inligting sal veilig toegesluit word en persone wat toegang daartoe moet kry sal 'n vorm van vertroulikheid teken waarin hul verklaar dat die inligting nie vir iets anders gebruik sal word as waarvoor u in die dokument toestemming gegee het nie. Die bevindinge van die navorser sal anoniem gerapporteer word sodat niemand bewus sal wees van u besonderhede nie. Inligting sal veilig en veilig gehou word deur harde kopieë in geslote kaste in 'n kantoor te hou en elektroniese inligting en opnames word deur 'n wagwoord beskerm. Sodra jou onderhoud getranskribeer is, sal die opnames uitgevee word.

Wat gebeur met die inligting?

Hierdie is 'n eenmalige insameling en die inligting sal deur die navorser geassesseer word, bygestaan deur 'n mede-kodeerder wat ook 'n vertroulikheidsooreenkoms sal onderteken. Na drie jaar sal al die inligting vernietig word.

Word u betaal om deel te neem aan die navorsing?

Nee, u sal nie betaal word om aan die navorsing deel te neem nie.

Vir enige ander vrae of besonderhede

- Navrae aan: die navorser: Suegnet Smit by 182 553 2566 of suegnet.smit@nwu.ac.za, die studieleier Dr Lynn Preston at 083 252 7763 of 10521402@nwu.ac.za; of die medestudieleier Prof Johnnie Hay: 018-285 2026; johnnie.hay@nwu.ac.za.
- U kan die EduREC via Prof Jako Olivier kontak by 018 2852246; jako.olivier@nwu.ac.za indien u enige kommer of klagtes het wat nie voldoende deur die navorser aangespreek is nie.
 - Deelnemers sal 'n afskrif van hierdie inligting en toestemmingsvorm vir eie rekords ontvang.

Hoe sal ek in kennis gestel word van bevindinge?

Voor die onderhoud kan u aandui of u terugvoer wil ontvang oor die navorsing of nie. Indien wel, kan die navorser per e-pos of persoonlik vir individuele terugvoering gekontak word.

Verklaring deur deelnemer

Ek onderteken die dokument as verklaring dat ek instem om deel te neem aan 'n navorsingstudie getiteld:

Training quality Learner Support Teachers at North-West University: a framework for meeting the educational challenge

Ek verklaar dat:

- Ek die inligting in hierdie dokument gelees het en dit verstaan, en dat dit in 'n taal geskryf is waarmee ek gemaklik is.
- Ek die geleentheid gebied is om vrae te vra en genoeg tyd gehad om te besluit of ek aan hierdie navorsing wil deelneem of nie.
- Ek verstaan dat deelname aan hierdie navorsing **vrywillig** is en dat ek enige tyd kan onttrek indien ek wil.
- Indien die navorser voel dat dit in my beste belang is, of indien ek nie die navorsingsplan volg soos ooreengekom nie, kan ek gevra word om die studie te verlaat.

Geteken te (plek) op (datum)..... 2018

.....
Handtekening van deelnemer

.....
Handtekening van getuie:

Verklaring deur persoon wat toestemming verkry:

Ek (naam) Suegnet Smit verklaar dat:

- Ek die navorsing aan die deelnemer verduidelik het.
- Ek die geleentheid gebied het vir die deelnemer om vrae te vra en die nodige tyd gegee het om te besluit of hul wil deelneem aan die navorsing.
- Ek tevrede is dat hy/sy die aspekte van hierdie navorsing verstaan soos bo bespreek.
- Ek het die deelnemer aangemoedig om vrae te vra en dit ten die beste van my kennis te beantwoord.
 - Ek nie 'n tolk gebruik het nie.

Geteken te (plek) op (datum) 2018

.....

Handtekening van Navorser

.....

Handtekening van getuie

ADDENDUM E: ACCEPTANCE/SUBMISSION PROOF OF ARTICLES AND MANUSCRIPTS

(2019/11/25) Suegnet Smit - AJOD External Review Decision 670 - Accepted for

Page 1

From: <aosis@ajod.org>
To: "Mrs Suegnet none Smit" <12685941@nwu.ac.za>
Date: 2019/10/09 12:17 PM
Subject: AJOD External Review Decision 670 - Accepted for publication

Ref. No.: 670
Manuscript title: The development of education for learners with diverse learning needs in the South African context: a bio-ecological systems analysis
Journal: African Journal of Disability
ISSN: 2223-9170, E-ISSN: 2226-7220

Dear Mrs Suegnet none Smit

Thank you for submitting your work to the African Journal of Disability. After one review round, both reviewers agreed that your paper is publishable without needing further peer review. This rarely happens - many congratulations! As you will see below, both reviewers provided feedback on formatting and style issues which our finalisation and publication department are equipped to remedy.

The Editorial Office should be in contact by 16 October 2019 to finalise your manuscript for the Finalisation and Publication Office. If you need any assistance, kindly contact the Editorial Office at submissions@ajod.org with any questions or concerns.

We remind our authors that our publisher is a member of CrossChecks plagiarism detection initiative and endorses and applies the standards of the Committee on Publication Ethics which promotes integrity in peer-reviewed research publications. This journal also conforms to the accreditation requirements by both the Department of Higher Education and Training of South Africa and Scielo SA. Be assured that upon publication, your manuscript will be indexed in various international research repositories for further dissemination and reach in readership.

Your manuscript will soon form part of this open access publication and your content will be licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution License. We look forward to your future contributions.

Thank you for submitting your interesting and important work to the African Journal of Disability! We know you had plenty of journals to choose from. We look forward to receiving manuscripts from you in future.

Kind regards,

Charlotte Capri
Editor-in-Chief: African Journal of Disability
Dr Charlotte Capri (D.Phil, Ph.D, MA)
editor@ajod.org

Please help us to improve your experience as an author by taking a few minutes to tell us about the service that you have received. We appreciate your participation and want to make sure we met your expectations, which will give us the opportunity to better serve the community.

Feedback:

https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=mXfgHQ3TR0ix-TiEIOAkzi4e5bmbRrhDux1_hEph7SZUQVZUWDNTR0tLQTVQODVUNIJT001SzhHSC4u

Thank you for submitting your interesting and important work to the African Journal of Disability. We value your contribution to the journal and for the active involvement in the development of the discipline.

