Intermediate Phase teachers' support to learners who experience intrinsic barriers to learning: A case study

BNJ Bless

orcid.org/0000-0003-1580-7045

Dissertation accepted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree Master of Education in Special Needs Education at the North-West University

Supervisor: Prof M Nel
Co-supervisor: Dr I Payne-Van Staden

Graduation: June 2022
Student number: 22557466

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to those who supported me during the duration of my research.

I would like to thank my supervisor, Prof. Mirna Nel for her continuous support, professional guidance, immeasurable patience, unwavering motivation and encouragement to run the race until the finish line.

My partner, Khanyisile Zwane for her unconditional support and encouragement, and understanding when I needed space to do my research. You are the pillar of my strength and thank you for not giving up on me.

The school principal and participants for taking time from their busy schedule to take part in my study. Without you the study would not be possible.

I would like to thank my parents Agnes Bless and Nelson Bless for their unconditional love and support.

To my colleagues and friends for their patience, unconditional support and their much encouraging words, “Don’t worry you will complete!”.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore how Intermediate Phase teachers support learners who experience intrinsic barriers to learning. The study was encouraged by other research studies' findings, as well as my own experiences and observations of how other colleagues struggled with supporting these learners. This prompted the question "How do Intermediate Phase teachers support learners who experience intrinsic barriers to learning?". A case study strategy of inquiry was employed to research and answer this question.

The study was qualitative in nature, including semi-structured questionnaires, face-to-face individual interviews and a document analysis. A thorough literature review was conducted before the empirical study commenced. The research revealed that there are gaps between policy and practice, a scarcity of resources and training, and that teachers lack the appropriate skills to support learners with intrinsic barriers to learning in their classrooms.

Despite the aforementioned challenges, the findings of the study indicated that participants use various strategies and methods to support learners. These include straddling, books from lower grades, peer-learning and collaboration amongst teachers. Critically, participants failed to mention curriculum differentiation and curriculum modification, individual education plans and assessment adaptations. This emphasizes a need for more workshops and training for teachers on how to adequately support learners with intrinsic barriers to learning in an inclusive classroom.

Keywords: intrinsic barriers, inclusive education, Intermediate Phase, learning support, collaboration

OPSOMMING

Die doel van hierdie studie was om te verken hoe ondersteun Intermediêre Fase onderwysers leerders wat intrinsieke hindernisse tot leer ervaar. Die studie is deur die bevindinge van ander navorsing aangespoor, asook my eie ervaring en waarneming van hoe ander kollegas worstel om hierdie leerders te ondersteun. Dit het die volgende vraag laat ontstaan “Hoe ondersteun Intermediêre Fase onderwysers leerders wat intrinsieke hindernisse tot leer ervaar?”. ’n Gevallestudie ondersoekstrategie is gebruik om hierdie vraag na te vors en te beantwoord.

Die studie was kwalitatief van aard en het semi-gestruktureerde vraelyste, persoonlike onderhoude en dokumentanalise ingesluit. ’n Deeglike literatuurstudie is uitgevoer voordat die empiriese studie begin is. Die navorsing het onthul dat daar gapings tussen beleid en praktyk is, daar ’n skaarste aan hulpbronne en opleiding bestaan en dat onderwysers ’n gebrek aan die toepaslike vaardighede het om leerders met intrinsieke hindernisse tot leer in hul klaskamers te ondersteun.

Ten spyte van die bogenoemde uitdagings, het die bevindinge van die studie aangedui dat deelnemers verskeie strategieë en metodes gebruik om leerders te ondersteun. Dit sluit “straddling”, boeke van laer grade, portuurleer en samewerking tussen onderwysers in. Krities het die deelnemers versuim om kurrikulumdifferensiasie en kurrikulumwysiging, individuele onderrigplanne en aanpassings van assesserings te noem. Dit benadruk die behoefte vir meer werkwinkels en opleiding vir onderwysers oor hoe om leerders met intrinsieke hindernisse tot leer in ’n inklusiewe klaskamer voldoende te ondersteun.

Sleutelterme: intrinsieke hindernisse, inklusiewe onderrig, Intermediëre Fase, leerondersteuning, samewerking

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADHD	Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DBST	District-based support teams
DoE	Department of Education
DSD	Department of Social Development
EWP6	Education White Paper 6
GDE	Gauteng Department of Basic Education
IEP	Individual education plan
LoLT	Language of Teaching and Learning
LSEN	Learners with special education needs
NCESS	National Committee for Education Support Services
NCSNET	National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training
SBST	School-based support teams
SGB	School governing body
SMT	School management team
SNA 1	Support needs assessment form 1
SNA 2	Support needs assessment form 2
WPRPD	White paper on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

1.1 Introduction

In South Africa, all children are regarded as the future of the country. This means that all children should receive quality education and support to achieve successful learning, including those who experience barriers to learning (Department of Education [DoE], 2001). According to Mbiza (2018), education in South Africa is valued, praised and encouraged, due to the fact that many South African parents come from a disadvantaged background and never had access to formal education in the past. This ideology is reflected in South African education policies, such as the South African Schools Act (SASA) (RSA, 1996) and Education White Paper 6 (EWP6) (cf. 2.6.2.3), Special Needs Education (cf. 2.6.2.4), building an inclusive education and training system (DoE, 2001) which affirm that all children have the right to basic and quality education. EWP6 also asserts the belief that all children can learn with support and that all teachers play a central role in ensuring the successful implementation of inclusive education (DoE, 2001). Therefore, EWP6 aimed to establish an education system for the 21st century, with the responsibilities of ensuring that all learners, with or without disabilities, pursue their learning potential to the fullest (DoE, 2001).

However, it is evident in recent international studies that South Africa has one of the world's worst education systems (Spaull, 2017). For example, a recent study revealed that 27% of South African learners who attended school for six years cannot read, and that only 37% of children starting Grade 1 go on to pass the matriculation exams (Nonjinge, 2018). It has also been found that roughly 20% of grade 9, 10 and 11 learners are repeaters of these grades, suggesting that they were poorly prepared in the early grades of the school system (Morris, 2018). These findings are also reflected in the World Economic Forum's (WEF) ranking of countries' education systems wherein the South African education system was ranked 75 out of 76 countries in 2020 (Workman, 2020). Moreover, the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) in 2016 revealed that out of 50 countries SA scored last in reading (Spaull, 2017). Furthermore, it was found that eight of ten SA school-going children struggle to read; that 78% of SA Grade

4 learners cannot read for meaning; and these Grade 4 learners have scored the lowest mark for reading out of all countries that participated in the study (Spaull, 2017).

There are several factors that contribute to many learners not experiencing successful learning such as mentioned above. This can include intrinsic and extrinsic barriers to learning (cf. 2.4). According to Nel, Nel and Hugo (2016), intrinsic barriers to learning refer to barriers within the person, while extrinsic barriers refer to factors outside the person. Intrinsic barriers that cause learning difficulties refer to physical, sensory, neurological and developmental impairments, as well as chronic illnesses, and psychosocial disturbances. Extrinsic factors that impact on learning comprise cultural, social, socio-economic, environmental and systemic influences (Walton, Nel, Hugo & Muller, 2009). This emphasises the importance of providing learners with adequate and appropriate support.

At this stage it is important to mention two different models that mainly determine learning support in South Africa, i.e., the medical-deficit model (cf. 2.7.1) and the socio-ecological model (cf. 2.7.2) (Nel, 2018). According to Nel, Nel et al. (2016), the medical model leads to learners experiencing barriers to learning – especially intrinsic – being categorised based on their medical condition. They are diagnosed by a health specialist (e.g., speech therapist, psychiatrist or psychologist) and then predominantly placed in a special or specialised education environment. With this model, learners' symptoms are seen as inherent to the learner, i.e. "deficit-within-child" and the impact of systemic and socio-environmental factors are not fully acknowledged (Nel, 2018). The emphasis is consequently placed on the learners' deficit as opposed to their abilities (Hay, 2008). This implies that learners are being discriminated against on the basis of their disability. This model can therefore be seen as discriminatory, because it segregates and labels learners, as "normal" and "special", "handicapped" or "slow" (Nel, Tlale, Engelbrecht and Nel, 2016). However, Nel, Tlale et al. (2016) also mention that medical information cannot be ignored when assessing and supporting learners, but should not be the only focus when a support plan is designed. It is essential that teachers need to take learners' backgrounds and environments into account to successfully support learners who experience barriers to learning

Contrary to the medical model is the socio-ecological model. The socio-ecological model is based on Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological perspective that people do not live in

isolation from their external environment and surroundings, and that external factors (i.e., family, friends, poverty, crime, etc.) also have an influence on a person (Seidman, 2011). According to Hay (2008), the bio-ecological framework attempts to understand the context and the dynamic relationship between the individual, context and external environment on different levels (i.e., micro, macro, meso and exo). This implies that barriers to learning should be addressed through a holistic and integrated approach, and individual characteristics of a child's barriers to learning are described against the background of the social, community and economic factors unique to a child's life world (Motitswe, 2017). This model is consequently based on the principles of: identifying learners' strengths as opposed to only focusing on the weaknesses; factors in the learners' environment and community are taken into consideration and teachers and parents are regarded as key role players in screening, identification, assessment and support of learners (Nel, Tlale et al., 2016).

The focus of this study is on learners' experiencing intrinsic barriers to learning. However, as asserted in the socio-ecological model, contextual factors are essential to take into consideration in order to provide adequate support. The study was carried out in a township context and consequently a brief scenario of the South African township schools are provided. In general, in my own experience, teachers have a lot of responsibility on their shoulders, for example, managing the class, instilling discipline, as well as large teaching and administrative workload, just to name a few. Furthermore, according to Masitsa (2011), township teachers seem to experience more stress and responsibilities (i.e., managing large classrooms and administrative duties) compared to those in suburbs, as the increase in responsibilities has not always been accompanied by the necessary teacher development. Township life on its own is also considered a stressor because it is characterised by a lack of life satisfaction and environmental devoid, such as poor basic infrastructure (e.g., water and electricity), poverty, crime, child-headed families, gangsterism and unemployment (Motitswe, 2017). Moreover, teachers are faced with overcrowded classrooms, a shortage of text books, lack of parental involvement, lack of support and resources (cf. 2.6.3) from school management teams (SMT) and districts with regard to learner support, poor literacy levels of learners and parents, as well as inadequate school infrastructure (Motitswe, 2017). In addition, and important for the focus of this study, many teachers are inadequately trained to support learners (cf. 2.6.2) who experience barriers to learning, and inefficient support structures are reported as a critical

obstacle (Motitswe, 2012). Classrooms also have a diverse range of learners with different learning needs which make it very difficult for teachers to deal with the afore mentioned challenges and to provide effective support to learners. Mahlo (2011) mentions that when addressing learner diversity and barriers to learning, there is no one-size-fits-all approach and strategy. Consequently, a wide range of effective strategies must be applied to support different barriers to learning.

As teachers play a central role in ascertaining that all learners achieve successful learning, it is important that they are knowledgeable and adequately skilled in order to provide effective support to learners, especially to those who experience intrinsic barriers to learning. Mkhuma (2012) affirms that teachers should have some background knowledge of intrinsic barriers to learning before attempting to identify them in order to minimise misidentification and non-identification of learners' barriers to learning. Misidentification refers to when teachers wrongly assume that a learner is experiencing a specific barrier to learning which they are not, for example, when a learner has a hearing impairment (cf. 2.3.4.3) and is labelled as severely disruptive in the classroom and possibly has attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) (cf. 2.3.4.2). Non-identification simply refers to the teacher's lack of knowledge and skills to identify learners experiencing barriers to learning (Mahlo, 2011). Research shows that many teachers do not have adequate knowledge and skills to identify, assess and support learners' experiencing intrinsic barriers to learning (Motitswe, 2017), as well as practicing an inclusive pedagogy when teaching these learners (Walton as cited by Motitswe, 2017). One of the reasons for this is that many in-service teachers in South Africa have not had the benefit of being formally trained to teach and support learners who experience intrinsic barriers to learning in their initial training (Mahlo, 2011), which impedes the achievement of inclusive education (Walton, 2017). Furthermore, pre-service teachers seem to complete their training without any sustained practical experience of supporting learners who experience barriers to learning, especially those with disabilities, thus making it difficult for them to apply the little they have learned in theory (Engelbrecht et al., 2015). Walton (2017) also highlights dissatisfaction by pre-service teachers, as they mentioned that most of the courses in inclusive education are more theoretical rather than practical, especially with regard to the support of learners who experience intrinsic barriers to learning.

With the introduction of inclusive education (cf. 2.6), the DoE regarded support for learners as essential to ensure the effective implementation of inclusive education (DoE, 2001) and subsequent education policies determined that support structures must be put in place at district and school levels to help teachers to identify, assess and support learners. These structures include district-based support teams (DBST) and school-based support teams (SBST)[1] (Department of Basic Education [DBE], 2014; DoE, 2005). The key responsibilities of the DBSTs are to liaise with and support the SBSTs (DoE, 2001). According to the EWP6 (DoE, 2001), each district must have a DBST responsible for the management of inclusive education within the district. The DBST (cf. 2.8.1.1) is also responsible for assisting in the development of teaching skills with regard to curriculum differentiation, alternative assessment strategies, the use of assistive devices, as well as developing learner support programmes (DoE, 2001). The role of the SBST (cf. 2.8.1.2) should be to guide and support inclusive teaching and learning processes at school level (DoE, 2001). This means that they must be able to identify and support learners, and assist teachers in supporting learners, as well as address other sociological needs within the institution (Motitswe, 2017). It is important to state that those who form part of the SBST committee should be people within the institution. It includes teachers with knowledge and skills in areas, such as learning support, teachers who volunteer because of interest, the school management team (SMT), a member from the school governing body (SGB), non-teachers such as administrative and care-taking staff (Nel, Nel et al., 2016).

The DBE also introduced the Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS) (cf. 2.8.1.4) document as a strategy to help teachers to identify and support learners' experiencing learning barriers. This strategy is part of the implementation of the EWP 6. The purpose of this strategy is to allow large numbers of learners who experience barriers to learning, including those who have disabilities, to exercise their right to education and have access to support in their local school (DBE, 2014). Although the DBE has attempted to put different support structures and strategies such as SBSTs, DBSTs and the SIAS strategy in place, it still seems to function ineffectively (Makhalemele & Nel,

[1] SBST's can also be called institution-level support teams (ILST) as indicated in the EWP6. However, in recent basic education documents (e.g., DBE, 2014) it is called school-based support teams (SBST). It is also the terminology mostly used by teachers and the Department of Education.

2016). This results in teachers still offering support within the confines of their own knowledge, skills and limited resources available to them (Engelbrecht et al., 2015).

The aim of this study was to explore how Intermediate Phase (IP) (Grade 4–6) (cf. 2.3) teachers support learners who experience intrinsic barriers to learning. The reason for selecting the IP is because the academic and cognitive requirements for learners are more challenging (Evans & Nthulana, 2018; Hughes, 2017). Furthermore, learners in this phase are taught by different teachers which may lead to mis or non-identification of barriers, as a result of time constraints, leaners' struggling to adapt to a new phase, lack of collaboration between teachers, as well as their inadequate knowledge about barriers to learning (Hughes, 2017). Teachers in this phase also have limited time (e.g., 30-minute periods) to spend with learners in classrooms as compared to those in the Foundation Phase who spend the whole day with learners in one class. Thus, time-constraints might result in learners not being appropriately identified or adequately supported. Moreover, Grade 4 and 5 learners generally need a lot of support since, in addition to having to adapt to a new learning environment, after being taught in their mother tongue in the FP, the Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) suddenly changes to English in most instances (Evans & Nthulana, 2018; Nel & Theron, 2008). In addition, according to Chambers (2018), overcrowding in most South African township primary schools is generally found in the higher primary school grades (Grades 5–7) which makes it very difficult for teachers to identify, assess and support individual learners who may have an intrinsic barrier to learning.

In this study, I aim to understand the methods and strategies used by Intermediate Phase school teachers to support learners who experience intrinsic barriers to learning in the midst of the challenges discussed above.

1.2 Problem Statement

It seems from the discussion in the introduction and rationale that most South African teachers appear to still not be knowledgeable and skilled enough to support learners experiencing intrinsic barriers to learning.