Your manuscript will soon form part of this open access publication and your content will be licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution License. We look forward to your future contributions.

Frequently Asked Question

What can I expect from the publication procedure?

On the acceptance of a manuscript for publication by the Editor-in-Chief, the editorial staff will work towards preparing the manuscript for online publication by performing a technical review of the publication process. The accepted manuscript will be prepared and handed over from the review office to the Finalisation and Publication Office.

Reviewer A: Please see comments below

REVIEW

The topic of this paper is interesting and worthwhile considering the difficulties evident in policies of inclusion.

The intention of the study is clear. The study makes an important contribution to the debate around PPCT (person, processes, context and time).

I believe this topic of research will make an important impact on the way teachers are trained, and the way learners are treated in schools. The paper illustrates both strengths and challenges of the system.

The paper is well written, concise and forms a useful contribution towards developing ways forward which will be emancipatory for learners with diverse needs.

It was a privilege to review such a masterful paper.

General

Punctuation and grammar needs some attention, especially punctuation of references in text.

There are some spelling typo's in the diagrams

Reviewer B: Please see comments below

The manuscript under discussion presented one with a good overview and

Suegnet Smit - ARAPBS vol 8 manuscript 18 feedback

From: <cornelia@ivylinepublishers.co.za>
To: <suegnet.smit@nwu.ac.za>
Date: 2019/10/07 09:46 AM
Subject: ARAPBS vol 8 manuscript 18 feedback
CC: "Jessica Pool" <Jessica.Pool@nwu.ac.za>, <Izak.Oosthuizen@nwu.ac.za>
Attachments: 1 REVIEWERS REPORT..pdf; 2 REVIEWERS REPORT.pdf; 1 ARAPBS VOL 8 MANUSCRIPT 18.docx

Dear Seugnet Smit

Re Training quality learner support teachers at a Higher Education Institution for meeting the educational challenge in South Africa: Perceptions of university lecturers.

We have received the reviewer reports. We want to congratulate you with the fact that the reviewers concurred that your chapter is to be provisionally accepted for publication in Teaching and Learning Research in Higher Education. Kindly find the reviews attached. Please address the remarks, indicating the adjustments in change log format.

Kindly return the adjusted chapter with attached change logs, to me at Cornelia@ivylinepublishers.co.za no later than 28 October 2019.

Kind regards

Cornelia van der Linde

Secretary - Ivyline Academic Book Publishers
Email: cornelia@ivylinepublishers.co.za / Tel: 018 294 5499



Cachetpark 5, Potchefstroom, North West, 2520
Reg.No:1998/011931/07 / Vat.No: 4060176932
TEL: 018 294 8879 / Fax: 018 297 8212

Suegnet Smit - ARAPBS VOL 8 MANUSCRIPT 18 - Language edited

From: "Cornelia van der Linde" <cornelia@ivylinepublishers.co.za>
To: <suegnet.smit@nwu.ac.za>
Date: 2019/11/15 01:49 PM
Subject: ARAPBS VOL 8 MANUSCRIPT 18 - Language edited
CC: "Jessica Pool" <Jessica.Pool@nwu.ac.za>, <Izak.Oosthuizen@nwu.ac.za>
Attachments: Modified copy of 1 ARAPBS VOL 8 MANUSCRIPT 18_2.docx

Dear Suegnet Smit

We have received your chapter **Training quality learner support post-graduate teachers at a higher education institution to meet the educational challenges in South Africa: Perceptions of university lecturers** back from language editing. Please accept or delete (with motivation) any changes the editor has made before final submission. Please add author information under the title.

Please note that this is the final draft and the EndNote and references should be done at this stage.

Kindly email the completed manuscript back to my office no later than 22 November 2019.

Kind regards

Cornelia van der Linde

Secretary - Ivyline Academic Book Publishers
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From: "Estelle Botha" <estelle.botha@up.ac.za>
To: <Suegnet.Smit@nwu.ac.za>
Date: 2019/11/28 03:18 PM
Subject: Automatic reply Re: Submission of article

Thank you for your e-mail. Kindly note that e-mails received on a Friday or over the week-end will be responded to in the following week. For telephonic inquiries, please contact me on +27-12-420-5798 or alternatively on +27-79-168-4630 (during office hours, Mondays to Thursdays only).

--
Ms Estelle Botha
Administrative Editor: *South African Journal of Education*
Faculty of Education
University of Pretoria
Pretoria
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Tel.: +27 12 420 5798
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This message and attachments are subject to a disclaimer.

Please refer to
<http://upnet.up.ac.za/services/it/documentation/docs/004167.pdf>
<<http://upnet.up.ac.za/services/it/documentation/docs/004167.pdf>> for
full
details.

Suegnet Smit - Submission of article

From: Suegnet Smit
To: Estelle.Botha@up.ac.za
Date: 2019/11/28 03:18 PM
Subject: Submission of article
Attachments: Suegnet EDITED ARTICLE 3 28 Nov KvD Unblinded_1.docx; Suegnet EDITED ARTICLE 3 28 Nov KvD Blinded.docx; Tables and Figures for Article.docx

Good day Estelle

Please find attached an article for submission to the South African Journal of Education (SAJE).

Title:

Do alumni student teachers who complete the Learner Support BEd Honours programme at Higher Educational Institutions meet the educational challenge?

Thank you.

Suegnet Smit

S. Smit *
Building B11; Office G68
School of Psycho-Social Education
Faculty of Education
North-West University
Potchefstroom Campus
Potchefstroom
2520

Suegnet.smit@nwu.ac.za

*To whom correspondence should be addressed

Vrywaringsklousule / Disclaimer: <http://www.nwu.ac.za/it/gov-man/disclaimer.html>



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From: Cornelia van der Linde [cornelia@ivylinepublishers.co.za]
Sent: 31 Oktober 2019 13:16 PM
To: 'suegnet.smit@nwu.ac.za' <suegnet.smit@nwu.ac.za>
Cc: 'Jessica Pool' <Jessica.Pool@nwu.ac.za>; Izak.Oosthuizen@nwu.ac.za
Subject: ARAPBS vol 8 manuskrip 19

Dear Seugnet Smit

Re Inductively derived Research and Developed Framework for Teacher Professional Development (TPD) in Learner Support through HE .