However, the EPW6 (DoE, 2001) clearly states that the teacher plays a central role in supporting every learner to ensure that they develop their full potential no matter what difficulties and barriers to learning they are experiencing. It also requires teachers to

acknowledge and respect the fact that learners are different and have different learning needs which should be equally valued (DoE, 2001). Yet, several research studies (e.g., Dreyer, 2017; Engelbrecht et al. 2015; Makhalemele & Nel, 2016; Mfuthwana & Dreyer, 2018; Mdikana & Phasha, 2018; Nel, Tlale et al., 2016) have found that teachers struggle to adequately support learners who experience intrinsic barriers to learning. The possible reasons reported by the afore mentioned research studies included: teachers not feeling adequately trained, support structures (i.e., SBST and DBST) not functioning well, curriculum inflexibility, overcrowded classrooms, poor infrastructure, etc. Consequently, the belief that these learners should rather be referred to specialist educationists and health professionals to be supported and receive education in more specialised education settings seem to remain the trend in the South African education system (Nel, Nel et al., 2016). Through my brief teaching experience of two years in Orange Farm, as well as during my teaching practice sessions in my pre-service studies, I have witnessed many learners experiencing intrinsic barriers to learning in the IP, and it appeared to me that not much is being done at schools to support them. I have witnessed a trend where learners are yearly being “progressed with support” to the next grade and continue to experience the same challenges and frustrations they had in the previous grades because it appears as if teachers are not able to support them adequately. I have seen teachers confused and frustrated when asked to support or to provide evidence of supporting learners who experience intrinsic barriers to learning as they are uncertain about the strategies they should employ to support these learners. Most of my colleagues still appear to believe in the medical model, where teachers identify learners who experience barriers to learning, then complete referral forms (to the DBST), so that learners can be diagnosed and placed in the Learners with Special Education Needs (LSEN) class. Many of these learners tend to be generally ignored in mainstream classrooms because teachers believe they cannot support them and complain about the DBST delaying to place them in LSEN classes. In one of the SBST meetings I attended, I observed that the committee agreed that all teachers must complete support forms for all learners who were at risk of repeating the grade, but with no effort to come up with support strategies. However, one also feels that the DBST is failing our teachers, because, for example, in a staff of 54 teachers only a handful is invited to attend short workshops on learning support, but this knowledge and skills are not properly cascaded to all teachers. Therefore, I realised a need to do a study on how teachers in the IP support learners with intrinsic barriers to learning at a school in the same township where I am currently

working. According to members of the community and some of my colleagues, this school's teachers and its SBST, have good support systems and strategies in place. The purpose of this qualitative, case study was therefore to explore and understand how intermediate phase primary school teachers in a specific school, support learners with intrinsic barriers to learning.

1.3 Research questions

1.3.1 Primary research question

The study was guided by the following research question: *How do Intermediate Phase school teachers support learners with intrinsic barriers to learning in their classrooms?*

1.3.2 Secondary research questions

In order to fully explore and gain a deeper understanding of the primary research question, the following secondary research questions were addressed:

- What do intrinsic barriers to learning mean?
- What does the support of intrinsic barriers entail?
- What strategies are used by teachers in a specific primary school to support learners with intrinsic barriers to learning?
- Which factors do the teachers in this specific primary school deem as hindering the provision of support to learners with intrinsic barriers?
- Which factors do the teachers in this specific primary school consider as enhancing the provision of support to learners with intrinsic barriers?
- What recommendations can be formulated to help Intermediate Phase teachers to provide effective support to learners with intrinsic barriers in a primary school?

1.3.3 Research objectives

Aim:

To explore how Intermediate Phase teachers of a specific primary school support learners' experiencing intrinsic barriers to learning.

Objectives:

- To determine through a literature review what intrinsic barriers to learning mean.
- To establish through a literature review what the support with regard to intrinsic barriers to learning entail.
- To explore the strategies used by teachers in a specific mainstream school with regard to supporting learners experiencing intrinsic barriers to learning.
- To explore factors that teachers in a specific mainstream school deem as hindering to support learners experiencing intrinsic barriers to learning.
- To explore factors that teachers in a specific mainstream school deem as enhancing to the provision of supporting learners who experience intrinsic barriers to learning.
- To establish possible recommendations for helping Intermediate Phase teachers to provide effective support to learners experiencing intrinsic barriers to learning in a Full Service School.

1.4 Conceptual framework

This study will be conceptualized on the basis of the following key words: Intrinsic barriers to learning, Learning support, Intermediate phase teachers, Inclusive education, Collaboration.

1.4.1 Intrinsic barriers to learning

Barriers to learning are any factor that may cause a breakdown in learning, either intrinsic or extrinsic (Bojuwoye, Moletsane, Stofile, Moolla & Sylvester, 2014). According to Nel, Tlale et al. (2016) extrinsic barriers are cultural, socio-environmental and systemic conditions outside the person such as, but not limited to poverty, crime, family background and violence. Extrinsic barriers are also often caused by societies in which individuals (learners) live or by governmental and school systems. While, intrinsic barriers refer to conditions within the person such as visual impairment, learning disabilities, ADHD, or epilepsy (Nel, Tlale et al., 2016).

1.4.2 Learning support

According to Nel, N al. (2016) learning support is an on-going process of assessing, identifying, and supporting. It means employing different strategies to support, accommodate and address different learning needs and learning styles in diverse classrooms. It implies moving away from the medical-deficit model and more towards the socio-ecological model (Swart & Pettipher, 2016).

1.4.3 Intermediate Phase

Teachers are the main drivers of the curriculum in their classrooms. They are responsible for ensuring that learners are equipped with the necessary skills, knowledge and values to become better citizens of the country, and also reach their full potential (Reeves & Robinson, 2014). IP teachers teach specific subjects within a prescribed curriculum from Grade 4–6, and they should promote learners' social, emotional, intellectual and physical development (Mthethwa, 2015).

1.4.4 Inclusive education

Inclusive education should enable the construction of a more democratic society where learners can claim their most basic human rights, including their right to have access to more equal and quality education (Morgan, 2008). Inclusive education does not place the responsibility of providing equal and quality education on special schools only, but calls on mainstream schools to accept and accommodate all learners with various barriers to learning (Nel, Nel et al., 2016). An inclusive education and training system is organised so that it can provide various levels and kinds of support to learners and teachers (DoE, 2001).

1.5 Research methodology

1.5.1 Research paradigm

According to Moyo et al. (2015), a research paradigm is a set of suppositions and philosophies about the world, and what is perceived as real or true. A researcher's worldview will shape and provide the researcher with a broad direction for what they hold to be true and as relative important evidence (Moyo et al., 2015). The study followed an interpretivistic paradigm, as a qualitative approach was used. The interpretivist

perspective is based on the assumption that: human life can only be understood from within; social life is a distinctively human product; the human mind is the purposive source or origin of meaning; human behaviour is affected by knowledge of the social world; and that the world does not exist independently of human knowledge (Maree, 2011). Therefore, interpretivists believe that reality as we know it, is constructed inter-subjectively with those who surround us and through exploration and communications we have with those around us (Creswell, 2005). This paradigm served as a guide for interpreting facts and evidence obtained throughout the research. In this regard, I used these assumptions to explore the primary research question. To achieve the purpose of the study, which was to explore how Intermediate Phase teachers support learners experiencing intrinsic barriers to learning, I acted as an instrument in exploring and creating meaning with the research participants.

1.5.2 Research design

Maree (2011) defines a research design as a plan or strategy which moves from the underlying philosophical assumptions to specifying the selection of participants, the data collection techniques to be used and the data analysis to be done. A qualitative research design was employed in this study. According to Creswell (2005), qualitative research is a systematic process of collecting, analysing, and interpreting visual or narrative data to increase understanding of a phenomenon that is not fully understood. A qualitative design allows the researcher to interact and engage with the participants to construct meaning (Creswell, 2012) which I believe in this research added rich and in-depth data which addressed the purpose of the study.

1.6 Literature review

Numerous databases were utilised to assist me with the literature search. The databases included ERIC, Ebscohost and Google Scholar. I also used the internet, scholarly journals and text books. The following key words were used to search and guide my literature review: learner support, collaboration Intermediate phase, inclusive education and intrinsic barriers to learning.

1.7 Empirical study

1.7.1 Strategy of enquiry

The study employed a case study as a strategy of enquiry. A case study research is a systematic inquiry which aims to describe and explain the phenomenon of interest (Creswell, 2012). Yin (as cited by Maree, 2011) defines case study research as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context and in which multiple sources of evidence are used. The proposed phenomenon that was explored in this instance is the support strategies used by Intermediate Phase teachers to support learners experiencing intrinsic barriers to learning in their classrooms.

This case study was carried out at a mainstream school in the township of Orange Farm in the Vaal Triangle area in South Africa. More details about the research site is provided in Chapter 3 (cf 3.2.4).

1.7.2 Population and sampling

Sampling refers to the process used to select a population for a study (Maree, 2011). The population of this study was sampled through purposive, criterion, and convenient sampling methods. Purposive sampling means that participants are selected because of some characteristics that make them the holders of the data needed for the study (Maree, 2011). Criterion sampling implies that you decide at the design stage of a study the typical characteristics of the participants to be included in the study, using criteria and the number of participants to be selected (Maree, 2011). All (four Grade 4 teachers, four Grade 5 teachers and four Grade 6 teachers) the IP teachers, members of the SBST committee, and the SBST co-ordinator of the school were asked to take part in the study, as they may have the necessary experience and knowledge to produce rich data for the proposed study.

Convenience sampling is often used in situations where population elements are selected based on their convenience and availability. The Orange Farm community has thus been selected for the convenience of the researcher as I know the school and the community well. This helped with the interpretation of the data as I understood the context. However, I still attempted to be as unbiased as possible. Convenience sampling also assisted me

in not traveling long distances to get to participants. This was especially important as data was collected during different COVID-19 lockdown levels.

1.7.3 Data collection methods

I made use of open questionnaires, semi-structured individual interviews and focus group interviews, as well as document analysis as data collection methods.

Open-ended questionnaires: Open-ended questionnaires provided the participants in this study the opportunity to express and clarify their understanding and perceptions (Ganga & Maphalala, 2015). The open-ended questions were formulated and constructed so that the responses of the participants provided me with rich and relevant information regarding their understanding and knowledge of the support strategies for learners with intrinsic barriers to learning.

Semi-structured individual interviews: In semi-structured individual interviews, questions are structured and detailed in advance (Creswell, 2012). I compiled a list of semi-structured questions which were determined by the literature review as well as the responses of the open questionnaires to explore further what Intermediate Phase teachers' understanding and knowledge are about learning support, as well as the strategies they employ when supporting learners who experience intrinsic barriers to learning. During these interviews, a range of techniques such as probing and clarifying answers were used to engage participants during the interviews. An audio recorder was used to record the interviews. This assisted me to recall and transcribe what was said during the interviews.

Document analysis: Document analysis is concerned with critically analysing secondary sources to deepen ones understanding of concepts and to add to ones existing knowledge and understanding (Nieuwenhuis, 2011. This may include published and unpublished work, reports, e-mails, etc. In this study, I utilised learners' profiles and SNA 1 and SNA 2 forms to fully understand how learners are supported. The SBST co-ordinator assisted with the selection of the documents. Learner profiles of learners who experience intrinsic barriers to learning were randomly chosen, as well as their support forms, and minutes of the SBST meeting. A learner profile is a document that contains personal information of a learner, learner achievements, challenges as well as other

relevant information about a learner. It is private and confidential and therefore participants were asked to give consent to use this.

Focus group interviews: The semi-structured focus group interview is commonly used in research studies to corroborate data that emerges from other data sources (Creswell, 2012). In this study I used focus group interviews in the following way: I presented my findings and interpretations of the open questionnaire, individual interviews, and the document analysis to all the participants. Then, by using semi-structured questions in order to guide the participants I requested them to either confirm or disagree with the findings and interpretations. Participants were asked to add any new information that was maybe missed during the data collection process. An audio recorder was utilised to record the interviews. This was helpful and assisted me to recall and transcribe what was discussed during the interviews.

1.7.4 Data collection process

The following data collection process was applied.

Step 1: Conducted a thorough literature review on the research topic.

Step 2: I obtained consent from the relevant ethics committee of North-West University and also asked the principal of school A for permission to conduct research at the school.

Step 3: I went to school A and asked the relevant participants to participate in the study, and also administered informed consent and set appointments.

Step 4: Administered the open-ended questionnaires for completion by participants regarding how they support learners experiencing intrinsic barriers to learning. I then collected, analysed and transcribed the open-ended questionnaires.

Step 5: I conducted face-to-face interviews with participants, transcribed interviews verbatim and analysed the data.

Step 6: I collected and analysed documents – learner profiles.

Step 7: Audio-recorded interviews were verbatim transcribed and analysed.

Step 8: I performed member checks to verify findings from transcripts.

Step 9: The research findings were interpreted, discussed and conclusions were drawn.

1.8 Data analysis and interpretation

Qualitative data analysis tends to be an on-going and interactive (non-linear) process, implying that data collection, processing, analysis and reporting are intertwined (Maree, 2011). In this study all data of the different data collection methods were analysed and interpreted in an integrated manner.

All data collected by electronic and digital means (such as audio tapes) was transcribed. I transcribed the data verbatim collected by the audio recorder and included some non-verbal cues (e.g., pauses, laughter, gestures and facial expressions) in my transcripts to gain a deep understanding of the participants' responses. After transcribing the data collected, I went back to the participants and discussed the transcripts to ensure that the transcripts reflect exactly what the participants meant in the interviews. In case of mistakes or misinterpretations, I went back and rectified the misinterpretations.

A thematic analysis was employed to analyse the data as a comprehensive whole and not as separate unit. This implies searching for themes that emerge as being important to the description of the studied phenomenon. The process involved identifying themes through careful reading and re-reading of data, recognising patterns within the data where emerging themes became categories for analysis (Fereday, 2006).

Creswell (2012) defines coding as the process of reading carefully through all data sets, line by line and dividing it into meaningful analytical units. It is therefore defined as marking segments of data with symbols, descriptive words or unique identifying words. For the purpose of this study, I used inductive codes to code the data and make sense of it, but the categories were deductively determined from research questions. Inductive codes refer to codes developed by the researcher by directly examining the data (Creswell, 2012). I used the open codes and put them on an audit trail for finer refinements. Thereafter, I used the relating open codes to form axial codes which have more reference to the research question. The themes, categories and subcategories were determined from the coded data. I also consulted my supervisor regarding the interpretation and analysis of the data to ensure that I have done it appropriately.

1.9 Quality criteria

Dependability

Mike (2011) explains that dependability ensures that the research findings are reliable and the research could be repeated. Dependability can be ensured by reporting in detail the processes and methods used in the research study to enable an external researcher to repeat the research with the same participants in the same context and achieve similar results (De Vos, 2005; Mike, 2011). I made sure that all the procedures that were used to obtain my data were clearly documented.

Crystallisation

Maree (2014) states that crystallisation means the processes of utilising various data gathering techniques and data analyses to reinterpret understanding of the phenomenon. Numerous data gathering methods were employed in the study. I consulted with my supervisor and made use of different data collection methods, namely, document analysis, open-questionnaire and focus-group interviews to compare whether the research results are trustworthy and reliable.

Transferability

According to Mike (2011), transferability is the degree to which research findings can be transferred to other contexts, other than the one being studied. I tried to make sure that all procedures I used to collect data were transparent and clear for other researchers to use in a different context. However, the findings may differ since schools differ in culture, dynamics, strategies and ways to support learners who experience barriers to learning.

Member checks

This is when data, analytic categories, interpretations and conclusions are tested with members of those groups from whom the data was originally obtained (Cohen & Crabtree, 2012). To enhance the credibility of the study, I had member checks with some participants and allowed them to comment on the interpretations and conclusions of the data. This was done throughout the data collection but specifically during member checks

Conformability

Mike (2011) describes conformability as the extent to which research findings are supported by the data collected. The researcher plays an integral part in the data collection process and brings a unique perspective to the research study. Furthermore, conformability allows external researchers to judge whether the final results of the research correlates with the data collected (Mike, 2011). My supervisor and co-supervisor served as external supervisors of the study to ensure and assess the conformability of the data collected.

1.10 The role of the researcher

According to Simon (2011), the qualitative researcher is considered an instrument of data collection. Therefore, he needs to describe relevant aspects of himself, including biases, assumptions and experiences to qualify his or her ability to conduct research. As a novice researcher it is important to highlight that my situatedness, biases and assumptions might have somehow affected my study. Every institution has its own unique dynamics. My assumptions and expectations about the research location may also have affected my research. However, I think that my knowledge and understanding of my situatedness in this study, helped me to be reflective during the study. I also consulted with my supervisor on a regular basis to make sure that I remained objective and unbiased in the data collection process, as well as during the data analysis and interpretation. By declaring my situatedness, I could reduce the chances of these factors to affect the reliability of my research findings.

My role in this study was administering the open-questionnaires, facilitating interviews and engaging participants. I also prepared semi-structured questions to initiate and start the interviews. I was also responsible for transcribing and analysing all documents.

1.11 Ethical considerations

It is essential for the researcher to consider ethical guidelines when planning to conduct research. I aimed to abide by and followed the following ethical considerations.

Before conducting research, an ethical clearance was obtained from the appropriate ethics committee of North-West University.

Informed consent and voluntary participation: Participants (teachers) were informed about the voluntary participation to the study and were given an informed consent form, which stipulates the purpose of the study, the reasons behind the study and I also informed them about the right to pull out at any time. The Gauteng Department of Basic Education (GDE) was also contacted to request ethical approval. The principal of school A was asked to give consent for allowing the study to take place in his school.

Protection from harm: The researcher should ensure that participants are not exposed to any undue physical, emotional or psychological harm (Shenton, 2009). During the study I strived to be honest, respectful and sympathetic towards all participants.

Privacy, confidentiality and anonymity: According to Forsyth (2010), both the researcher and participants must have a clear understanding regarding confidentiality of the results and findings of the study. All participants' information and shared responses during the study were kept private and the results are presented in an anonymous manner in order to protect the identities of the participants. Participants were informed that confidentiality could not be ensured during focus group interviews. All audio recordings will be destroyed as soon as the study has been completed. However, the transcriptions will be kept in a secured and locked facility for a period of five years. The participants were informed of this.

1.12 Research outlay

Chapter 1: Introduction and rationale

Chapter 1 provides a general overview to the study, including an introduction and rationale for the study.

Chapter 2: Literature review

This chapter provides a literature review on the study.

Chapter 3: Research methodology

This chapter describes the research process in depth, including the research design and methodology followed in the study.

Chapter 4: Data analysis and interpretation

Chapter 4 presents the raw data, an analysis and the interpretation of data.

Chapter 5: Findings and recommendations

In Chapter 5 the researcher summarises the results and findings of the study and presents conclusions drawn from the study. Limitations of the study and recommendations for future research are also be addressed.

1.13 Conclusion

It is evident in the afore discussion that there is still a gap on supporting learners who experience intrinsic barriers in classrooms, as teachers expressed confusion, lack of knowledge and skills with regard to supporting learners who experience intrinsic barriers to learning, and there is still a vast gap between SBSTs and DBSTs structures in schools. Teachers need to be educated and trained on how to support learners in their classrooms and the gap between all role players and stakeholders should be bridged. I intend to address some of the aspects highlighted in this study more in-depth in the next chapter (literature review), the aims and objectives of the study are also be addressed, as well as the conceptual frameworks of the study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The main focus of this case study research is to explore the strategies employed by Intermediate Phase teachers when supporting learners who experience intrinsic barriers to learning. In view of the international use of disabilities rather than intrinsic barriers to learning, the term disabilities will be used interchangeably.

The chapter aims to give a literature overview of the theoretical framework, underlining this research, as well as the following conceptual frameworks: inclusive education, intrinsic barriers to learning, learning support and intermediate phase teachers. The discussions are divided into sections and sub-sections, and each section addresses the conceptual frameworks.

2.2 Theoretical framework

Since inclusive education is regarded by many researchers as mainly influenced by a constructivist theoretical framework (Nel, Nel et al., 2016) it was also one of the fundamental theories that affected this study. The constructivist theory asserts that knowledge should not be passively passed on from one person to the next and that there are social, historical, and cultural contexts that must be considered (Donald et al., 2010). The aforementioned is an important principle for this research. I, as the researcher, had to continuously interact and reflect on the literature review in order to gain an understanding of the whole context as best as I possibly can. During the empirical part, I was aware that the participants conveyed their knowledge and experiences from their own social, historical and cultural contexts and I needed to respect that. Thus, I regarded the knowledge that I gained from the literature review and empirical study as emergent, developmental and viably constructed explanations by humans in meaning making cultural and social communities of discourse (Fosnot, 2013).

In addition, Bronfenbrenner's socio-ecological model, which focuses on how individuals and systems influence one another at different levels (micro, meso, macro and exo systems), was also used as a foundational theory for this study. The reason for this is that

the teaching, learning and support of learners who experience intrinsic barriers to learning are impacted by environmental, systemic, cultural, social and personal factors, as well as the interaction and relationship between these factors on different levels (i.e., micro, meso, macro and exo) (Motitswe, 2017). The socio-ecological model is also based on values and principles of social inclusion which acknowledges the aforementioned interactions and relationships, but also affirms that learners have diverse needs as a result of dynamics, such as language, religion, culture, gender, etc. (Nel, 2017). According to Hay (2008), the socio-ecological perspective allows integrated collaboration between several role players (policy makers, DBSTs, SBSTs, parents, social workers, NGOs, CBOs, etc.) for the benefit of the learner. This implies that barriers to learning should be addressed through a holistic and integrated approach, and individual characteristics of a child's barriers to learning should be described against the background of the social, community and economic factors unique to a child's life world (Motitswe, 2017).

According to Sincero (2012), the microsystem is the setting in which we have direct social interaction with social agents, such as family, friends, classmates, teachers, neighbours or other people who have direct contact with you. In this instance teachers and learners have direct contact with learners who experience intrinsic barriers to learning since they are situated in one classroom. This can therefore be regarded as social interaction between the learner, teacher and classmates. Furthermore, there should be collaboration between teachers and the SBST, because teachers are responsible for identifying learners who experience barriers in their classrooms, as they have direct contact with learners on a daily basis. Shaffer (2008) describes the meso-system as the second layer of Bronfenbrenner's socio-ecological perspective which focuses on the connections or interrelationships among microsystems, such as homes, schools and peer groups.

Bronfenbrenner believes that development is likely to be optimised by strong, supportive links between microsystems (Shaffer, 2008). In this study the SBST is regarded as the link between the microsystem (teachers) and the exo-system (DBST). The connection between the learner, teacher and SBST can optimise the development of learners who experience barriers to learning, as well as promote inclusive education in schools. Lastly, the third layer of Bronfenbrenner's socio-ecological theory is the exo-system which consists of the contexts that children and adolescents are not part of but which may have

a direct influence on their development (Shaffer 2008). In this study, the DBST can be viewed as part of the exo-system, because once teachers have identified learners with barriers, the DBST should ensure that they provide necessary support towards teachers so that inclusive education can be successfully implemented.

Also see Section 2.7.2 for further detail about Bronfenbrenners' bio-ecological model.

2.3 Defining Intermediate Phase

South Africa's education system has three different bands (DBE, 2011). The first band being General Education and Training (GET) (i.e., Grade R–9), the second band Further Education and Training (FET) (i.e., Grade 10–12), while the third and last band is Higher Education and Training (HET) (Mouton et al., 2013). The Intermediate Phase falls under the GET band and includes Grade 4 to 6 (Wilmot & Irwin, 2015). In the Intermediate Phase learners use the foundational concepts gained in the Foundation Phase to build their knowledge and learn new concepts (DBE, 2011), and are led into more abstract thought work. Thus, the application of skills and concepts are of significance during this phase (Wilmot & Irwin, 2015). Furthermore, learners are expected to develop a sense of independent learning which means that they are required to work individually for the time allocated on a particular task. However, the teacher and parent must still provide guidance and instruction, especially if they encounter any problems (Reeves & Robinson, 2014).

The transition from Grade 3 to Grade 4 is often challenging for most learners, as the workload increases substantially (Reeves & Robinson, 2014). This could result in learners experiencing the Intermediate Phase as overwhelming and more difficult while they are introduced to working more independently and required to think more critically (Wium & Louw, 2015). According to Pretorius (2002), the Intermediate Phase requires that learners use reading as a language and information processing skill where they are largely expected to decode text. This means that they should begin to switch from learning the lower level skills involved in learning to read to adapting to using these reading skills as a tool for learning.

According to South African Association for Language Teaching ([SAALT]) one of the biggest challenges faced by most Intermediate Phase learners is learning in English. In most schools, learners learn in their mother tongue during the Foundation Phase and

then change to English as LoLT in the Intermediate Phase (Nuraini, 2016). This disadvantages many learners, and also leads to linguistic difficulties which could contribute to learning breakdown (Zimmerman, 2017). Phala and Hugo (2016), assert that most South African learners read below their grade level as a result of them learning in a second (or even third or fourth) language. This finding is supported by the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) results of 2016 which revealed that 78% of South African Grade 4 learners cannot read for meaning (Spaull, 2017). Consequently, it seems that learning in the Intermediate Phase in itself can create barriers to learning, which could aggravate the challenges learners, who have intrinsic barriers to learning, experience. The next section discusses intrinsic barriers to learning.

2.4 Describing intrinsic barriers to learning

According to the DBE (2005), the concept “barriers to learning” refers to all systemic, societal and intrinsic factors that obstruct effective learning and development. These barriers can arise within the education system as a whole, the school, or within the learner him/herself (DBE, 2005).

Extrinsic barriers refer to barriers outside the person, which can include socio-economic issues (e.g. poverty family systems, abuse and lack of basic needs), systemic (e.g. lack of proper learning support materials, overcrowded housing, unemployment, high levels of violence, crime, overfull classroom and limited school facilities) (Kähkönen et al., 2011; Nel & Grosser, 2016), and environmental barriers, such as under-estimation or high expectations of learners to achieve or school routines that do not accommodate all learners (Walton et al., 2009). Kähkönen et al. (2011) further point out that it is also important to deal with extrinsic barriers, such as a lack of infrastructure, a prescriptive curriculum, collaboration amongst all stakeholders, socio-economic background of learners and a shortage of appropriate supporting material (visual aids, audio devices, etc.).

In contrast, intrinsic barriers to learning are situated within the learner and include neurological disabilities, developmental impairments, psychosocial disturbances, various intellectual impairments, physical disabilities, sensory impairments (e.g., visual and hearing) and learning disabilities (Nel, Tlale et. al., 2016; Walton et al., 2009). These intrinsic barriers to learning can have a negative impact on learners if they struggle to

perform academically and they may feel overwhelmed and loose interest and motivation for school work (Vlok, 2016). Furthermore, Walton (2017) mentions that learners with intrinsic barriers may become rebellious towards teachers who struggle to teach them and the slightest negative experience in the learning environment can lead to greater discouragement to do well. Classrooms can also have a diverse range of learners with different learning needs as they vary in terms of intellectual, cognitive, social and communicative abilities, as well as in the severity of the barriers experienced (Roni & Merga, 2019). This could make it very difficult for teachers to provide effective support to learners. Mahlo (2011) mentions that when addressing learner diversity and barriers to learning, there is no one-size-fits-all approach and strategy. Consequently, a wide range of effective strategies must be applied to support different barriers to learning.

External and internal barriers to learning do not exist in isolation, but are interactive and complex within a wide spectrum of systems and interrelations which could impact on learners' ability to access and benefit from education (Conway, 2017. For example, reading rates and approaches towards reading may be shaped by a range of extrinsic and intrinsic variables, which can comprise of, but are not limited to, external influences, such as friends' and parent attitudes, school-related factors, as well as learners' personal characteristics, including gender, age and reading skills (Roni & Merga, 2019).

It is evident from the above discussion that teachers must be enabled and capacitated to teach and support learners with intrinsic barriers to learning. This can include knowing how to plan additional time, using different teaching techniques and how to use alternative educational equipment as well as how to arrange classrooms to accommodate different disabilities (Ahmad, 2012).

This study focuses on intrinsic barriers to learning, which Vlok (2016) categorises into emotional, physical, neurological and chronic illness.

2.4.1 Emotional and behavioural barriers

In the context of this study the term "behavioural and emotional barriers" refers to a negative level of self-esteem felt by learners who experience barriers to learning (Vlok, 2016). As highlighted earlier, learners who experience intrinsic barriers to learning may suffer from low self-esteem which may lead to them losing interest in their school work as a result of poor academic performance, while others tend to be rebellious towards

teachers and authorities as a result. The negative effects of little parental participation or interest because of, for example, single parenthood, or insufficient or discordant communication between the father and mother, as well as between the parents and the children due to divorce, may also be a cause of learners' emotional and behavioural problems (Theunissen et al., 2017).

Other emotional and behavioural problems can be as a result of traumatic experiences. Trauma is defined as a sudden, life threatening event, in which an individual feels horrified, terrified or helpless (Adubasim & Ugwu, 2019). Traumatic effects on learners can occur where a learner was directly involved in a traumatic event, but also when trauma happens to people they love most or to those around them. For example, traumatic experiences can be as a result of medical interventions, different kinds of accidents, house fires, substance abuse by parents or parents who mistreat their children, parents' separation or divorce, and living with a family member who is critically ill (Frieze, 2015). These can have negative effects on the learners' mental health, well-being and academic performance (Adubasim & Ugwu, 2019) and they may present behaviours, such as nonparticipation in social activities, lack of concentration, oral and physical blow-ups, regular absenteeism and subsequently poor academic performance (Hassan, 2015). It is therefore important for schools to collaborate with other stakeholders, such as social workers and psychologists to provide support to such learners. The DBE should also provide workshops for teachers on how to deal with and handle such cases in their classrooms.

2.4.2 Physical impairments

Learners with physical impairments experience problems with mobility and physical vitality (Vlok, 2016) which result in less physical activeness than both their able-bodied counterparts and their peers with other disability types (Li et al., 2017). These impairments can be as a result of amputations, paralysis, cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy or any other body deformities (Kohzuki, 2014). It has been common practice that learners with physical impairments have not always been accommodated in most mainstream schools (Ishmael, 2015). Such learners may experience negative feedback and reactions and even vindictiveness, simply because of the way they look and move. The feedback and reactions include social rejection, which is often categorised by: being feared, stared at, belittled, shouted at, despised, degraded, teased, given labels, rude

remarks, name calling, or such belittling and hurtful reactions which demonstrate no acceptance of learners (Ishmael, 2015). This can result in them feeling embarrassed and excluded which might lead to emotional, behavioural and social problems (Hanková & Vávrová, 2016). Therefore, it is imperative that schools should strive to include and accommodate learners with physical impairments by having ramps and appropriate infrastructure, adapted handles to assist with grasp, technology such as modified keyboards and specialised computer programs, and digital material to, for example, alleviate extensive note taking (DoE, 2011).

As participation is an integral feature of inclusive education, teachers must create a classroom atmosphere were learners with physical impairments are accepted. Thus, having activities and playing learning or social games which allow these learners to participate with their abled-bodied peers are important. This will minimise stigma and labelling in classrooms, and every learner will have a sense of belonging (Ishmael, 2015).

2.4.3 Chronic illnesses and diseases

Learners' daily functioning and their ability to participate in their own education can be affected by chronic illnesses and diseases (Murphy, 2017). Most of the diseases affecting learners in this way are usually permanent or long-term diseases, for example, HIV/Aids, asthma, lung diseases or cancer (A'Bear, 2014). Children who spend long periods of time in hospital often have a backlog in their school work which affects academic progress, feel isolated from their family and peers, which could lead to adjustment problems when they return to school (Muntanera et al., 2014). Furthermore, certain medications used to treat chronic diseases might influence the learner's school performance – for example, a certain drug might make the learner drowsy in class or might lead to the learner causing a disturbance (Murphy, 2017).

In more recent times, the world has been faced with a global pandemic called Corona Virus 2019 (COVID-19). COVID-19 was first reported in the city of Wuhan in China and has continued to ravage the world since then (Mahaye, 2020). The symptoms of the virus include dry cough, fever and tiredness, shortness of breath, headache and general body weakness due to inducement of ailment in the body. In South Africa, the first confirmed case of COVID-19 was reported on 5 March 2020 and about a month later, the number of cases had escalated to 1585 (Mahaye, 2020). This could be due to the fact that persons

infected with COVID-19 can be symptomatic or asymptomatic depending on the person's immune system. The pandemic had resulted to total closure of schools in about 192 countries (Sheikh, Sheikh, Sheikh and Dhami, 2020) including South Africa, subsequently leading to long periods where little or no teaching and learning occurred. Mahaye (2020) reported that as a result of periods where teaching and learning could not fully take place temporal and permanent damage on the education system as well as learners' academic progress is a large possibility. The temporal damage include disruption in completing the curriculum which takes time to recover while permanent damage includes learners never returning to school even after the outbreak has ended.

2.4.4 Neurological barriers

Neurological barriers can include disabilities such as epilepsy, spina bifida, cerebral palsy, fatal alcohol syndrome disorders, acute strokes, brain tumours and muscular dystrophy (Mohamed et al., 2016). According to Vlok (2016), physical and intellectual impairments usually accompany neurological barriers. Neurological disorders may also lead to learning barriers and prolonged dependence on learning aids and other people (Vlok, 2016). As a consequence, it poses many psychosocial and socio-economic difficulties to learners' parents. Many of these learners also have difficulties with their social lives due to anxiety and fear of being stigmatised (Lawal et al., 2014).