We have received the reviewer reports. We want to congratulate you with the fact that the reviewers concurred that your chapter is to be provisionally accepted for publication in Teaching and Learning Research in Higher Education. Kindly find the reviews attached. Please address the remarks, indicating the adjustments in change log format.

Kindly return the adjusted chapter with attached change logs, to me at Cornelia@ivylinepublishers.co.za no later than 18 November 2019.

Kind regards

Cornelia van der Linde

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Email: cornelia@ivylinepublishers.co.za / Tel: 018 294 5499



Cachetpark 5, Potchefstroom, North West, 2520
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AOSIS Publishing Guidelines (Chapter 2)



AOSIS Publishing house style for authors

Manuscripts must adhere to the following guide before submission.

Table of content

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Language usage

General elements

- **Quotations:** Use single quotation marks for quotations. For quotations within quotations, use double quotation marks. Quotations of more than 30 words are to be indented. Do not use quotation marks for indented quotations unless it is direct speech (e.g. interviewee responses).
- **En dashes and hyphens:** Use an en dash (i.e. extended hyphen that can be found in the Insert box under Symbols in Microsoft Word) in ranges of numbers and dates. Use hyphens only for words that are hyphenated.
- **Dates:** Format dates as '02 October 2006', except at the beginning of sentences where numerals and dates should either be spelt out or the sentence should be rearranged.
- **Percentage:** The per cent symbol (%) is used in conjunction with all numbers (e.g. 12%). Numbers that have been written out will appear with 'percent' (e.g. five percent). 'Percentage' is used in a general sense.
- **Numbers:** Numbers from one to nine must be written out. Numbers from 10 onwards, must be used as numerals, except at the beginning of a sentence.
- **Spacing and punctuation:** There should be one space (and not two) between sentences; one space before unit terms (e.g. 5 kg, 5 cm, 5 mmol, 5 days, 5 °C, etc.), but no space before the percentage symbol (%). Thousands and millions are marked with a space and *not* a comma (e.g. 1000, 1 000 000). Ranges are expressed with an extended hyphen (i.e. en dash), not with a short hyphen (e.g. 1990–2000).
- **Units:** The use of units should conform to the SI convention and be abbreviated accordingly. Metric units and their international symbols are used throughout, as in the decimal point (not the decimal comma), and the 24-hour clock.
- **Foreign language:** Foreign language words should be italicised, unless these words are part of normal usage. Consult the Oxford English Dictionary if in doubt.
- **Acronyms:** If a phrase with an established acronym or abbreviation is used and appears more than five times in your manuscript, please include the acronym or abbreviation in brackets after first mention of the phrase, and then use the acronym or abbreviation only. Please note that you should not define acronyms or abbreviations in any of your headings. If either has been used in your abstract, you need to define them again on their first usage in the main text.

Sensitive and political terms

- **Race and ethnicity:** Try to avoid terms such as 'blacks' and 'whites'; use instead 'black *people*', 'white *people*', etc. 'Caucasian', 'Mongoloid', 'Negroid', etc. are generally to be avoided except in human population studies. 'Mixed race' is preferable to 'half-caste' or 'coloured'.
- **Disabilities:** Avoid using 'the disabled', 'the handicapped', and instead use 'people with disabilities' not 'the disabled' or 'people with learning difficulties', not 'mentally handicapped'.
- **Disease**
 - Avoid health-determined categorisation.
 - Use 'people with diabetes'; not 'diabetics'.
 - Use 'people with cancer'; not 'cancer sufferers'.

- Use 'sexually transmitted infection (STI)' and not 'sexually transmitted disease (STD)'.
 - Avoid phrasing that dehumanises a patient. Many authors use case (instance of a disease) when they mean patient (i.e. the person or individual who is ill with the (disease)).
- **AIDS**
 - Ensure that 'AIDS' is used for the disease and 'HIV' for the virus, e.g. do not use 'AIDS carrier', 'AIDS positive', 'AIDS virus' or 'catching AIDS or HIV/AIDS' (avoid using the solidus here).
 - 'AIDS sufferer/victim' is inappropriate; use 'people with AIDS'.
 - Refer to 'people who practise high-risk activities' and not '*high-risk groups*'.
 - The expression 'full-blown AIDS' is unnecessary if the correct distinction has been made between HIV and AIDS.
- **Male versus Female**
 - 'Male' and 'female' are *adjectives*, so be careful to use them as such (i.e. a *male* patient and a *female* frog, but a 35-year-old *man*, a French *woman* and a group of 25 *men* and 35 *women*).
- **Sexuality:** Avoid the terms '*homosexual activities*' (if achievable within the manuscript's context, specify which activity is being referred to, especially when dealing with medical research.) Avoid using '*homosexuals*' (specify homosexual men or homosexual women).
- **Gender:** Use gender neutral nouns. Avoid the use of 'man' if not specifically referring to men; for example:
 - for 'man' use 'humans'
 - for 'man-kind' use 'the human race'
 - for 'man-power' use 'workforce'
 - for 'man-made fibre' use 'synthetic fibre'
- **'He/she', 'him/her' and 'his/hers':** For 'he/she', 'him/her' and 'his/hers' rather use 'he or she', 'her or him', 'his or hers' (without a solidus) or change to plural 'they'. Use inclusive pronouns: use 'he or she', or rephrase the sentence (rephrasing to the plural form often works):

X ... *Any observer* of changes in publishing technology will perceive that *he* has need of...

✓ ... *Observers* of... will perceive that *they* have...

Beware of referring to people with stereotypical pronouns (e.g. 'the doctor treated *his* patient'; 'the secretary tidied *her* desk').

- **Geography**
 - The terms *Third World*, *poor countries* and *underdeveloped countries* should be avoided.
 - *Developing* or *non-developed country/society* is better, but it is best to specify countries or regions instead.
 - *Western society* and *Western World* should only be used in relation to geography; otherwise, use *developed world/society* or, even better, specify the countries themselves or the region.

Tables, figures and photographs

Tables should be in an Excel (.xls) format. Ensure that all personal identifying information is removed from the supplementary files as indicated in the provided instructions. All captions should be provided together on a separate page. Tables and figures should use numerical numbers.