2.4.4.1 Learning disabilities

"Learning disabilities is a general term that refers to a heterogeneous group of disorders manifested by significant difficulties in the acquisition and use of listening, speaking, reading, writing, reasoning, or mathematical skills" (Pesova et al., 2014, p. 16). According to Karimi (2013), the different types of learning disabilities consist of dyslexia (i.e., reading difficulties), dyscalculia (i.e., difficulty with mathematics) and dysgraphia (i.e., writing). These conditions are intrinsic to the learner, and are caused by a dysfunction in the central nervous system (Angelka & Goran, 2018). Learning disabilities may also occur comorbid with other disabilities (such as neurological, sensory, mental and intellectual impairments, as well as emotional and behavioural problems). Learning disabilities can also arise as a result of numerous factors that include visual, hearing, motor or physical impairments, intellectual impairments or genetic factors (Iaonnidi & Samara, 2019). In

addition, Nel and Grosser (2016) argue that regardless of the decent teaching and extra support these learners get, they keep on experiencing learning difficulties.

Furthermore, Ioannidi and Samara (2019) also assert that learners with learning disabilities have a range of intellectual abilities, but it should not be assumed that learners with learning disabilities have poor intellectual ability. Learning disabilities also refer to the problems related to psychological processes involved in understanding or using language, both written or spoken (Nel, Nel et al., 2016). For example, learners moving from Foundation Phase to Intermediate Phase might experience English as a language barrier since they were taught in their mother tongue in the Foundation Phase. For many young learners, Grade 4 is a very difficult year for their school life, because they are expected to learn more on their own and do more formal assessment tasks on their own in English (Nel, et al., 2011).

2.4.4.2 Attention hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and attention deficit disorder (ADD)

Hyperactivity and distractibility form part of a phenomenon known as attention hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Hyperactivity refers to a surplus of motor activity which implies that learners with hyperactivity seem to be in motion for no apparent aim. In addition, they are easily distracted meaning that they react to more or less every sensory stimulus (Nel, Nel et al., 2016). Too much visual or auditory stimulation in a classroom can cause the ADHD learner to become restless and then they would walk around in class, disrupting other learners, as well as teaching and learning. They also want to leave the classroom frequently (Stefanini et al., 2015). ADHD has also been associated with school failure and academic underachievement (Vlok, 2016). A study by Nel et al. (2011) shows that the most prevalent barrier to learning in schools seems to be ADHD with boys being significantly more likely than girls to be diagnosed with ADHD. However, not all learners with learning disabilities have ADHD, but they usually have attention deficit disorder (ADD) (Vlok, 2016).

Learners with ADD show signs of inattentiveness by, for example, having a problem getting started on tasks, making careless mistakes in written work and losing focus during the class lessons or reading (Hoseini et al., 2014). Learners with ADD struggle to organise, they shun or hate tasks that require lots of thinking, misplace things and are

easily distracted (Ogundele, 2018). A learner with ADHD and/or ADD in class requires good planning by the teacher to make sure that he or she is kept interested, busy and out of mischief all the time. For instance, teachers could divide work into shorter chunks which helps to make sure that the learner is able to concentrate on the task concerned (Jelas, 2010). In addition, teachers can allow learners to get up and stretch every now and then when they notice that a learner has lost concentration in class. Learners can also be given some brain gym activities, such as drawing lazy 8s, hook-ups, and thinking caps to help with concentration (Ogundele, 2018). Moreover, teachers may request learners to bring small bottles with drinking water to school, so that when the learner get restless the whole class drinks water from their bottles (Nel, Nel et al., 2016). The next section discusses sensory impairments.

2.4.5 Sensory impairments

2.4.5.1 Hearing impairments

Anatia, Sabers & Stinson (2007) defines a hearing impairment as a hearing loss that prevents a person from receiving sounds through the ear. Hearing impairments can range from mild to severe which result in different learning needs. Nwadinobi (2017) describes six categories used to describe the degrees of hearing loss namely slight, mild, moderate, moderately severe, severe and profound hearing loss. A learner experiencing a slight hearing loss may have problems with hearing faint or distant speech and such learners can benefit from hearing aids, assistive devices and technologies i.e. radio. A person with a mild hearing impairment usually hears very well if they are listening to a single person speaking in a quiet space but experience problems hearing from a distance. For children with moderate hearing loss listening is a strain (Nwadinobi, 2017). While they can understand what a person says if the person is close, it is often difficult for them to hear someone else in a noisy environment. They may also miss 50-70% of speech in a conversation, thus usually ask to have part of the conversation repeated (Nwadinobi, 2017). Moderately severe refers to a person who sometimes or more often or not miss up to 100 % of speech in a conversation and therefore need for a conversation to be very loud. Such persons can benefit from hearing aids and technological devices (Gudyanga et al., 2014). Furthermore, people with a severe hearing impairment may be able to hear noises around them but appear to be ignoring conversations around them (Nwadinobi, 2017). Moreover, this could be because of the frustration they are feeling due to poor

language development. In addition, children who experience a profound hearing loss cannot hear any speech, the may detect sounds around them and rely on vibrations and movement around them (Nwadinobi, 2017). They may also rely on sight rather than hearing as their main way of communication with others (Gudyanga et al., 2014). Typical symptoms of hearing impairments are muffled hearing (which occurs when sound waves have a problem passing through the inner ear), difficulty understanding what people are saying, especially when there are competing voices or background noise, and listening to television or radio at a higher volume. The major problem facing learners with a hearing impairment is communication which also differs from learner to learner (Bell & Swart, 2018).

Among the factors that impact on the communication and language skills and the improvement thereof are when the hearing impairment- occurred (e.g. was the learner born with it or was it acquired), the type of the hearing impairment, the degree of deafness, extent and nature of residual hearing, and the kind of interventions that were taken (Ntinda et al., 2019). Learners with a hearing impairment need to be supported in one or more of four broad areas including communication and interaction, cognition and learning, behavioural, emotional and social development, and sensory development (Ntinda et al., 2019). In classrooms, learners who experience hearing impairments usually may seem to be attentive, but mostly do not understand what is said, do not hear when a teacher speaks behind his or her back, often misinterprets instructions, watches the teacher's lips and face all the time while trying to understand what is said. (Durocher, Wang, Bickenbach, Schreiber & Wilson, 2019). Therefore, facial expressions, gestures, and other body language help them understand messages and instructions. In addition, teachers must first get the attention of learners with hearing impairments before speaking and communicating and must always face the learners when teaching and avoid talking while writing on the board (Lambert, 2008).

Many learners with hearing impairments have poor reading accomplishment levels and as a result experience low educational achievement (Ntinda et al., 2019). These learners may become more tired than their fellow learners due to the fact that they use more energy for listening. Not being able to hear may also impact on self-esteem as the learner may be accused of "not listening", "day dreaming", or "not paying attention" in class. This

may also affect their relationships with classmates because of communication break downs due to the hearing impairment.

2.4.5.2 Visual impairments

The inability of learners with a visual impairment to see can limit their learning experience. Maindi (2018) categorises learners with visual impairments according to their education requirements, i.e. learners who can use normal print as their educational medium and those who need to use braille (Maindi, 2018). Naipal and Rampersad (2018) categorise visual impairments into four levels, namely, mild, moderate, severe and blindness. A mild visual impairment means that the person indicated some type of impairment in the eyes or vision, while both moderate and severe impairments are categorised as a visual acuity of less than 6/18, but equal to or better than 6/12. Then people with a visual field of less than 10 degrees around the central point are identified as blind (Naipal & Rampersad, 2018). Maindi (2018) further explains that in the context of education, learners are classified as either partially sighted, have low vision, or are totally blind. Learners who are partially sighted have some type of visual impairment that has resulted in a need for accommodations and may require the use of eyeglasses or contact lenses. Then, learners with a low vision are those who are unable to read at a normal viewing distance even with the aid of contact lenses or eyeglasses (Maindi, 2018). They may also require adaptations in light, size print or sometimes even braille. Leaners who are totally blind are those who learn via braille or other non-visual media (Naipal & Rampersad, 2018). Furthermore, learners who are short-sighted (myopia) have a problem in seeing learning materials at a distance and writing on the chalkboard. They normally turn their heads or eyes, hold reading materials very close to the face or are unable to make eye contact when talking to others (Maindi, 2018). They may require particular visual aids such as eyeglasses in order to learn skills that sighted learners learn naturally. In contrast some learners are more farsighted than short-sighted. This means they can see things at a distance more clearly. Conversely, near-sightedness makes distant objects blurry, while farsightedness blurs objects that are close (Debrowski, 2021). According to Debrowski (2021), farsighted vision is usually caused by an eye ball that is too short causing light to focus behind the retina. Mild cases of farsightedness (hyperopia) do not affect the vision, but may lead to headaches when reading or doing close-up work.

Teaching styles, learning material, and educational objectives should be designed and modified to suit learners with visual impairments specific learning needs and abilities. For example, using more hearing and textual media for learning (Salleh & Zainal, 2010). Learners who have some ability to see could also be provided with optical devices such as magnifiers, microscopes, telescopes and lenses to enable them to enlarge and view regular print materials better (Maindi, 2018).

2.4.6 Autism spectrum disorder (ASD)

Jelas (2010) defines autism as a pervasive developing disorder which is characterised by problems with communication and social interaction, as well as constrained, repetitive and stereotypic forms of behaviours, interests and activities. Nel, Nel et al. (2016) add that children with autism seem to have an inherent predisposition and could stem from multifaceted origins such as childhood trauma, malnutrition and neurological imbalance in the brain, causing instabilities in brain development and function. The onset of autism is mostly from birth or before the age of three years (Nel, Nel et al., 2016).

Autism often manifests with impairment in the quality of development with regard to social interaction, language and communication, behaviour and imagination (Nel, Tlale et al., 2016). Learners who are autistic commonly show characteristics such as difficulties with non-verbal communications, delay in or lack of expressive skills, a tendency to use language to have needs met rather than for social purpose, repetitive and idiosyncratic speech patterns, and difficulty in changing topics in conversations, fascination with movement, such as the spinning of a fan or turning wheels on toys, restricted range of interest and preoccupation with one specific interest or object (Jelas, 2010).

In addition, there may be deficits in complex abilities (for example, building puzzles or riding a bicycle), yet simple abilities in the same area may be intact (Lewis & Kapla, 2013). Learners with ASD may have difficulty understanding oral and written information, for example, following directions and understanding what they read. It is thus important for teachers and schools to use visual cues and photographs to indicate change, for example, a new teacher, learner or playground (Lambert, 2008). In addition, schools can allocate a place where the learner can go if they get lost, e.g., library, school's reception area, or class teacher's classroom. Teachers can also reduce paper and pencil tasks,

and also allow for assignments to be word processed, and administer lower reading level of assignments (Lambert, 2008).

In the above section, an overview of what intrinsic barriers to learning entail have been provided in order to create an understanding of the terminology and concepts. In the following section a discussion will ensue on issues related to how these barriers are viewed and approached within the education system, starting with the historical view on children with disabilities (intrinsic barriers to learning).

2.5 Historical view on children with disabilities (intrinsic barriers to learning)

In order to understand what the current scenario is with regard to the support of learners with intrinsic barriers to learning (disabilities) it is necessary to provide a brief international and national historical background. All countries have differences, but also some similarities, with regard to the historical road education for learners with disabilities took (Swart & Pettipher, 2016). According to Walton (2015), the approach to the provision of education for learners with disabilities has been undergoing significant changes for many years. Until recently, most governments took the responsibility for the education of learners with disabilities in the form of special education, where these learners are separated from the other learners who were considered to be 'abled' (Donohue & Bornman, 2014). Furthermore, the medical model (cf. 2.7.1) was (and in many instances still is) the dominant approach applied to identify, diagnose and remediate learners with disabilities (Bornman & Donohue, 2013). In this approach these learners are labelled as 'abnormal' and in need of specialist education provision (Donohue & Bornman, 2014). Thus, they are identified as having special needs and then categorised according to the type of disability they have, where after they are placed in special settings that exclude them from the mainstream of education, because society believe that it is in their best interest (Motitswe, 2016). In places where it was not considered desirable or feasible to establish a special school, special classes were set up (Donohue & Bornman, 2014). The majority of special classes were established at mainstream primary schools (Donohue & Bornman, 2014).

Before the political transformation in South Africa, learners with disabilities experienced great difficulty in gaining access to education as very few special schools existed and they were limited to admitting learners according to rigidly applied categories as directed

by a medical approach (cf. 2.6.3.3) (Murphy, 2017). In addition, teacher training was mainly focused on enabling one to teach in either an ordinary school or a special school (Walton, 2017). This exclusionary approach resulted in: limited educational opportunities for many learners with disabilities; inequalities between provision for white and black learners; a highly inefficient and fragmented educational bureaucracy which separated and marginalised learners with disabilities from the mainstream; the provision of highly specialised services to a limited number of learners (Materechera, 2020).

Further, this system was supported by legislation and policy which entrenched these inequalities by institutionalising racial segregation, labelling learners with 'special needs' and separating them from their peers. Nevertheless, as a consequence of these kinds of practices education provision for learners with 'special needs' and support services led to the involvement of non-governmental structures, including churches, the development of advocacy groups, alternative teaching practice methods and innovative responses to the limitations of the system (Walton, 2017).

As evident from the above discussion education for children with disabilities is a sector where the effects of apartheid are very evident. This is apparent in the segregation of learners on the basis of race, as well as disability. Thus, special schools during the apartheid regime operated predominantly according to two segregating criteria, race and disability, while schools that accommodated white learners with disabilities were very well-resourced, whilst the few schools for black learners with disabilities were under resourced (Chaterechera, 2020). Furthermore, during the apartheid years, very few black learners with disabilities attended local schools and also received little support or in many instances they did not attend school at all (Walton, 2017). After the political transformation, inclusivity and access to quality education for all learners became a priority for the South African government which was also influenced by the international movement to inclusive education.

2.6 Conceptualising inclusive education

The movement towards inclusive education can be traced back to the 1960s (Conway, 2017). However, the first global commitment towards Education for All (EFA) was made at an international conference in Jomtien, Thailand, in 1990 which included 155 countries

and representatives from 150 government and non-government organisations. The primary commitments made at the Jomtien Conference was that primary school education would be accessible to all learners (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation [UNESCO], 1990). Consequently, the Jomtien Conference, with the support of UNESCO, the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund and the World Bank, aimed to embrace and implement a new inclusive vision for basic education (Motitswe, 2016).

A second defining international milestone in the development of inclusive education was the Salamanca Statement issued in 1994 in Salamanca, Spain (UNESCO, 1994). The statement reaffirmed the commitment to Education for All. However, in addition, the statement called on signatory governments to ensure that their respective departments of education will adopt principles of inclusion offering all children mainstream education. Furthermore, the statement called on the schooling system to integrate learners irrespective of their intellectual, social, emotional, physical, linguistic or cultural backgrounds (Conway, 2017). The statement affirmed that integration was best achieved by inclusive, "full-service" schools. The Salamanca Statement further recognised that all-inclusive systems and schools are only possible with the co-operation and collaboration of teachers, parents, families, and volunteers committed to inclusion (UNESCO, 1994). This requires the commitment of communities to develop a positive environment supportive of inclusion of all learners into the education system (UNESCO, 1994).

Conceptualising inclusive education is complex, as multiple definitions exist and vary depending on context and availability of resources (Materechera, 2020; Nel, 2017). However, in the context of this study inclusive education can be defined as a dynamic process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners, by reducing barriers to and within the learning environment, and of seeing individual differences not as problems but as opportunities for enriching learning (DoE, 2001). Furthermore, according to Engelbrecht et al. (2015), inclusive education is underpinned by the principle of inclusion and can be described as a value and belief that view all people as equal.

It seems that there are two leading viewpoints globally on inclusive education, one that primarily focuses on the inclusion of learners with different kinds of disabilities (also called special needs) in mainstream education and the broader view that inclusion is a societal

issue (i.e., social inclusion) where inclusivity deals with diversity with regard to (dis)ability, race, religion, social class, socio-economic disadvantages, ethnicity, gender and academic achievement (Nel, 2017). These definitions give evidence that multiple views regarding inclusive education exist. In view of this, the two perspectives will be discussed and distinguished in order to gain a holistic picture and understanding of inclusive education.

2.6.1 The predominant "inclusion of children with disabilities" focus

This viewpoint is influenced by the Salamanca Statement (cf. 2.5), which asserted that all learners, including those with disabilities, should learn together, where possible, and that ordinary schools must recognise and respond to the diverse needs of their learners while also having a continuum of support and services to match those needs (Materechera, 2020). Thus, all educational policies should stipulate that the local school would be attended if the child did not have a disability (Ainscow, 2014; Ainscow, 2016; Conway, 2017; DoE, 2017). This discourse is in line with the Convention on the Rights of Children (CRC) aged 0 to 18 years of 1989 (United Nations [UN], 1989); the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child in 1999 (African Union, 1999); the International Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) (UN, 2006), which all affirm equal opportunity and the rights of children with disabilities to basic education without discrimination.

However, despite these internationally accepted conventions children with disabilities remain some of the most vulnerable populations as they are generally excluded from society and fully enjoying their basic human rights, and continue to have poor access to education, health services and future employment (Nel, Tlale et al., 2016). In addition, many of these children experience social, cultural and attitudinal obstacles and are particularly vulnerable to victimization, violence, abuse and exploitation. Furthermore, in many societies there is a belief that these children are some sort of punishment or bewitchment and are consequently rejected by parents and communities and hidden away (Ishmael, 2015).

2.6.2 The Social Inclusion focus

Ainscow (2014), and Booth and Ainscow (2011) assert that the aim of inclusive education should be to eliminate social exclusion that is a consequence of attitudes and responses

to diversity in race, social class, ethnicity, religion, gender and ability. Thus, social inclusion affirms the belief that education is a basic human right and the foundation for a more just society. This implies that inclusive education is about the development and transformation of schools, rather than an attempt to integrate vulnerable groups of learners into existing arrangements (Ainscow, 2014). Booth and Ainscow (2011) describes social inclusion as putting inclusive values into action. Thus, social inclusion recognises that intrinsic (special needs/disabilities) and societal and systemic (extrinsic) factors interact (Nel, 2017).

According to this viewpoint, inclusion should not be confined to the mainstreaming of children categorised as having special educational needs only (Engelbrecht et al., 2015). It is rather about enabling education structures, systems as well as teaching and learning methodologies to meet the needs of all learners (Materechera, 2020). This requires that the focus should not be about learners fitting into the system, but rather changing the system to include and accommodate learners with diverse learning needs. This emphasises that inclusion should focus on capacitating local neighbourhood mainstream schools to support the participation and learning of a diverse range of learners, which in this study refers to a full-service school (Booth, 2011).

According to Booth and Ainscow (2011) and Nel (2017), the notion that inclusive education only refers to one group (those with disabilities), while ‘‘social inclusion’’ refers to a different group, could encourage the belief that people with disabilities experience some kind of non-social exclusion which arises as a direct result of their impairment (Booth and Ainscow, 2011). Therefore, participation in education and society should not only be about prevailing over disabling features of a setting or system as this devalues them as people, since it can lead to ignoring other aspects of their identities that have to do with their background, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation or political beliefs (Ainscow, 2014).

Thus, the view that inclusion is about simply moving learners who have disabilities into mainstream schools can cause that social factors (discrimination, infrastructure, face, social class, gender, etc.) are not taken into account. Earlier I have indicated that social inclusion is based on inclusive values and about putting these values into action. A list of inclusive values has been outlined by Booth and Ainscow (2011), which includes equality, participation, community, respect for diversity and sustainability. In order to address social

exclusion, teachers and schools attempting to promote inclusion in their practice should integrate these values and put it into action in their policies, school culture and their practice (Booth and Ainscow, 2011).

Equality

Inequality, inequity, unfairness, and injustice can be regarded as forms of exclusion (Ismail, 2015). According to Wolhuter (2014), equality is about everyone being treated as of equal worth. This requires that children are not grouped between and within schools and classes, where hierarchies of worth are avoided. It is also concerned with the way schools are managed (Boateng, 2014). Equality in education means that every learner has the same opportunities to learn without ranking and labelling. This means meeting and respecting differences and accepting diversity. It is thus essential for the education system to provide equal opportunities to all the learners, regardless of the differences between them (García et al., 2020).

Participation

Participation is when people feel involved and accepted in activities (Vetoniemi & Kärnä, 2019). This links to the ideals of democracy and freedom. Participation is thus about being with and collaborating with others, as well as being actively engaged in learning and an involvement in decisions about one's life, including education (Tesfaye & Berhanu, 2015). However, it also entails the right of choice not to participate, to assert one's autonomy against the group by saying no. According to Vetoniemi and Kärnä (2019), full participation involves dialogue with others on the basis of mutual respect and setting aside differences of status and power (Vetoniemi & Kärnä, 2019).

Respect for diversity

An inclusive response to diversity assert that everyone belongs equally and takes pleasure in and respects the equal worth of others irrespective of their perceived difference (Possi & Milinga, 2017). Diversity refers to accepting similarity and difference amongst people while encompassing everyone.

Community

An inclusive view of community goes beyond attachment and obligation to family and friendships but to a broader companion feeling towards others (Mortiera et al., 2010). A culture which encourages collaboration is a basic building block of a community and is linked to taking responsibility as well as public service, citizenship, and moreover global citizenship through the recognition of global interdependence (Siu & Morash, 2014). The principal, teachers, learners, parents and local community form part of the school community. Consequently, schools as communities should be based on values and principles of partnership and collaboration. In an inclusive school, collaboration between all stakeholders will ensure the successful implementation of inclusive school communities. Gross et al. (2015) mention that an inclusive school community should strive to provide a model of what it means to be a responsible and active citizen whose rights are respected, not just in school, but also outside school in the community. Thus, establishing and developing communities of practice where all relevant role players are involved allows an understanding and recognition of learning processes.

It is evident in the above discussion that multiple perspectives of inclusive education exist globally. Therefore, in order to fully understand what is happening in classrooms, it is important to look at inclusive education from a South African perspective.

2.7 Inclusive education in South Africa

From a South African perspective, inclusion is viewed as being value-based and about community, rights and compassion, as well as belonging and respect (Muthukrishna & Engelbrecht, 2018). As mentioned earlier previously special schools were admitting learners according to rigidly applied categories. The categorisation system allowed only those learners with organic, medical disabilities access to education and support programmes in these schools. This was followed by individualistic intervention roles allocated to mainly health professionals (Nel, Tlale et al., 2016). Furthermore, placements in a special school or class were very often determined along the lines of racial segregation (Conway, 2017).

In the 1990s, South Africa started to view disabilities more holistically. Learning difficulties went from being seen as a ‘problem’ within the individual to recognition of the relationship between individuals’ learning difficulties and the environment that they were interacting in (Swart & Pettipher, 2016). This prompted a need for change in the system and policies

to promote equity and accommodating all leaners' needs in the education system. The Department of Education acknowledged that changes had to be made to the provision of education and training so that it would be sensitive and responsive to the diverse learning needs of all learners (DOE, 2001).

Consequently, post 1994, the South African government developed a vision for an education system based on equity, human rights and human capital development (Engelbrecht et al., 2016). All education policies and legislation developed after political transformation were built on the *Constitution of South Africa* (1996) which affirms the fundamental inclusive principles of human dignity, the achievement of equality and the advancement of human rights and freedoms, freedom from unfairly discrimination, and the fundamental right to basic education. Furthermore, the *South African Schools Act* 84 of 1996 also underpins the constitution and all subsequent education policies. Important policies and legislation relevant to the establishment of inclusive education in South Africa which were developed include: the *South Africa Schools Act* 84 (1996) and White Paper on the rights of persons with disabilities (2016), Building an Inclusive Education and Training System, which was released in July 2001 (DoE, 2001).

In October 1996, the Ministry appointed a National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training (NCSNET) and a National Committee on Education Support Services (NCESS) to make recommendations on how inclusive education should be implemented. Following the NCESS and NSCNET report, the Education White Paper 6 (EWP6) was drafted and accepted in 2001, outlining the strategies and levers for establishing an inclusive education and training system in the country (DoE, 2001). These policies had a positive impact on inclusive education and practices, and philosophies of inclusion that were introduced into the South African education system from 1996 in terms of equality and human rights and human resource development (Wium & Louw, 2015).

2.7.1 POLICY DEVELOPMENT

2.7.1.1 White Paper on the rights of persons with disabilities

The White Paper on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (WPRPD) is a policy that was intended to hasten transformation and reparation regarding the full inclusion, integration and equality for persons with disabilities (Department of Social Development [DSD], 2016). According to the South African Human Rights Commission ([SAHRC], (2013-

2017), the WPRPD was launched in 2016 by the DSD to offer clarity on several issues comprising the development of standard operational measures for mainstreaming disability. It also sets out the norms and standards in terms of which discriminatory barriers should be removed and it broadly outlines stakeholder responsibilities.

Moreover, the WPRPD was developed over a period of time in consultation with organisations of and for persons with disabilities, government departments, municipalities, public entities, the private sector and civil society at large, as well as the SAHRC (DSD, 2016). The policy recognises the rights of persons with disabilities by accepting that not all people with disabilities are the same, and that personal situations, gender, age, sexuality, religious and cultural backgrounds, geographical location, requires different responses and by eliminating inequitable barriers to access and participation as well as making sure that universal design informs access and participation in the planning, budgeting and service delivery value chain of all programmes (DSD, 2016).

It was also indicated that there is a need for changes to be made to the provision of education and training to ensure that it was responsive and sensitive to the diverse range of learning needs (Motitswe, 2017. As a result of WPRPD, the EWP6 was drafted to ensure that all South Africans have equal access to educational and social opportunities and that education should be made available to all persons with or without disabilities (Mahlo, 2011). Thus, the WPRPD resulted in steps being taken to ensure that people with disabilities have the same rights and responsibilities as any other citizen in South Africa (DSD, 2016).

2.7.1.2 NCESS and NCSNET report

The National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training (NCSNET) and the National Committee for Education Support Services (NCESS) were appointed by the then Minister of Education in 1996 to investigate and make recommendations on all aspects of ‘special needs’ and support services in education and training in South Africa (DoE, 1997). The focus of the investigation was on the development of education in order to ensure that the system becomes more responsive to the diverse needs of all learners (Makhalemele &Nel, 2014). A key recommendation of the 1997 report of the NCSNET and NCESS was that holistic and integrated learner support through inter-sectorial

collaboration and community-led support systems focusing on preventative and developmental approaches must be provided (Makhalemele & Nel, 2014).

The report acknowledged that all learners may either permanently or temporarily encounter or experience barriers to learning and development. It also emphasised that learners who have historically been neglected in the system must be included in one education system; including learners with disabilities who may need to use specialised equipment or assistive devices to access the curriculum and participate in the learning process; learners who experience some form of learning breakdown as a result of a particular barrier; and learners who are at risk for personal and social reasons (Engelbrecht et al., 2015). Furthermore, the report emphasised that barriers to learning and development can occur within all aspects of the system and curriculum, including centres of learning, the education system, and the broader social context (Engelbrecht et al., 2015; Walton, 2015).

Consequently, the NCSNET and NCESS report supported the recognition that a range of needs exists among learners and within the education system which must all be met if effective learning and development is to be provided and sustained (Lebesa, 2015). In recognising this, it follows that the education system must be structured and function in such a way that it can accommodate a diversity of learner needs and system needs (Murungi, 2015). Walton (2015) argues that it is when the education system fails to provide for and accommodate such diversity that learning breakdown takes place and learners are excluded. Amongst some of the factors that were found to be placing learners at risk, including learners with disabilities, were issues of an inflexible curriculum, negative and harmful attitudes, language barriers, inadequate support provisions and lack of enabling and protective legislation policy (DoE, 1997).

2.7.1.3 Factors placing learners at risk

According to Elphick and Elphick (2015) effective learning is associated with and reliant on the social and emotional well-being of the learner. Particular conditions may arise within the social, economic and political environment in which the learner lives which can impact negatively on a learner's social and emotional well-being. This can place the learner at risk to experience barriers to learning (DoE, 1997). Such factors either impact directly on the learner or on his/her family or community (Ainscow & Booth, 2011).

2.7.1.4 Negative and harmful attitudes

Negative attitudes towards difference seem to remain a precarious barrier to effective learning and development (Khan & Khan, 2017). Discriminatory attitudes towards learners ensuing from prejudice on the basis of race, class, gender, culture, disability, religion, ability, sexual preference and other characteristics can result in causing barriers to learning when such attitudes are directed towards learners (Huskin, 2018). Negative attitudes toward learners manifest themselves in the labelling of learners, such as 'drop outs', 'repeaters' or 'slow learners'. It is critical to recognise the impact which this kind of labelling has on a learner's self-esteem. However, the most serious consequence of such labelling results when it is linked to placement in a separated education environment and the learner is excluded from the general education system (Materechera, 2020; Walton, 2017).

In some instances, learners are categorised and placed in a separate learning environment merely because they are labelled as belonging to a group of learners for which a certain kind of educational placement exists. It is important to note that in the school setting, teachers often respond negatively to the inclusion in their class of a child with a disability (Materechera, 2020). Such attitudes are aggravated by a lack of awareness and inadequate training of teachers to deal with the potential needs of a learner with disability (Bouillet & Mirošević, 2015). In general, it appears as if learners with disabilities are undervalued in the learning environment and this means that they are not recognised and they are not actively involved in societal activities. However, Walton (2017) argues that the attitude of teachers sometimes depends on the availability of relevant resources needed for including learners with disabilities in their classrooms. Without the appropriate resources teachers are not eager to accommodate learners with disabilities as they believe teaching and learning cannot be effective then.

2.7.1.5 An inflexible curriculum

The inflexibility of a curriculum which places obstacles in the way of meeting diverse learning needs can be viewed as one of the most serious barriers to learning and development (Oliva, 2016). For example, when learners are unable to access the curriculum, learning difficulties can occur. For a curriculum to be more flexible the following components need to be adapted in order to accommodate all learners: the

style and tempo of teaching and learning, what is taught, the way the classroom is managed and organised, as well as materials and equipment which are used in the learning and teaching process (DoE, 2001; Bouillet & Mirošević, 2015). Furthermore teachers, often use teaching styles that may not meet the needs of some of the learners. This could be the result of inadequate training. For example, the pace of teaching may only accommodate learners who learn quickly, but it can also limit the initiative and involvement of learners with high levels of ability. Moreover, if learners with a disability are not given the opportunity to fulfil their personal needs in the educational setting without additional assistance it can confound their learning. In many instances learners are also excluded from certain aspects of the curriculum as a result of ignorance or prejudice (Ainscow & Booth, 2011). For example, learners with physical disabilities are often prevented from playing sport or are not given the opportunity to do so (Al Salim, 2017). In addition, what is taught may often be inappropriate to the learner's life situation making learning difficult and ultimately contributing to barriers to learning (Bouillet & Mirošević, 2015).

2.7.1.6 Language barriers

A further area that can cause barriers to learning are the LoLT of the school (Possi & Milinga, 2017). Possi and Malinga (2017) point out that the inherited language-in-education policy in South Africa has been fraught with tensions, contradictions and sensitivities, and is underpinned by racial and linguistic discrimination. The reason for this is that teaching and learning for many South African learners takes place through a language which is not their first language (Nel & Theron, 2008) which often leads to significant linguistic difficulties contributing to barriers to learning (Yahaya et al., 2010). Furthermore, teachers often experience difficulties in developing appropriate support mechanisms for English second language learners who struggle with the LoLT (Conway, 2017). As a result, many of these learners are identified as slow learners, or without having a learning or intellectual ability (Nel & Theron, 2008).

2.7.1.7 Inadequate support provisions

In the context of this study, where the focus is on learning support, inadequate support provisions is an important factor to address. Oliva (2016) asserts that mechanisms and processes are needed to enable the the education system, including teachers and

learners, to minimise, remove and prevent barriers which may exist or arise If no or inadequate support services, it will be difficult to overcome barriers to learning and development and consequently learning needs cannot be fully met (Adewumi & Mosito, 2019). Thus, inappropriate or inadequate support services may contribute to learning breakdown and/or exclusion. For example, where support services is overemphasises the problems within the learner rather than also taking systemic barriers into consideration – such as poor teaching methods – the intervention may intensify learning breakdown. Contributing to this is that, in the past, mechanisms and processes of assessment lead to categorisation by disability or learning difficulty rather than focusing on addressing learning needs (Eloff & Kgwete, 2007).

Although some attempts have been made to try to change the practices of the medical model (c.f. 2.7.1), which focused on the deficit-within-child, and to facilitate more effective needs identification, it is important to mention that this model still impact on identification, assessment and support procedures and processes (Makhalemele & Nel, 2016). For example, the use of intelligence tests that were and continue to be routinely administered by some departments, are areas of concern as it leads to labelling and categorisation of learners (Nel, 2018). Problems associated with this, according to Elphick and Elphick (2012), are that because of these tests, many learners are still placed in a different class and given LSEN numbers which results in exclusion and discrimination in many instances.

2.7.1.8 Lack of enabling and protective legislation and policy

Many of the barriers to learning and development discussed above do not merely arise from problems occurring in the education system or in the wider society (DoE, 1997).Policies and legislation governing the education system and regulating the societies can directly or indirectly facilitate the existence of such barriers. Where legislation or policy fails to protect learners from discrimination or perpetuates inequalities, it directly contributes to the existence or maintenance of such barriers (DoE, 1997).