- **Organise your visual presentation:** Once you have read through the analyses and decided how best to present each table or figure, think about how you will arrange them within the manuscript. The analyses should tell a story that leads the reader through the steps needed to logically answer the question(s) that you as author are posing in the Introduction. The order in which you present the results can be as important in convincing the readers as what you actually are saying in the text.
- **How to refer to tables and figures in the text:** Every figure and table included in the paper *must* be referred to in the body of the text. Use sentences that draw the reader's attention to the relationship or trend you wish to highlight, referring to the appropriate figure or table only in parenthesis e.g.:
 - Germination rates were significantly higher after 24 h in running water than in controls (Figure 4).
 - DNA sequence homologies for the purple gene from the four congeners (Table 1) show high similarity, differing by at most 4 base pairs. (Avoid sentences that give no information other than directing the reader to the figure or table, e.g. Table 1 shows the summary results for male and female heights at Bates College.)
- **Abbreviation of the word 'Figure':** When referring to a figure in the text, the word 'figure' is never abbreviated as 'Fig.'; the same rule applies to the usage of 'table'. Both words are spelled out completely in descriptive legends.
- **How to number tables and figures:** Figures and tables are numbered independently, in the sequence in which you refer to them in the text, starting with Figure 1 and Table 1. If, in revision, you change the presentation sequence of the figures and tables, you must renumber them to reflect the new sequence.
- **The acid test for tables and figures:** Any table or figure you present must be clear, well-labelled, and described by its legend to be understood by your intended audience without reading the results section. That is, it must be able to stand alone and be interpretable. Overly complicated figures or tables may be difficult to understand in or out of context, so strive for simplicity whenever possible.
- **Descriptive legends or captions:** To pass the acid test above, a clear and complete legend (sometimes called a caption) is essential. Like the title of the manuscript itself, each legend should convey as much information as possible about what the table or figure intends to tell the reader:
 - the results that are being shown in the graph(s), including the summary statistics plotted
 - the organism studied in the experiment (if applicable)
 - a context for the results: the treatment applied or the relationship displayed, etc.
 - location (*only* if a field experiment)
 - specific explanatory information needed to interpret the results shown (in tables, this is frequently done as footnotes)
 - culture parameters or conditions if applicable (temperature, media, etc.)

- o sample sizes and statistical test summaries, as they apply

Do not simply restate the axis labels with a 'versus' written in between.

Example: Figure 1: Height frequency (%) of White Pines (*Pinusstrobus*) in the Thorncrag Bird Sanctuary, Lewiston, Maine, before and after the Ice Storm of 1998. Before, $n = 137$, after, $n = 133$. Four trees fell during the storm and were excluded from the post-storm survey.

TABLE 4: Leaf dry weights of three pea varieties grown at different temperatures.

Variety	Temperature (°C)		Days after sowing		
	Mean	HE	40	55	70
EC-12876	18	35	0.40 ^a	3.88 ^a	0.17*
P-116	22	38	0.52	0.43 ^b	1.20
T-163	25	38	1.35**	5.36 ^b	4.20

Source: Environmental Association Report 2009
HE, heat event (introduced at weekly intervals).
Values are given as means ($n = 30$).
^a Each group consisted of three separate plots.
^b Pest infection prevented data collection.
*, $p < 0.05$; **, $p < 0.01$

Note: Questions frequently arise about how much methodology to include in the legend, and how much results reporting should be done. For laboratory reports, specific results should be reported in the results text with a reference to the applicable table or figure. Other than culture conditions, methods are similarly confined to the Methods section.

Footnotes to tables, figures and photographs

Do not introduce footnotes in the body of the manuscript. Footnotes should be used as follows:

- Copyright and permissions to reproduce should be clearly stated.
- Notes about the table as a whole can be left unlinked (i.e. no linking letters or numbers or symbols) or linked to, for example, a relevant column heading.
- Notes about specific parts of the table should be linked using superscript lower case letters (preferred), superscript numbers or symbols.
- If lower case letters are used, it could be confused with the table data; use symbols or numbers instead.
- Do not make use of superscript numbers in parentheses (brackets).
- If an abbreviation is mentioned for the first time in a table (e.g. 'CE' in Table 1), it must be defined in a footnote to that table, (e.g. HE, Heat event (introduced at weekly intervals)).
- Asterisk footnotes are reserved for probability values in tables and usually signify the following values: *, $p \leq 0.05$; **, $p \leq 0.01$; ***, $p \leq 0.001$. The asterisk is often used in mathematics and should therefore be avoided as a footnote symbol.
- Footnote links should be placed after punctuation. The preferred order of footnote symbols in tables (which should be superscripted) is [†], [‡], [§], [¶] (these are doubled if more footnotes are needed, e.g. ^{††}).
- When superscript numbers or letters are used in text, beware of potential confusion with other superscripts (e.g. 2 for 'squared').
- Footnotes should be in the following order:

- source notes
- other general notes
- notes on specific parts of the table (following the order in the table itself)
- notes on level of probability

Guidance on submitting creatives electronically

Please supply images as the size intended for final publication. Resizing of images is time consuming and can result in loss of quality.

Supply your manuscript creatives in one of the following three preferred formats:

- **TIFF:** This is an image made up of pixels and is the most universal and most widely supported format across Windows and Mac platforms. Most graphics packages can save a file as a TIFF. The higher the resolution (i.e. the number of pixels) the sharper the final image.
 - Colour or greyscale photographic images: 300dpi
 - Line art or combination images: 600/900dpi
 - We would recommend using this format for photographic images.
- **EPS:** An EPS is essentially an envelope for holding text and images. Line art can be produced as an EPS (in Illustrator, for example). There are virtually no limits to scaling line art saved as an EPS. It can also contain TIFF images. However, please ensure that all fonts are embedded (that is, saved as outlines) and that line weights are not defined as hairline.
- **PDF:** This format is, again, like an EPS in that it is an envelope for holding different kinds of images and line art. Great care should be taken to ensure that fonts are embedded and that original images are at the correct size and resolution before being saved as a PDF. It is possible to save or export as TIFF or EPS from most graphics applications, just as it is possible to save direct to a PDF from most graphics packages by using a postscript printer driver. PDF creation packages (e.g. Acrobat Distiller) are also now widely available.

Other file formats

- **JPEG:** A JPEG compressed TIFF is acceptable as long as the degree of compression is moderate. It is better to use a JPEG for online images as a good quality image is achievable even with a high degree of compression.
- **GIF:** A format suitable for images that contain few colours. Again, this should only be used for images intended for the web.
- We cannot guarantee the quality of images supplied in other formats.

Colour:

- *Greyscale, CMYK, RGB.*
- Greyscale art should be saved in greyscale mode.
- CyanMagentaYellowBlack are the base colours used during the printing process.
- Any colour that is to appear in print must be in CMYK mode.
- RedGreenBlue are the colours used by monitors and default scanner settings. Any colour that is to appear online must be in RGB mode.

Guidelines for Math

- Set display equations in MathType. Each display equation should be in its own MathType object. Each MathType object should contain the entire equation, including final punctuation. The equation number should be set as Microsoft Word regular text, outside the MathType object, separated by either a tab or a space.
- Set in-text (inline) math in Microsoft Word regular text. Exception: If in-text (inline) math has elements that should be stacked or have rules, circumflexes, arrows, or other accents spanning over more than one character, set in MathType as 'Inline Equation.'
- If any characters cannot be found in Word's Symbol palette ('(normal text)', 'Times New Roman', or 'Symbol'), please set in MathType.
- No display equations are allowed in figure captions, table titles, or table footnotes. If a display equation occurs in a text footnote, it is best to recast it as inline math. There are a few journals with lengthy footnotes with style exceptions to this rule.
- No numbered equations are allowed in table footnotes.
- Display and/or numbered equations ARE allowed in table body, but must be 'inline' when converted to MathML equations.

Fonts: Unicode fonts

Please use standard (Unicode) fonts such as Palatino, Times New Roman, Helvetica and Symbol. Fonts that have not been embedded will usually be replaced by Courier, resulting in character loss or realignment.

Understanding Unicode

The [explanation](#) at [Unicode.org](#) is a good place to begin.

'Unicode provides a unique number for every character, no matter what the platform, no matter what the program, no matter what the language.' (Unicode.org, 2011)

Put more simply, no matter what font is used, your computer and other computers will always know exactly what symbol is called for and display the text correctly.

Note: AOSIS Publishing publishes in four different formats, namely, PDF, HTML, XML and ePUB. If your manuscript is not unicode compliant, then it will not be possible to produce all four formats. We will send the back to you to make the fonts Unicode compliant to enable us to produce all four formats.

How to check whether your font-type is unicode compliant

1. Open your manuscript in your text editor.
2. Highlight all the text within your manuscript and change the font to Arial or Times New Roman.
3. Scrutinise your entire manuscript.
 - o **Document reads perfectly?** If the words are readable and identifiable, then the font that you are using is unicode compliant.
 - o **Document has changed certain or all characters?** Font used is not unicode compliant and needs to be changed prior to submission to this journal.

Which fonts are Unicode compliant?

- To use Unicode, you will need to install (or find already installed) Unicode fonts on your computer. This is neither difficult nor costly.
- For basic information and links to numerous Unicode fonts, see <http://www.alanwood.net/unicode/fonts.html>
 - Arial Unicode MS
 - Courier New
 - DejaVu Serif
 - Gentium
 - Garamond
 - Minion Pro
 - Myriad Pro
 - Tahoma
 - Times New Roman
 - Verdana

Unicode in Windows

Installing fonts on a Windows computer is fairly simple.

1. Download the font.
2. If it is a compressed file (such as .zip), expand it.
3. Open the fonts folder by clicking on Start, then Settings, then Control Panel, then Fonts.
4. Drag the font file(s) into this folder. It should automatically install.

Using the insert symbol function

- Use the Insert Symbol function (found in the Insert menu). This function allows you to choose characters from a grid displayed in its own window. Double-clicking the desired character inserts it at the cursor in the document.
- Use the symbol insert window to assign keystrokes to the characters you use most often. For example, you might assign the keystroke alt+a to the lower case a with macron, and alt+shif+A to capital A with macron.

Keyboard for Windows

The preferred method for typing in Unicode. Essentially this means telling Windows that you want a different keyboard layout to be available for use. At this step things might vary from computer to computer.

- Click on Start, then Settings, then Control Panel.
- Double click Regional and Language Options. The window that opens should have three tabs: Regional Options, Languages, and Advanced.
- Click on the Keyboards and Languages tab.
- Options include installing additional languages or changing the keyboard. Read the guidelines provided by Windows carefully.
- Select 'Change keyboards' in the same window after installing additional language.
- To make it your default keyboard you must choose it in the drop down list under Default Input Language at the top of this window. Click Add.
- Proceed to select the 'Language Bar' tab at the top and ensure that the box 'Show additional Language bar icons in the taskbar' is ticked.

- Now there should be a little keyboard icon in the task bar at the bottom of your screen (if there wasn't already). (It will be next to the blue square with EN in it, which signifies that the current input language is English. If you use no other languages, this icon might not be there.) When you click on the small keyboard icon, a list of keyboard choices pops up. If you made Alt-Latin the default, it should be in bold type. (However, it may not appear until the next time you restart your computer. Until then it might be a blank line in the list.)

Typing with the alternative keyboard is simple. For most letters you will do things as you always have. When you need a special character or a character with a diacritic or accent, you will use key combinations with the Alt key to the right of the space bar (the one on the left side does not work for this in Windows, unfortunately). For example, to type the letter 'a' with a macron you hold down the Alt key and press the letter a, release them both, then type the letter a. For letters with a dot below them, hold down Alt, press the period key, release both, and then type the letter which needs the dot.

Unicode in Macintosh

To enter Unicode text on a Macintosh, you have several options.

Firstly, you may use the **Character Palette**, which is found in the Input Menu (the flag menu in the upper right, near the clock).

- If the Character Palette option is not shown, enable it by doing the following:
 - Go to the Apple menu, select System Preferences.
 - In the Preferences window, choose International.
 - Select Input Menu.
 - Check Character Palette. You can also check Keyboard Viewer, Unicode Hex Input, and US Extended at this time.
 - Check Alt-Latin. If it is not there, see below for information on installing it.
 - Make sure the "Show Input Menu in menu bar" option is checked.
- To use the Character Palette to enter Unicode characters in a document, just keep it open in the background. When you need a character, you can enter it by double clicking on it in Character Palette.
- A useful feature of Character Palette is the ability to designate frequently-used characters as favourites, saving you the trouble of finding the different letters each time you need them.
- For more information on Character Palette, see Alan Wood's site: http://www.alanwood.net/unicode/utilities_fonts_macosx.html

Secondly, you may use the excellent and extremely simple **Alt-Latin keyboard** or **LatinTL keyboard**, both of which were created specifically for this purpose by Kino.