2.7.2 The Education White Paper 6 (EWP6)

The EWP6 is a policy which resulted from the NCSNET and NCESS report. This paper aimed to outline the provision of educational opportunities, in particular for those learners

who experience or have experienced barriers to learning and development or who had dropped out of learning because of the inability of the education and training system to accommodate their learning needs (DoE, 2001). Thus, the EWP6 (DOE, 2001) emphasises that inclusive education is about supporting all learners, teachers and the education system as a whole so that the full range of learning needs can be met. Moreover, the focus is on overcoming barriers within the system and providing an opportunity for children to be members of a society where labels and separation do not feature (Dreyer, 2012). The focus is thus no longer on the individual learner to fit in, but on the potential of the system to transform so that individual differences amongst learners can be accommodated (Yorke, 2010).

The EPW6 (DoE, 2001) aims to develop a flexible curriculum to ensure educational access to all learners, promoting the rights and responsibilities of parents, teachers and learners, as well as providing effective development programmes for teachers (e.g., workshops on inclusion), and fostering holistic and integrated support provision through inter-sectorial collaboration, i.e., social-workers, South African Police Services (SAPS), nurses, etc. (DoE, 2001). Moreover, it indicates how learners with disabilities should be identified and supported, assessed and incorporated into special, full-service and ordinary schools (cf. 2.6.2.4.1) in an incremental manner, and to introduce strategies and interventions that will assist teachers to cope with a diversity of learning and teaching needs in classrooms (Walton, 2015).

Moreover, inclusive education aims to systematically move away from segregating learners according to categories of disabilities as an organising principle for institutions, i.e., slow learners, special learners, etc. It bases the provision of education for learners with disabilities on the intensity of support needed to overcome the debilitating impact of those disabilities i.e. mild – severe support (DoE, 2001). It also places an emphasis on supporting learners through inclusive full-service schools (DoE, 2001). However, Engelbrecht et al. (2015) expressed concerns with regards to placement of learners in different schools (mainstream, full-service and special schools) as this could promote the medical-deficit model (cf. 2.7.1).

2.7.3 Different schools

The South African school system has a history of many divisions. These divisions were not only based on race, gender and religion, but also ability (disabled/able-bodied). As indicated by Mudau (2004), the South African school system still seems to be divided into two systems, namely, mainstream schools and special needs schools. As a way to bridge the gap, full-service schools were proposed as a way of achieving redress for those who were historically marginalised by the school system, as well as transforming mainstream schools into inclusive schools (Mdunyelwa 2020). In this section I aim to describe the difference between the three different schools and their roles within an inclusive education system.

2.7.3.1 Mainstream/ordinary schools

Mainstream schools are also referred to as ordinary schools. These schools primarily meet the needs of learners who do not have special educational needs. Therefore, they are not specially organised to provide for learners with disabilities (DoE, 2001). Mainstream schools focus more on academics as compared to a special needs school (Murungi, 2015). Special needs schools refer to schools that are equipped to deliver a specialised education programme to learners who require highly intensive educational support. These schools are required to provide academic programmes for children with severe disabilities (DoE, 2001) (cf. 2.6.2.4.3).

According to the report of Annual Surveys for Ordinary Schools (2016), there are 24 532 ordinary schools in the country. The majority of these schools were in Gauteng (471), followed by KwaZulu-Natal with (163) schools. However, since the inception of the EWP6 (DoE, 2001) teachers in mainstream classroom were also expected to provide support to learners with a wide range of learning needs, including learners with disabilities, in their classrooms. Thus, the DoE (currently the DBE) aimed at transforming primary schools into full-service schools (DoE, 2001).

2.7.3.2 Full-service schools

One of the primary strategies of EWP6 was the transformation of mainstream primary schools into inclusive full-service schools (DoE, 2001). In 2010 the Guidelines for full-service schools was published by the Department of Basic Education (DoE, 2010a).

EWP6 defined a full-service school as a school that will be equipped and supported to provide for the full range of learning needs among all learners (DoE, 2001). It was asserted in both EWP6 and the guideline document (Mkhuma et al., 2014) that full-service schools will be supported by the DBE with the necessary physical, material and human resources, as well as with the professional development of teachers to accommodate a diverse range of learner needs and become models for inclusion which other schools could emulate (Adewumi & Mosito, 2019; Engelbrecht et al. 2016).

However, Walton (2015) states that the progress of transforming mainstream schools into full-service schools was initially slow and by 2010 only eight schools country wide had completed their transition. By 2016, at least 715 full-service schools have been established throughout the country (Makhalemele & Nel, 2016).

In line with the principles of collaboration (cf. 2.6.4), it was envisioned that full-service schools would also co-ordinate area clusters for inclusive education by supporting surrounding schools and teachers in shifting towards more inclusive practices (Mkhuma et al., 2014). Furthermore, full-service schools should also have a site-based (school level) support through a functioning ILST, support neighbouring schools in transforming towards inclusive education; collaborate closely with special schools serving as resource centres in exchanging knowledge and skills; and work closely with the DBST (Engelbrecht et al., 2016). In addition, Mkhuma et al.Mkhuma et al. (2014) indicated three ways in which inclusive full-service schools can be utilised to benefit the communities, namely, readiness to learn, extended learning opportunities and access to health care.

Readiness to learn

Some learners in certain communities lack the necessary readiness to be in the formal classroom and fully participate in the learning process. This could be a result of parents not having the skill to stimulate their child in acquiring the basic perceptual, motoric and language skills that are needed for early childhood teaching (Zimmerman, 2017). To address this issue, full-service schools can assist in identifying barriers and provide support to learners who experience barriers to learning early, and be inclusive early childhood learning centres that could assist these learners and their parents, thus fulfilling a preventative task in preparing the learners for formal schooling (Mkhuma et al., 2014).

Extended learning opportunities

In the current educational system, contact time appears not to be adequate for learners to accumulate all the knowledge and skills they need in order to succeed (Mkhuma et al., 2014). Consequently, full-service schools can extend schools hours and add after-school programmes that are integrated with the curriculum (Mkhuma et al., 2014). During this time, additional learning support can be provided and programmes with regard to social skills and cultural experiences can also be presented (Donohue & Bornman, 2014).

Access to health care

According to Mkhuma et al. (2014), some children are challenged with physical and/or psychosocial problems which result in them not performing well academically. A majority of these learners need health services and counselling. Therefore, full-service schools can provide on-site health clinics together with trained health officials to assist with these health concerns of learners.

2.7.3.3 Special schools

According to Mdunyelwa(2020), special-needs schools refer to schools that are equipped to deliver a specialised education programme to learners who require highly intensive educational support. These schools are required to provide academic programmes for children with severe disabilities (DoE, 2001). According to the Guidelines for Special Schools (DBE, 2014), the inclusive education model depends strongly on resource centres (special schools) (for learners with a high intensity of support needs) to offer professional support to neighbouring schools, including full-service schools (for learners with a moderate amount of support needs). Therefore, it should also be part of the support service provided by DBSTs (cf. 2.8.1.1).

Even so, Mdunyelwa(2020) highlight that special schools themselves must be strengthened in order to provide quality education for their own learners, before they can offer support to other schools. They must operate in terms of principles underpinning inclusive education by promoting full development of human potential, instilling a sense of dignity and strengthen human rights of all learners. Thus, special schools must promote inclusion and participation of all learners in all academic, social and sporting activities in the school (Laauwen, 2009).

Currently in South Africa, learners can only attend these schools once they have been assessed by the process as outlined in the Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS) policy (cf. 2.8.1.4) at a mainstream school, and should only be placed in a special school specialising in the accommodation of their disability (Mdunyelwa, 2020). It is important to mention that teaching and learning in special schools is determined by the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) as well as the Differentiated Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (DCAPS) which explains the adaptations deemed appropriate to enable learners with disabilities access to the curriculum (Mkhuma et al., 2014).

Access to special schools for learners with disabilities in rural areas remain problematic. These schools are usually a long distance away from the learners' homes, which means that they need to either travel far distances or stay in hostels. Consequently, many of these children do not attend school or are admitted into mainstream classes without the appropriate resources and equipment (Mudau, 2004). Furthermore, families often complain about expensive school, hostel and transport fees that they cannot afford and about seeing their children only on holidays and missing them (Mdunyelwa, 2020). Laauwen (2009) mentions the following factors as possible obstacles that prevent special schools from offering quality education and support:

- teachers who are not qualified to teach learners with intrinsic barriers to learning;
- high rate of child abuse and bullying in hostels;
- neither teachers, nor principals or the DBSTs and provincial officials seem to understand the EWP6 and how to execute its directives; and
- a lack of resources and assistive devices.

In the next section, the challenges to the inclusion of learners with intrinsic barriers to learning will be discussed.

2.7.4 Challenges with regard to the inclusion of learners with intrinsic barriers to learning

Although South African teachers seem to favour inclusion in principle they believe that the South African educational system does not have the resources needed to enable

them to implement inclusive education (Naicker, 2013). Post 1994 education policy documents set out a vision of what an ideal education system might look like based on the principles of inclusion, equality and human rights development. It has been twenty years since the publication of South Africa's inclusive policy on education, yet the vision of a truly inclusive education system in South Africa has not been fully realised (Murungi, 2015). Literature has indicated the complexities, dilemmas, constraints and possibilities that variously impact on the implementation of inclusive education internationally and in South Africa (Adewumi & Mosito, 2019). In this section I intend to discuss some of the obstacles and challenges which hinder the successful implementation of inclusive education in South Africa.

According to Govender (2018), the tensions between the contents of policy, systemic realities which includes funding constraints, teachers' inadequate knowledge and training, poor infrastructure, an inflexible curriculum (cf. 2.6.2.2.3), and negative attitudes towards inclusion (cf. 2.6.2.2.2) have become stumbling blocks for an inclusive system. Ndimande (2016), further refers to other inequities that include class, gender and geography, the limited availability of appropriately educated teachers and ineffective and inadequate teaching and learning resources in mainstream schools. Further, funding constraints affect the availability of resources, whereas negative school cultures influence attitudes towards difference and disability negatively and still complicate the implementation of EPW6 (Naicker, 2013). Furthermore, learners with disabilities also face some challenges with regard to social and infrastructural issues (Ishmael, 2015).

Learners with disabilities experience many social challenges such as being feared, gazed at, criticised, yelled at, hated, dishonoured, harassed, given labels and impolite comments (Limaye, 2016). Challenges for learners with disabilities with regard to infrastructure include poor door designs and doorways as characterised by door handles not at the correct height, inaccessible doorways, slippery floors, high chalk boards (if they need to write on it), as well as tables and chairs in the classroom or in the dining halls which do not accommodate learners with physical disabilities. In addition, there are spaces which are too small for wheelchairs, and toilet seats and hand basins, which are not at the correct heights or user friendly to one with a physical disability (Ishmael, 2015). From the above discussions, it is evident that these challenges may be caused by a lack of understanding of inclusive education.

2.7.4.1 Lack of understanding

A lack in fully understanding the concept of inclusive education can be an obstacle to putting it into practice (Nyangaria & Ordho, 2015). Sanagi (2016) points out that teachers' misunderstanding of inclusive education will not lead to decent practices which may in turn lead to exclusion, thus making the environment hostile for learners who experience barriers to learning. Teachers need a knowledge base for inclusive education and skills for teaching diversity in the classroom. This includes an understanding of obstacles in order to alter and adapt teaching methodology in the classroom (Parveen & Qounsar, 2018). They also have to understand the different needs of the learners in their classrooms, to identify their difficulties and to be able to give support to all their learners in order for them to learn (Sanagi, 2016).

Parveen and Qounsar (2018) suggest that making sure that newly qualified teachers have a basic understanding of inclusive education is the greatest investment that can be made for successful implementation of inclusive education and practices. In addition, Ireri et al. (2020) indicate that efforts with regard to the implementation of inclusive education are unsuccessful in many countries due to a lack of organisational capability to implement and sustain the practices of their inclusive education policy. Futhermore, Kofidou and Mantzikos (2017) assert that teachers' attitudes towards and perceptions about learners with disabilities are sometimes negative which subsequently leads to practicing the former medical-deficit model (c.f. 2.7.1) and labelling of leaners who experience barriers to learning. Moreover, because people and other children do not understand disabilities and how inclusion works, these learners may face violence, abuse or social isolation from their non-disabled peers. A lack of understanding and negative attitudes towards learner differences result in discrimination and prejudice in the school and the society which can manifest itself as a critical barrier to the implementation of inclusive education (Ireri et al., 2020).

Also, cultural attitudes about the significance of educating children with disabilities can affect whether or not parents decide to send them to school. In many developing countries around the world, children with disabilities often do not attend school because it is thought that they cannot learn or will be disruptive to other learners (Donohue & Bornman, 2014). One can argue that the underlining cause of the aforementioned challenges lies with ambiguity with regard to the epistemologies of inclusive education, especially at school

level. Epistemology has been defined as the theory of knowledge, especially with regards to methods, scope and the distinction between justified beliefs or opinion (Mbiza, 2018).

As highlighted above, Nel et al. (2015) have indicated that teachers still seem to not have adequate knowledge on inclusive education, let alone skills to support learners with various barriers to learning in their classrooms.

2.7.4.2 Lack of training

According to Nel, Tlale et al. (2016), 65% of mainstream teachers have no formal qualification to provide support to learners who experience barriers to learning, which in return leads to feelings of incompetence. This is affirmed by another study by Pappas et al. (2018), where teachers indicated that they did not have the necessary skills and competencies to handle learners who experience various barriers to learning in their classrooms. Most teachers in a study by Eloff and Kgwete (2007) also mentioned that they did not receive any formal training on addressing learners' needs in a diverse classroom, as most of them only had diplomas and degrees for mainstream education. Mahlo (2011), Mbiza (2018), as well as Mfuthwana and Dreyer (2018) report that teachers feel unprepared to deal with diverse classrooms because their pre-service training did not focus on assisting learners with diverse learning needs.

2.7.4.3 Continued separation

Walton (2015) declares that teachers' continued feelings of uncertainty regarding the implementation of inclusive education increases as they become more concerned with teaching subject matter and completing curriculum requirements rather than diversifying instruction and developing support strategies to meet a range of learner needs (Walton, 2015. Naicker (2013) asserts that the reason for this is that mainstream classroom teachers struggle to accommodate learners who experience barriers to learning. Consequently, learners who have been identified within the school context as experiencing barriers to learning are still placed in separate classrooms and labelled in medical-deficit terms (Walton, 2017).

Eloff and Kgwete (2007) explain that teachers attribute this, among others, to not being trained to provide specialised support, too little time to attend to all the individual learners who experience barriers to leaning, too many learners in a class and a lack of learning

support resources and learning material. Therefore, they attempt to provide what they believe is the best possible learning environment for learners who experience barriers to learning by placing them in a separate classroom with teachers who they believe have some training and experience in teaching these learners (Naicker, 2013). In addition, teachers seem to prefer to rather refer learners with disabilities to what they regard as well-qualified health professionals for support and placement in separate LSEN classes (Mahlo, 2011; Makhalemele & Nel, 2016). This confirms that the medical-deficit model is still a chosen model for support in classrooms. An important principle of inclusive education is that the medical-deficit model should not be the predominant approach anymore, as it can promote a discriminatory practice of stigmatisation and labelling (DoE, 2001; Nel & Grosser, 2016).

Chaterechera (2020) furthermore affirms that schools especially opt for separate classrooms for learners who have neurological, physical and sensory disabilities, as well as learners with learning disabilities. These classes are called classrooms for learners with special educational needs' (LSEN classes). Before learners are placed in these classrooms they are primarily assessed by health professionals (usually within the DBST). If the district office approves placement in the LSEN class, an LSEN number is awarded (Conway, 2017; Walton, 2017). This could be regarded as a form of exclusion.

The possible reason for the continued application of a medical-deficit model practice can be that teachers are struggling to change their perceptions of learners with disabilities, as well as transforming their traditional classroom practices to more inclusive practices that reflect acceptance, participation and social change (Naicker, 2013).This statement is supported by Conway's (2017) study, where teachers pointed out that they had not yet received the promised training in the implementation of inclusive education, learning support material and adaptive equipment from the Provincial DoE as well as from the Local Departmental District Office. In addition, learning support material for learners with disabilities and especially equipment for learners with physical disabilities are not provided by the department due to limited financial resources (Conway, 2017). There is also limited literature on clear monitoring and mentoring processes regarding the further development of the schools towards an inclusive system in South Africa.

2.7.4.4 Limited resources

Although the desegregation of schools had been addressed with policies, differentiated access to schooling still exists (Chambers, 2018). Chambers (2018) states that learners from middle to higher income socio-economic backgrounds are concentrated at former Model C schools which used to be well-resourced institutions for white learners, while learners from the lower working class and rural poor are still concentrated at pre-1994 poorly resourced institutions. Chambers (2018) further declares that poor quality of learning and teaching still characterises many of the poorly resourced schools, especially in the rural areas.

Furthermore, Ainscow (2016) postulate that the poorest attend the lowest performing schools, while the upper class attends the highest performing schools. Moreover, Fourie and Hooijer (2018) assert the fact that equal funding of education remains a key priority for the government schools, as the charging of school fees and the control of schools by SGBs have enabled the historically privileged schools to further develop teaching and learning resources and pursue excellence more than those who were previously disadvantaged. Thus, it seems that equity of opportunity and outcomes are now determined by social class and geography in contrast to racial discrimination in the past (Ainscow , 2016). Consequently, the low-achieving and the least advantaged schools fall progressively further and further behind their high-performing counterparts which does not foster equity.

Learners with physical disabilities are also faced with the challenge of having inadequate infrastructure such as a lack of lifts in some school buildings and no access for learners in wheelchairs to some classrooms and bathrooms, or slippery and uneven floors (Nel et al., 2015).

2.8 Collaboration

Collaboration is defined as the process of two or more parties working together hand-in-hand to achieve a common objective and goal (Adams et al., 2016). Inclusive school communities require that there is a shared accountability amongst all school professionals, while adapting organisational structures with regard to professional roles and school practices to promote collaborative decision making and innovative problem solving (Khoaeane & Naong, 2015). Ainscow et al. (2016), affirm that the collaboration

between parents, schools, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), local and regional districts are important for implementation of a successful inclusive education. Effective collaboration is achieved when all parties attempt to reach the same goals. Therefore, collaboration must be voluntary, and about sharing resources, being accountable in decision-making, aiming toward communal goals, accepting each other's roles, the capability to work together, and lastly, trust and respect for each other (Khoaeane & Naong, 2015). As collaboration is significant in an inclusive environment when considering practices and exchanging knowledge it has been used as a key approach to generate creativity and innovation for creating effective educational programmes (Adams et al., 2016). Therefore, collaboration among all stakeholders is important for providing the best possible support to learners who experience barriers to learning.

A collaborative approach amongst teachers and parents promotes more effective decision making which will result in learners attaining successful learning and reaching their potential (Reed et al., 2012). Teachers report that teaching learners with disabilities in the general classroom adds stress and contributes to negative attitudes towards the implementation of inclusive education (Galaterou & Antoniou, 2017). Thus, when working with learners who have special educational needs collaboration is essential to lighten the workload (Adams et al., 2016).

In addition, Ainscow (2016) suggested a strategy which could improve the development of equity and inclusive practices in schools called "collaborative inquiry". This approach is a process of knowledge generation that occurs when a researcher and practitioner (i.e., teacher) aim at producing new knowledge about ways on how inclusive values can better be realised in future (Ainscow et al., 2016). This strategy requires a reorientation of values from all stakeholders, for example, teachers need to move away from the dominant view that teaching is a "personal and private activity", but rather adopt the "more risky view" that it is an activity that can be continuously improved. At the same time, researchers must not undervalue the knowledge teachers acquire in their own classrooms. In this way, researchers will be able to recognise the potential of personal knowledge as it becomes transformed into professional knowledge (Ainscow et al., 2016). This knowledge could be used to support learners in classrooms. In the next section learner support is discussed, as well as the transition from the medical-deficit model of supporting learners to a more socio-ecological model of supporting learners.

2.9 Learner support

The term ‘learner support’ and ‘inclusive education’ are interdependent (Kratochvílová, 2014). Learner support intends to solve barriers to inclusion and recognises the potential of learners to grow and reach the highest levels of independence (Booth & Ainscow, 2011). Moreover, it refers to how learners with disabilities should be acknowledged, identified, assessed and included into the education system, as well as introducing strategies and interventions that will assist teachers to cope with a diversity of learning and teaching needs in classrooms (Engelbrecht et al., 2016).

Yet, learner support is a complex concept which carries a lot of meanings (Makhalemele & Nel, 2014). According to the EWP6 (DoE, 2001), an inclusive education and training system is an organised system that aims to provide various levels and kinds of support to learners and teachers in schools. Fourie and Hooijer (2018) assert that inclusive education is about taking into account the effects and influences of all the systems (e.g., micro, meso, exo, chrono and macro systems) (cf. 2.2) which make up a particular child’s life world. Therefore, learner support should be viewed from the socio-ecological model (Mahlo & Hugo, 2013) (cf. 2.7.2).

This implies a paradigmatic shift away from the focus of support as a segregating medical model approach towards a more inclusive model (cf. 2.6.1) of support with the underpinning principle of respecting human rights (i.e., socio-ecological model) (cf. 2.7.2) (Hay 2003; Swart & Pettipher, 2016). Therefore, it is important, within an inclusive education environment, that learner support should be an on-going process of assessing, identifying, and supporting and that a learner’s background with regard to family, the school and even aspects of community are taken into account when addressing barriers to learning (Nel, Nel et al., 2016). This means that teachers need to employ different strategies to support, accommodate and address different learning needs and learning styles in diverse classrooms. At this stage it is important to mention two different models that mainly determine learning support in South Africa, namely, the medical-deficit model and the socio-ecological model (Nel, 2018).

2.9.1 Medical model

According to Nel, Nel et al. (2016), the medical model leads to learners experiencing barriers to learning – especially intrinsic – to being categorised based on their medical

condition. Within the medical model, disability is mainly seen as a departure from human normality with a subsequent restriction in the capability to perform tasks. This approach promotes an understanding of disability primarily as an individual condition – and consequently the labelling of a learner with special needs (LSEN) (Engelbrecht et al., 2015). Yorke (2010) and (Nel, 2018) express concerns that the medical-deficit model allows educational difficulties to be explained solely in terms of learner deficits, thus distracting attention from systemic, social and environmental influences.

With this model, leaners are diagnosed mainly by a health specialist (e.g., medical doctor, speech therapist, psychiatrist or psychologist) and then mostly placed in a special or specialised education environment. Thus, learners' symptoms are predominantly seen as inherent to the learner, i.e., "deficit-within-child" and the impact of systemic and socio-environmental factors are not fully acknowledged (Nel, 2018). Furthermore, emphasis is placed on the learners' deficits as opposed to their abilities (Hay, 2008). This implies that learners are being discriminated against on the basis of their disability. This model can therefore be seen as discriminatory, because it segregates and labels learners, as "normal" and "special" "handicapped" or "slow" (Nel, Nel et al., 2016).

It is however, important to note that medical information cannot be ignored when assessing and supporting learners, but should not be the only focus when a support plan is designed (Nel, Nel et al, 2016). Medical records can also be used to assist teachers with regard to identifying some barriers to learning, i.e., learner with visual impairment, hearing impairments, epilepsy, etc. It is essential for teachers to take learners' socio-economic and environmental backgrounds into account in order to successfully support those who experience barriers to learning.

2.9.2 Socio-ecological model

The socio-ecological model is in contrast to the medial-model were problems are viewed to be "within" the learner. This model is based on Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological perspective that people do not live in isolation from their external environment and surroundings, and that external social, systemic and environmental factors (e.g., family, friends, poverty, crime, etc.) also have an influence on a person (Nel, 2018; Seidman, 2011). Mahlo (2011) affirms that learners do not live in isolation from their surrounding

environment, and that the surrounding systems (teachers, curriculum, school and peers) also determine the learners' academic success.

According to Hay (2008), the bio-ecological framework attempts to understand the context and the dynamic relationship between the individual, context and external environment on different levels (i.e., micro, macro, meso and exo). Each of these relationships has the potential to help or hinder the individual's development. Thus, understanding the impact of relationships between individuals and systems provides opportunities for enhancement of the positive relationships and reduction of the barriers to learning and development (Swart & Pettipher, 2016) This implies that barriers to learning should be addressed through a holistic and integrated approach, and individual characteristics of a child's barriers to learning are described against the background of the social, community and economic factors unique to a child's life world (Motitswe, 2017).

This model is consequently based on the principles of: identifying learners' strengths as opposed to only focusing on the weaknesses; factors in the learners' environment and community are taken into consideration; and teachers and parents are regarded as key role players in screening, identification, assessment and support of learners (Nel, Nel et al., 2016).

Swart and Pettipher (2011), point out that Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological model suggests that there are diverse levels of interrelating systems that cause alteration, growth and development which must be considered during the learner support process. Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological model of human development has advanced from a blend of ecological and systems theories, and can be used to clarify development and the difficult, causal progressions included in change (Spies, 2013). This model refers to the interdependence between diverse settings and comprises persons and the physical environment in a formed system (Donald et al., 2010). It accepts the importance of roles that parents, extended family, friendships, peer group, teachers, community and wider government structures can play in giving support to learners with intrinsic barriers to learning (Pieterse, 2010). It also proposes that the support experiences of learners are impacted by different characteristics such as time, contexts and change which influence every learner in a different way (Pieterse, 2010).

The process involves interaction, for example, between the teacher and learner, teachers and parents, various teachers within the school, and teachers and management structures (Spies, 2013). Person refers to an individual and his or her characteristics, which are primarily biologically founded (Spies, 2013). Context is the environment that consists of four interconnected systems, namely, the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem and macrosystem (Rosa & Tudge, 2013). Furthermore, Duerden and Witt (2010) point out that the microsystem represents the learner's close context and is categorised by direct face-to-face interactions, for example, family relations and close friendships which have a direct effect on the development of the learners. The mesosystem is a set of microsystems that frequently interact with one another and it also entails the interrelationships amongst two or more settings where the developing learner actively takes part (home, school, neighbourhood and classmates).

The exosystem denotes to one or more settings that do not include the learner as an active contributor, but where events happen that affect what happens in the setting encompassing the learner, for example, a parents' work place (Spies, 2013). The macrosystem involves culture and society, for instance, the economic, social, educational, legal and political systems (Hook, 2010). Time contained within the bio-ecological model entails what occurs over the progress of an action or interaction adding to ancient time like the timing of a parent 's passing, and internal alterations connected to time in the learner 's setting (Rose & Tudge, 2013). The learning environment also plays a significant role in the implementation of learner support.

2.9.3 Learning environment.

It is important to take the learning environment into account when attempting to address barriers to learning, because that is a place where learning takes place. A supportive environment should ideally be one where every learner should feel welcome no matter their background (Fourie & Hooijer, 2018). Moreover, it should be an environment where all learners feel safe, that they belong and where they can fully participate in learning activities (Fourie & Hooijer, 2018). With regard to the curriculum environment, Motitswe (2017) suggests that there are two contrasting approaches to a curriculum environment. The first approach views the curriculum environment as a blueprint that is rigidly prescriptive about content that should be taught. However, for the purpose of this study,

more focus will be on the second approach which focuses on a flexible curriculum where differentiation also consider different factors in the environment (cf. 2.7.2).

This approach is more flexible and emphasises the learning needs of learners that must be addressed to ensure the learner develops his or her full potential (Fourie & Hooijer, 2018). Thus, this approach is more learner centred, and the teacher focuses on the needs of the learner while using knowledge to develop the thinking skills and competencies of a learner (Landsberg, Kruger & Swart, 2018). Within this approach, the role of the teacher changes to that of a facilitator who is actively involved in helping learners to achieve their learning outcomes (Fourie & Hooijer, 2018). In order to successfully implement this approach, a positive learning environment that contributes to the well-being of all learners must be established (Walton, Lebeloane, Nel & Muller, 2014). This means that teachers need to be flexible in their practices to provide experiences that are varied for a diverse population of learners (Bojuwoye et al., 2014).

Therefore, it requires teachers to be reflective about their teaching practice, attitudes and knowledge of learners in order to maximise opportunities for a supportive learning environment and learning processes (Fourie & Hooijer, 2018; Landsberg et al., 2018). This implies ensuring the physical, psychological and instructional aspects are developed to contribute to effective learning (Grieve & Haining, 2011). Walton (2017) asserts that teachers who know the impact of motivation on learning spend more time and energy creating positive environments inside and outside of the classroom to promote development of attitudes, perceptions and feelings that enhance student motivation.

Grieve and Haining (2011) regard task, context and learning environment as key aspects to a successful supportive learning practice. This means that the task which a learner finds difficult must be analysed so that the aspects causing difficulty can be modified and adjusted (Fourie & Hooijer, 2018). The teacher as facilitator also has to understand the learners' social context which includes abilities, needs, background, interests and learning barriers in order to successfully help them (Fourie & Hooijer, 2018). Co-operative learning is another strategy which has been found to be effective to support learners who experience barriers to learning (Fourie & Hooijer, 2018; Nel et al., 2016). Anderson and Boyle (2015) defines co-operative learning as a successful teaching strategy in which smalls groups, each learner with a different level of ability, use a variety of learning activities to improve their understanding of a subject.

Further, during cooperative learning, learners are encouraged to become responsible for their own and others' learning (Fourie & Hooijer, 2018). This involves information sharing, working effectively together and managing information responsibly, while group members encourage each other during the process. A study by Bojuwoye et al. (2014), indicates that peer mentoring and group activities enable effective learning for learners as they engage them in meaningful discussions among themselves, enhance their learning as well as their social and personal development. According to Anderson and Boyle (2015), where teachers and peers focus on giving support in the group it could also be motivating and enhancing learners' self-esteem, as well as improving academic performance.

Anderson (2013) further suggests multi-level teaching and curriculum differentiation as strategies for accommodating and supporting learners with intrinsic barriers to learning. Nel, Nel et al. (2016), define differentiation as a broad term used to encompass a variety of instructional and assessment strategies that ensure that the curriculum can be accessed by all learners. Walton (2017) describes differentiated instruction or learning as a practice that is fundamentally more inclusive, in contrast with assuming that all learners will be engaged in the same learning experiences and assessed according to the same criteria. Thus, differentiation deals with any adaptations, modifications and adjustments to the learning environment, teaching methodologies and assessment strategies that could enhance a learner's performance and also allow participation in all learning activities (Fourie & Hooijer, 2018).

Furthermore, it involves considering the learners' differences with regard to the capability, capacity, interests and understanding. Therefore, a wide range of strategies, techniques, and approaches should be used to support learning with the aim to help every learner to achieve and realise his or her potential. In this way, greater access to the curriculum for all learners, including learners with disabilities are endorsed (DoE, 2001). Multi-level teaching occurs when the learners in a particular class work on the same topic, but at different levels (Fourie & Hooijer, 2018). This means that the teacher carefully contemplates the needs of all the learners in her class and then plans activities for them according to their abilities (Walton, 2017).

Other strategies include designing down and straddling. Designing down means the designing of the curriculum should begin with a clear definition of the anticipated outcomes that learners should achieve at the end of their lesson (Fourie & Hooijer, 2018).

Straddling involves that a learner works towards achieving the concepts and skills from more than one grade or phase within a different subject, for example, a learner who masters subjects in a particular grade, but struggles with a subject, can be given tasks of a lower grade (Fourie & Hooijer, 2018). In the next section, the learning support and its mechanisms in the context of South Africa are discussed.

2.9.4 Learner support in South Africa

In the South African context, the EWP6 (DoE, 2001) defines learner support as any form of help, support, assistance and guidance given to learners who experience any barriers to learning in order to enable them to overcome their barriers. This support can be at low, moderate or high-intensity level depending on the needs of the individual learner (Weeks & Erradu, 2013).

In this section, specific attention will paid to exploring the support strategies offered to learners in South African schools and classrooms. Different support mechanisms and strategies will be discussed, including the support structures, support documents Individual Education Plan (IEP) and Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS). Even so, some of the concepts relating to learner support will not be neglected.

2.10 Support structure and processes

The DoE emphasised that support for learners is essential to ensure the effective implementation of inclusive education (DoE, 2001). Subsequently, education policies that determine support structures were put in place at district and school levels to help teachers to identify, assess and support learners. These structures include DBSTs and SBSTs[2] (DBE, 2014; DoE, 2005).

2.10.1 District based support team (DBST)

According to EWP6 (DoE, 2001) each district must have a DBST responsible for the management of inclusive education within the district. The key responsibilities of the DBSTs are to liaise with and support the SBSTs (cf.2.8.1.2) (DoE, 2001). The SIAS (DBE, 2014) (cf. 2.8.1.4) also requires that programs for support should be compiled in such a

[2] SBSTs can also be called institution-level support teams (ILST) as indicated in the EWP6. However, in recent basic education documents (e.g., DBE, 2014) it is called school-based support teams (SBST). It is also the terminology mostly used by teachers and the Department of Basic Education.

way that the learner gets complete access to all the opportunities for successful learning. An important part of this policy is the focus on cooperation between parents, teachers, SBST, DBST, health professionals and is also considered as essential for the effective execution of the programme for support.