- To install either keyboard (or both of them), you must first download AltLatin.zip and/or LatinTL_X.dmg.sit from [Alt-Latin page](#).
- If your browser does not automatically expand the .zip or .sit file, tell it to save the file to your desktop (so it will be easy to find), then manually expand it. Usually this can be done simply by double-clicking the file, which will start the appropriate decompression program. LatinTL expands to a disk image, but for the purpose of installation you can treat it just like a folder.
- Follow the instructions in the 'readme' file to install the keyboard(s).

- Make it visible in the Input Menu by following the instructions given above for the Character Palette.
- Because Alt-Latin and LatinTL work like any other keyboard, you will not have to change keyboards unless you need to type in a different alphabet, such as Arabic.
- Entering letters with diacritics using either keyboard is very simple:
 1. Make sure you are using a Unicode font. It may work with other fonts, but you should use Unicode (OS X comes with Lucida Grande and there are others available).
 2. To enter a vowel with a macron, simply hold down either **option** key and hit the letter 'a' simultaneously. Release them, then type the letter that needs the macron (using the shift key if you need a capital).
 3. For letters with dots below, press option and period, release, then type the letter.
 4. Hamza is shift+option+P, and 'ayn is option+p. (This may not work in Microsoft Word with Alt-Latin – reason unknown. If it does not work, use the LatinTL keyboard instead, or use the Character Palette for these two characters. These keystrokes do work in TextEdit and other software with Alt-Latin.)
- The PDF file included with Alt-Latin shows maps of the keyboard, in case you need something not mentioned here, or you may use our maps found on <http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/e/collections/mideast/encyclopedia/unicode.html>.
- The layout of LatinTL is very similar, with only a few differences, and it also includes maps. (See the [Alt-Latin](#) page for a description of the differences.)
- **Click [here](#) for diagrams of the Alt-Latin keyboard** (usable for LatinTL as well, with a few differences) and for downloads.
- The diagrams are for the Windows version, but the layout is almost identical to the Mac version. The main difference is that where the Windows version uses only the Alt key to the right of the space bar, the Mac version uses either of the two Option keys. This makes the Mac version a little more comfortable to use, since you can use either hand. (There is no Windows version of LatinTL.)
- There are downloadable PDF files of the diagrams available on the same page, in case you would like to print them for easier reference while typing.
- Kino's site (linked above) also has numerous other Macintosh keyboard and font resources, such as some keyboards based on non-US layouts (notably a UK variant of Alt-Latin).

Thirdly, you may want to use Knut S. Vikør's **Jaghub keyboard layouts** (and, perhaps, his Unicode fonts).

His Arabic Macintosh pages have long been one of the web's most useful sources for Mac users who need to type Arabic or transliteration, and he has updated both the pages and the downloadable resources he created.

- The page on transliteration, '[Writing Arabic with Latin letters](#)', explains the issues and provides a downloadable file containing the JaghbUni font package and the American Diacs. keyboard layout.
- The [Jaghub font package page](#) gives more information about the three fonts included, as well as German, French, Italian, Danish, Swedish, Norwegian, US and UK keyboard layouts for typing diacritics in Unicode fonts.
- There are also separate keyboard layouts for typing IPA characters in Unicode fonts for the same national standards (that is, the non-option keys

Academic Research and Publication Book Series (Chapters 3 & 5)



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ACADEMIC RESEARCH AND PUBLICATION BOOK SERIES (ARAPBS) GUIDELINES FOR AUTHORS

INTRODUCTION

The ARAPBS invites original research based manuscripts related to all levels and fields of teaching-learning in the Higher Education context. Book chapters that fall into the relevant fields and have not previously been published or submitted for publication elsewhere, will be considered.

SUBMISSION

All manuscripts will be subjected to a double-blind peer review process (national and/or international). The content should not be in the form of a study guide, fiction, an inaugural speech, news article, text book content or book review, but original research based manuscripts. The manuscript targets scholars in particular fields.

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Text style

Manuscripts should be typed in size 12 point Arial font with 1,5 line spacing. Text should be justified with margins of 2,5cm on all sides. Main headings are typed in lower case, bold, font size 14 and subheadings in bold, lower case, font size 12. Both headings and subheadings begin against the margin. The text should not include page numbers, headers, footers or footnotes. Numbers before headings and subheadings have to be included, but not more than four digits (for example 1.2.2.4). The expected length of a chapter is 20 – 24 pages. This includes tables, figures and the list of references, excluding the abstract.

Language editing

Manuscripts should be submitted in *British(UK) English*. Before submission of the manuscript, language editing is an essential prerequisite. While abbreviations and acronyms generally in use are acceptable, lesser known abbreviations and acronyms are not acceptable. Italics are to be used only in the event of emphasis or expressions in another language.

CONTENT GUIDELINES

Title

The title should be brief, but adequately informative. It should be bold, in lower case, centered and in 16 font Arial. The title should not exceed 15 words.

Authors and affiliations

Names of authors are to appear below each other, centered and in lower case letters. Main authors first, followed by co-authors. The affiliation of authors need to be indicated.

On the cover page, authors should kindly provide the following details:

- The title of the chapter
- title, initials and surname,
- institution, position, faculty and school,
- e-mail address/es

The next page, is to be the first page of the chapter. The title of the chapter is to be repeated at the top of page 1 but should not include any personal information after the cover page.

Abstract

All manuscripts must be accompanied by an abstract of 200 – 300 words. The abstract should include the purpose of the study, the methodology or approach, the findings and contributions.

Key words

A maximum of 5 keywords should be cited directly after the abstract. The keywords should reflect the discipline, theme and context of the study.

Introduction

The introduction section follows directly after the key words. The subtitle, introduction starts against the margin.

Body of the chapter

This should include an introduction and background to the study, an analysis of the problem(s) related to the particular field of study which need to be researched, a literature review which may include a conceptual and theoretical framework, a clear research design (quantitative, qualitative, mixed method) including suitable methodology for the chosen design (data collection strategies, data analysis, trustworthiness and ethical aspects).

Tables and figures

The tables and figures should be included in the text in MS Word or Excel format. All tables and figures should be numbered, labelled and the source of the information acknowledged. Table headings should appear above the table and figure headings below the figure.

Style of referencing

Place the references at the end of the manuscript. Harvard style referencing should be used. Arrange the reference list in alphabetical order of author's surnames, and chronologically for each author where more than one work by that author is cited, starting with the most recent publication. The author's surname is placed first, followed by initials, the year of publication (not in brackets) is given, followed by the details of the publication. Some examples of typical references are explained below:

- **In-text referencing**

"Mokoena (2012:6) found....." or found by Mokoena (2012) that....".

For multiple authors initially use: Materechera, Mokoena, and Cronjé (2013) concluded that... and thereafter: Materechera *et al.* (2013).

- **Reference list**

Books

Mokoena, M.M. & Cronjé, A. 2013. *Teaching and learning issues*. Mafikeng: Juta.

Journal articles

Morule, N.M. 2010. Problems experienced in a reading lab. *Journal of language studies*, 10(2): 12-20.

Conference proceedings:

Magodiello, M.E., Morule, N.M. & Prinsloo, B. 2009. *Academic activities*. Conference proceedings of the 19th annual conference conducted by the Association for Academic Support, Mafikeng, South Africa, 15 – 20 November 2009. Ivyline: Potchefstroom.

For theses/dissertations

Mashego, R.D. 2008. *The experiences of senior phase teachers in the implementation of OBE*. Unpublished MEd dissertation. Mafikeng: North-West University.

For legislation

Republic of South Africa. 2001. The children's protection Act, Act 67 of 1996. *Government Gazette*. No. 2345.

For web articles.

Mokoka, A. 2006. *The administrative problems experienced in a front office*. Available from: <http://admin.page.com/adc.html> (Accessed 10 October 2010).

SA Journal of Education (Chapter 4)

Author Guidelines

Guidelines for Contributors

Editorial policy

The South African Journal of Education (SAJE) publishes original research articles reporting on research that fulfils the criteria of a generally accepted research paradigm; review articles, intended for the professional scientist and which critically evaluate the research done in a specific field in education; and letters in which criticism is given of articles that appeared in this Journal. Research articles of localised content, i.e. of interest only to specific areas or specialists and which would not appeal to the broader readership of the Journal, should preferably not be submitted. Authors should indicate the relevance of the study for education research when submitting manuscripts, where the education system is characterised by transformation, and/or an emerging economy/development state, and/or scarce resources. In addition a brief narrative account/description of ethical issues/aspects should be included in articles that report on empirical findings.

All manuscripts will be submitted to referees (national and/or international), who hold documented expertise in the area the manuscripts addresses. When reviews are received, an editorial decision will be reached to either accept the article, reject the article, request a revision (in some cases for a second or third round of peer review), or request arbitration. As a rule only one article per author or co-author will be accepted per year for refereeing and possible publication.

Authors bear full responsibility for the accuracy and recency of the factual content of their contributions. A signed declaration in respect of originality must accompany each manuscript. On submission of the manuscript, the author(s) must present a written undertaking that the article has not been published or is not being presented for publication elsewhere.

All manuscripts will be put through Turnitin upon receipt of the manuscript. An arbitrary guideline of a 15% similarity index applies, even though Turnitin reports are interpreted qualitatively. The use of common methodological terms and scientific concepts does not necessarily imply plagiarism, yet repetition of other work in sections that focus on content and new knowledge will not be allowed. Word-for-word copying of the work of others should be indicated by means of double quotation marks, and reference to the author, year of publication and relevant page number, e.g. "Brown (1997:40-41)". Redundancy/self-plagiarism is also unacceptable, where authors reproduce sections of their own previously published work without using quotation marks, or where authors create several papers slightly differing from each other, and then submit these to different journals without acknowledging this (Information adapted from Code of Ethics for the Journal of International Business Studies (n.d.). Available at <http://www.palgrave->

journals.com/jibs/author_instructions.html#Ethical-guidelines.

Accessed 20 March 2013).

Plagiarism and redundancy/self-plagiarism will be dealt with as follows:

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to readers in the next issue of the journal. The Executive Editor has the right to refuse submissions from such authors for a certain period of time (Information adapted from Redundant Publication: The Editorial Policy Committee of the Council of Science Editors (n.d.). Available at

http://natajournals.org/userimages/ContentEditor/1256771128861/redundant_pub.pdf.

Accessed 20 March 2013).

- In cases of major concern, authors will be denied the privilege of publishing the relevant paper in the South African Journal of Education.
- In cases of minor concern, authors will be asked to rephrase the duplicated sentences. (Information adapted from Code of Ethics for the Journal of International Business Studies (n.d.). Available at http://www.palgrave-journals.com/jibs/author_instructions.html#Ethical-guidelines. Accessed 20 March 2013).

Author(s) must furthermore ensure that the language in the manuscript is professionally edited. Upon submission, the name and address of the language editor must be provided. Copyright of all published material remains vested in the Education Association of South Africa (EASA).

Processing charges

Authors will be invoiced for the required article processing charges (APC) upon acceptance of a manuscript for publication. These charges are reviewed annually, and will align with charges

for the year of acceptance. The 2018 approved APC is ZAR 5,500 per article for South African and USD \$525 for international, authors.

Preparation and structure of manuscripts

The manuscript, including abstract, figure captions, tables, etc. should be typed on A4 paper and the pages numbered consecutively. Manuscripts should be typed in Microsoft Word format with text in Arial font, 12 point, and 1.5 line spacing. All margins should be 2.54 cm. The total number of pages should preferably not exceed 17 pages ($\pm$ 6,000 words).

The title of the manuscript should be brief (maximum 15 words). The title should be followed by the author(s) name(s), affiliation(s) (Department and University), and an e-mail address for the corresponding author.

An abstract in English (approximately 190 words) must be provided, followed by up to 10 keywords, presented alphabetically.

The text of the article should be structured according to the following unnumbered sections, which may include sub-sections:

- Introduction and/or background
- Literature review
- Theoretical/Conceptual Framework

- Methodology
- Results/findings
- Discussion
- Acknowledgements
- References

Figures should be clear, black/white originals, on separate pages — not embedded in the text. Grey or coloured shading must be avoided. Tables/figures should include a brief descriptive heading/caption and be numbered consecutively, using the decimal point rather than the decimal comma.

References

Only sources cited in the text must be listed in the list of references, in alphabetical order, at the end of the manuscript. References should be presented as indicated in the examples below. Special attention should be paid to the required punctuation.

References are cited in the text by the author(s) name(s) and the year of publication in brackets (Harvard method), separated by a comma, e.g. (Brown, 1997). If several articles by the same author and from the same year are cited, the letters a, b, c, etc. should be added after the year of publication, e.g. (Brown, 1977a).

Page references in the text should follow a colon after the date, e.g. (Brown, 1997:40-48). In works by three or more authors the surnames of all authors should be given in the first reference to such a work yet in subsequent references to such this work, only the name of the first author is given, followed by the abbreviation et al., e.g. (Ziv et al., 1995).

If reference is made to an anonymous item in a newspaper, the name of the newspaper is given in brackets, e.g. (Daily News, 1999).

For personal communications (oral or written) the relevant person and personal communication should be indicated in brackets, e.g. (M Smith, pers. comm.).

Format for referencing journal articles:

Johnson DW & Johnson RT 1999. Gifted students illustrate co-operative learning. *Educational Leadership*, 50(1):60-61. <https://doi.org/10.15700/el.1999.50>

Books:

Van Zyl R (ed.) 1994. *Recent advances in classroom research*. San Diego, CA: McGraw-Hill.

Chapters in books:

Dukzec S 1988. Gender issues. In D Hicks & J Brown (eds). *Education for peace*. London, England: Routledge.

Unpublished theses or dissertations:

Squelch J 1991. Teacher training for multicultural education in a multicultural society. MEd dissertation. Pretoria, South Africa: University of South Africa.

Anonymous newspaper references:

Citizen 1996. Education for all, 22 March.

Electronic references:***Published under author's name:***

Wilson J 2000. The blame culture. *British Educational Research Journal*, 26. Available at <http://www.govsources/gtp%access>. Accessed 20 April 2005.

Website references with no author:

These references are not archival and are therefore subject to change in any way and at any time. If it is essential to present them, however these should be included in a numbered endnote and not in the reference list.

Submission of manuscripts:

Manuscripts can be submitted electronically by e-mail or via the internet. All manuscripts should be submitted in MS Word format.

Authors who submit manuscripts for the first time should submit their manuscripts to Estelle.Botha@up.ac.za. Only once the Editorial Committee decides to accept the manuscript for review, users will be registered as authors. All submissions should include a (i) cover letter, (ii) checklist (see below), (iii) the manuscript (in the stipulated format), (iv) proof of professional language editing, and (v) declaration of originality. Authors who have published in the Journal before can make use of Internet submissions, following the "Register as Author" and then submitting the manuscript online. Following this route will enable authors to track the status of their articles on the website.

For inquiries contact *Estelle.Botha@up.ac.za*

7 Submission Preparation Checklist

1. Cover letter is included confirming that the submission has not been previously published, nor is it before another journal for consideration
2. Manuscript is prepared according to page number and format stipulations
3. Manuscript includes the following headings: Introduction, Literature review, Theoretical/conceptual framework, Methodology, Results/findings, Discussion, Conclusion, References
4. Manuscript is free of plagiarism and declaration of originality is attached
5. Certificate of professional language editing is attached
6. Recommendation for three national and three international reviewers is included
7. All URL addresses in the text (e.g., <http://pkp.sfu.ca>) are activated and ready to click
8. The text has had the authors' names removed. If an author is cited, "Author" and year are used in the bibliography and footnotes, instead of author's name, paper title, etc. The author's name has also been removed from the document's Properties, which in Microsoft Word is found in the File menu.
9. Empirical data must be checked by a statistical consultant

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ADDENDUM G: ETHICS APPROVAL



21 September 2018

To Whom It May Concern

I hereby confirm that the ethics application, as stated below, was approved on the Edu-REC meeting of 26 July 2018.

Ethics number: NWU-00530-17-A2

Project head: Dr L Preston

Project team: S Smit, Prof JF Hay

Title: Training quality learner support teachers at North-West University: a framework for meeting the educational challenge

Period: 1 July 2017 – 1 July 2018.

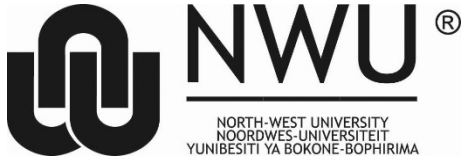
Risk level: Low

Should you have further enquiries in this regard, you are welcome to contact Prof Jako Olivier at 018 285 2078 or by email at Jako.Olivier@nwu.ac.za or Ms Erna Greyling at 018 299 4656 or by email at Erna.Greyling@nwu.ac.za.

Yours sincerely

Prof J Olivier
Chair Edu-REC

ADDENDUM H: LETTER FROM CO-SUPERVISOR



PO Box 1174, Vanderbijlpark
South Africa 1900

Tel: 016 910-3111

Fax: 016 910-3116

Web: <http://www.nwu.ac.za>

School of Psycho-Social Education
27 November 2019

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN: PHD ARTICLES OF MRS S SMIT

I herewith confirm that my name should not appear on Articles 2 and 4 of the mentioned PhD candidate's articles.

Yours faithfully

Prof Johnnie Hay
Co-supervisor
Johnnie.Hay@nwu.ac.za
016-910 3143

ADDENDUM I: DECLARATION BY EDITOR



084 365 4320 
editingexcellencepotch@gmail.com 

*This is to certify that the dissertation in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree*

Doctor of Philosophy in Learner Support

of

Suegnet Smit

has been edited by

Valerie Viljoen

Editing Excellence

The complete dissertation has been edited.

Date: 9 November 2019



SATI INDIVIDUAL MEMBER
Member no. 1003396

ADDENDUM J: DECLARATION BY BIBLIOGRAPHIC CONTROLLER AND TECHNICAL EDITOR



To whom it may concern

This letter is to confirm that Ms Suegnet Blignaut submitted her PhD thesis to me for bibliographic control, as well as for the technical formatting of the document according to the prerequisites of the North-West University and of each of the respective journals/publishers. I hereby confirm that the final reference list meets the requirements of the APA style. Further, each of the articles' reference lists adhere to the respective journals' requirements.

Regards



Kirchner van Deventer

1 December 2019