The DBST is also responsible for assisting teachers in the development of teaching skills with regard to curriculum differentiation, alternative assessment strategies, the use of assistive devices, as well as developing learner support programmes (DoE, 2001). However, the successful functioning of the DBST has been criticized as recent studies revealed teachers' dissatisfaction with the aforementioned structure (Makhalemele & Nel, 2016). This results in teachers still attempting to offer support within the confines of their own knowledge, skills and limited resources available to them (Engelbrecht et al., 2015). This relates to the fact that most mainstream teachers have no formal qualification to provide support to learners who experience learning difficulties which in return leads to feelings of incompetence (Wienand, 2011).

Furthermore, mainstream teachers argue that in their attempts to help learners who struggle, the more able learners are neglected (Dreyer et al., 2012). Many teachers believe that they are inadequately trained to support learners who experience barriers to learning (especially intrinsic barriers), and inefficient support structures are reported to add to their feelings of inability to support these learners (Motitswe, 2012).

2.10.2 Institution-based support team/ School-based support team (SBST/ ILST)

SBSTs are considered as a valuable resource to schools for the implementation of inclusive education. The SBST is responsible for guiding and supporting inclusive teaching and learning processes at school level (DoE, 2001). This means that this team must be able to identify and support learners, and assist teachers with supporting learners, as well as addressing other sociological needs within the school (Motitswe, 2017). It is important to state that those who form part of the SBST committee should be personnel within the school. This includes teachers with knowledge and skills in areas such as learning support, teachers who volunteer because of interest, the school management team (SMT), a member from the SGB and non-teachers, such as administrative and care-taking staff (Nel, Nel et al., 2016).

If a learner who is experiencing barriers to learning does not receive any help at school, they will probably drop out of school and become unemployable because of a lack of knowledge and skills. Several research studies (e.g. Dreyer, 2017; Engelbrecht et al. 2015; Makhalemele & Nel, 2016; Mdikana & Phasha, 2018; Mfuthwana & Dreyer, 2018; Nel et al. 2016) have found that teachers struggle to adequately support learners who experience intrinsic barriers to learning. The possible reasons reported by the aforementioned research studies included: teachers not feeling adequately trained, support structures (i.e., SBST and DBST) not functioning well, curriculum inflexibility, overcrowded classrooms, poor infrastructure, etc. The study conducted by Grieve and Haining (2011) highlights that many learners also wait very long to be assessed by DBST and only few learners are assessed. However, teachers need to try to support learners in their classrooms before they refer learners to the SBST. Another way of supporting learners in classrooms is through individual education plans (IEP) which is discussed in the next session.

2.10.3 Individual education plan (IEP)

An individual education plan (IEP) is one of the strategies that can be used to assist learners with intrinsic barriers to learning. According to Nel, Nel et al. (2016), an IEP is a set of prioritised skills that the learner's family and instructional team believe must be accomplished. Lerner (2013) describes an IEP as a written plan for a particular learner that prescribes educational objectives for that learner. This means all relevant stakeholders should outline a written plan of how and when the learner is going to achieve the set educational objectives. It should be a collaborative process (cf. 2.6.4) involving the teacher, the learner, the parents, the SBST, the DBST, as well as other health professionals that might be needed (Nel, Nel et al., 2016).

As learners experience different barriers to learning, IEPs should be uniquely and specifically designed to accommodate their individual learning needs (Nel, Nel et al., 2016). For example, learners who experience some reading and spelling difficulties may only need a bit of additional support and an alternative instructional method, while others with more serious barriers to learning will need a more intensive, prolonged method (Nel, N et al., 2016). Evans and Nthulana (2018) assert that an IEP should incorporate the general curriculum content, and must be implemented within the classroom routine and activities. However, before an IEP is designed and implemented teachers should follow

a process of teaching, assessing, supporting, assessing and adapting in order to help them identify the barrier and draw solutions on what must be included in the IEP.

According to Lerner (2013) and Nel, Nel et al. (2016), IEPs follow a sequence of three stages namely, referral, assessment, and instruction.

Referral stage

This stage consists of pre-referral activities, then referral and initial planning. During this stage, teachers usually identify that a learner is experiencing barrier(s) to learning. Pre-referral activities include preventive actions provided by collaboration between a peer group of colleagues and the SBST (Nel, Tlale et al., 2016). During this collaboration, the learner's academic and behavioural problems are evaluated, and interventions, accommodations and adaptations are recommended. These measures are implemented by the classroom teacher to meet the needs of the learner (Nel, Tlale et al., 2016).

Assessment stage

This stage includes a collaborative approach, involving the learner, the parents, teacher, SBST, DBST and other professional specialists related to the barrier to learning, such as speech therapist, occupational therapists, social workers, medical doctors, psychologists and optometrists (Nel, Tlale et al., 2016). Assessment does not mean only using formal and standardised tests, but must be a holistic process, including, previous and current teachers' experience of the learner's progress (report cards), the learner's class work, homework, and assessment tasks. These documents must be studied to identify the learner's strengths and needs while curriculum-based tests must be conducted to assess current academic performance (Nel, Tlale et al., 2016).

Planning stage

After the assessment has been conducted, an IEP meeting must be set up where all the role players in the collaboration team get together. At this meeting, the contents of the learner's IEP are discussed and recorded (Fourie & Hooijer, 2018). If other professionals such as a psychologist and speech therapist are needed, they must be part of this meeting. The contents of the IEP must include components, such as the description of the learner's current academic performance, a description of short-term and long-term

objectives to be achieved by the learner, measurable annual goals which includes academic and functional goals for the learner, a collaborative agreement between all role players, a description of what type of accommodations, adaptations and modifications need to be planned for in the general teaching and learning process. In addition, an explanation of the extent to which the learner might not be able to participate in regular class and how it must be planned for should be included. For example, a learner with physical disabilities will not be able to always participate in physical education (Walton, Lebeloane et al., 2014). Figure 2.1 depicts the steps for creating an IEP as proposed by Lerner (2013).

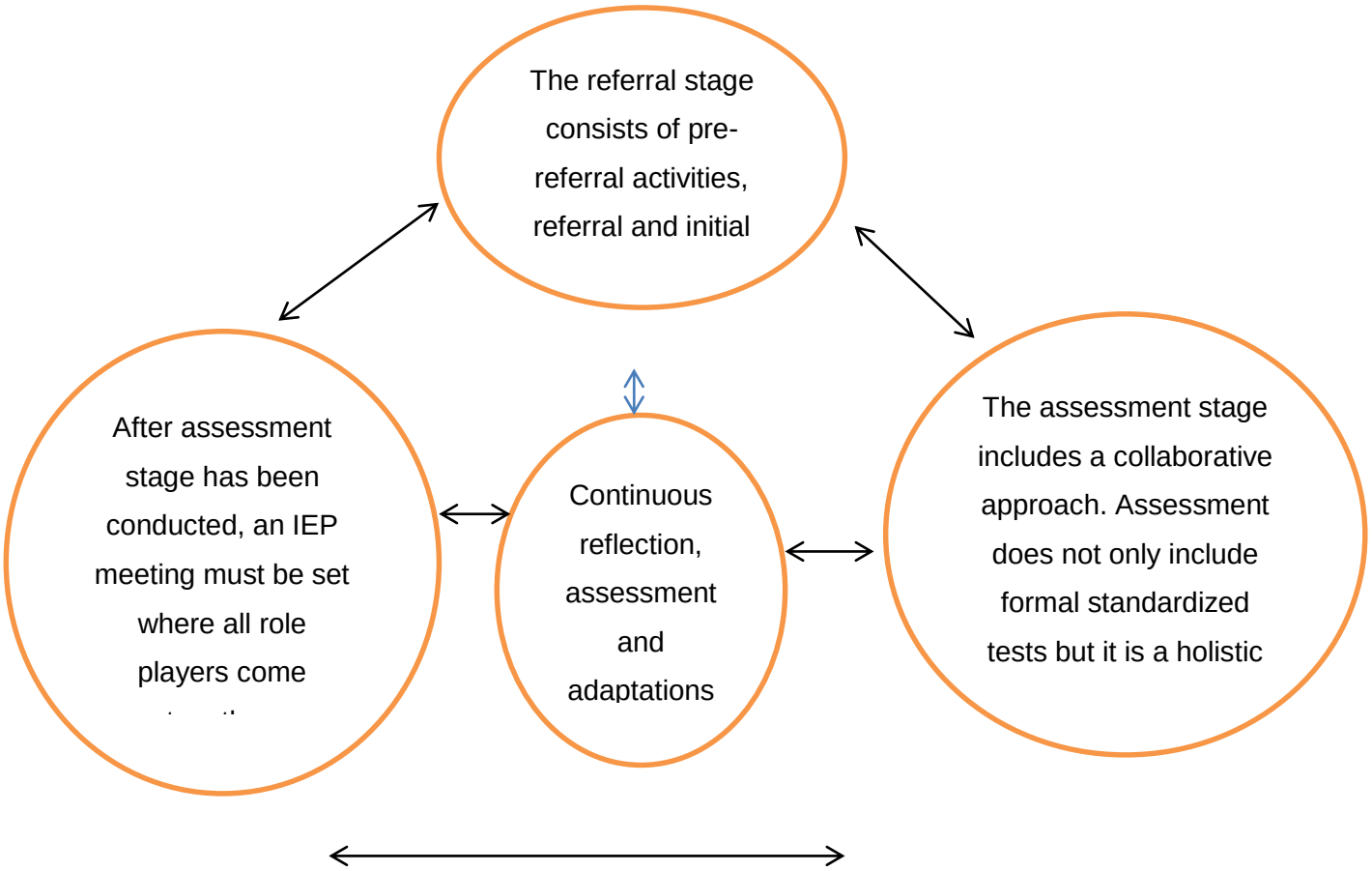


Figure 2.1: Steps for creating an IEP process

In the next section the steps and referral stages are discussed in line with the SIAS policy.

2.10.4 Screening, identification, assessment and support (SIAS)

The screening, identification, assessment and support (SIAS) policy document was developed and implemented in 2014 with the intention of supporting learners who experience barriers to learning (Nel & Grosser, 2016). The policy is aimed at improving access to education for vulnerable learners and those who experience barriers to learning (DBE, 2014). Moreover, it focuses on monitoring and supporting teaching and learning processes for learners who experience barriers to learning. In addition, it provides clear guidelines on the enrolment of learners in special schools and settings while also acknowledging parents and teachers as key role players in the support of learners who experience barriers to learning (DBE, 2014). A key feature of the policy is that it is based on the principles of collaboration (cf. 2.6.4) amongst stakeholders.

The SIAS policy is implemented in three stages at different levels, namely: initial screening which is guided by the learner profile (LP) completed by the teacher; secondly, identifying and addressing the barriers to learning and development at school level, and then; lastly at district level. The teacher must screen all learners in the beginning of each phase and record the finding in the LP during the initial screening phase. The LP should have basic information about the learner and include documents such as the learners' year-end report cards, reports from other professionals, parents and other relevant stakeholders (DBE, 2014).

The second stage of this policy focuses on identifying and addressing barriers at school level. During this stage, the teacher should act as a case manager, once they have identified learners as vulnerable or at risk during the initial screening phase (DBE, 2014). The learners' parents must be involved in the decision making process of the SIAS. There are certain forms that must be completed starting with the Support Needs Assessment form 1 (SNA 1). The following should be addressed in the SNA 1: the areas of concern, basis of information gathered, as well as strengths and needs across a broad spectrum of areas (Evans & Nthulana, 2018). In cases where support given by the teacher proves to be ineffective, he or she should report the matter to the SBST who will then need to fill the Support Needs Assessment form 2 (SNA 2). The SNA 2 includes a plan of action through which the teacher can collaborate with other stakeholders to strengthen the support. The plan is captured and put into action. The SBST can then determine if further support is needed in which case the DBST can be asked to assist (DBE, 2014)

The final stage of the SIAS document includes identifying and addressing barriers to learning and development at district level (DBE, 2014). This level requires the completion of the Support Needs Assessment form 3 (SNA 3) by the relevant DBST members with regard to their intervention strategy to monitor support provision, resources, training, counselling and mentoring of teachers (DBE, 2014; Motitswe 2013)

2.11 Chapter summary

It is evident from the literature review that inclusive education cannot be isolated from the social context. This is particularly important, since inclusive education is generally related to environmental disadvantage or external factors including poverty, lack of awareness and access to educational, medical and healthcare facilities, as well as exposure to political violence (Dreyer, 2012). The literature review has highlighted the complex nature of inclusion and the challenges of implementing inclusive education in South Africa. The movement towards inclusive education and the surrounding debate seem to also have generated diverse interpretations, definitions and, subsequently, responses among all stakeholders, particularly teachers. The gap between policy and practice continues to create a major concern, thus stressing the need for collaboration amongst all role players (parents, teachers, SBSTs and DBSTs, etc.) involved, in order to bridge the gaps. It is also important to note that South Africa has made strides in order to meet international standards in terms of developing policies to address the previous injustices and inequalities.

It is evident from the literature review that issues of exclusion have not been fully addressed, as learners with different needs still cannot be in the same schooling system. It appears as if learners are still being categorised according to ability from mainstream education, full-service and special schools. It is further concluded that although there is a strong move away from the medical model, much of the support provided appears to still rely on this model to classify and place learners appropriately. The literature review described the provision and delivery of learning support to learners experiencing barriers to learning within a socio-ecological model, in the South African context, which is the focus of this study. Consequently, this illustrates a strong demand for continuous development and training of mainstream teachers to enable them to address the diverse needs of all learners in the mainstream class. In the next chapter, I shift focus to the

empirical study. The research methodology, processes and practices will be explained in-depth.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

Learner support is about ensuring that **all learners**, regardless of their background, abilities and disabilities, and learning barriers have equal access to education. The previous chapter has established an understanding of learning support from an inclusive education perspective within a South African context.

The purpose of this study is to explore how Intermediate Phase teachers support learners who experience intrinsic barriers in mainstream classrooms. In order to achieve the research aim of this study (as discussed in Chapter 1) I had to determine the best way to do it (Dreyer, 2011). In this chapter the research design and methodology that were chosen for this study will be discussed in more depth. Consequently, this chapter focuses specifically on describing research method, research design, data collection procedures, and data analysis that have been applied in this study. Ethical considerations as well as issues of data verification pertaining to this study are also addressed.

Table 3.1 Illustrates the research process that was followed throughout this study.

Table 3.1: Research process

RESEARCH PROCESS	
Research design	Qualitative research design
Research paradigm	Interpretivist
Strategy of inquiry	Case study
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	
Research location/Sample site	School A in Orange Farm
Sampling	Intermediate Phase teachers, SBST co-ordinator and the principal
Data collection methods	Face-to-face individual interviews, semi-structured questionnaires, focus group interview (member checking) and document analysis
Data analysis and interpretation	Thematic analysis (inductive)
QUALITY CRITERIA	Conformability, dependability, crystallisation and member checks
ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS	
Informed consent, protection from harm, and privacy and confidentiality	
CONCLUSION	

3.2 Research design

Maree (2011) defines a research design as a plan or strategy which moves from the underlying philosophical assumptions to specifying the selection of participants, the data collection techniques to be used and the data analysis to be done. This study applied qualitative research. A qualitative research design is one that is characterised by empirical, descriptive and detailed data and works with data in an inductive and interpretive manner (Conway, 2017). Furthermore, Creswell (2005) defines qualitative research as a systematic process of collecting, analysing, and interpreting visual or narrative data to increase understanding of a phenomenon that is not fully understood. This design allowed the researcher to interact and engage with the participants in order to construct meaning (Creswell, 2012).

In general, qualitative researchers become immersed in the phenomenon being studied and have an attitude of appreciation rather than acting as an expert (Creswell, 2005). Therefore, qualitative research aims to understand and interpret the meaning that research participants give to their everyday lives (Conway, 2017). In this study I was acting as a key instrument for creating meaning by interacting with participants using various data collection methods in order to gain a deeper understanding of how Intermediate Phase teachers supported learners experiencing intrinsic barriers to learning. This is in accordance with Creswell's (2012) affirmation that qualitative research is descriptive in nature, thus it describes and analyses people's individual and collective social actions, beliefs, thoughts and perceptions and is primarily concerned with understanding the social phenomena from the participants' perspective. Therefore, participants in this study were given an opportunity to express and describe their experiences and perceptions on the phenomenon under study.

Lebesa (2015) however, indicated that there are some advantages and disadvantages of qualitative research. The advantages are that qualitative research emphasises the importance of the participants' views, the importance of the setting where participants express their views, and highlights the meanings people hold about educational or social issues. The disadvantages of qualitative research could be that it is difficult to be done in an objective, neutral manner, and has the potential to be one-sided if the researcher is either narrow-minded or prejudiced (Lebesa, 2015). To guard against these challenges, I attempted to be unbiased, and declared my situatedness regarding the topic (Cohen & Crabtree, 2012).

3.3 Research paradigm

Moyo et al. (2015) define a research paradigm as a set of suppositions and philosophies about the world, and what is perceived as real or true. Conway (2017) describes a research paradigm as a pattern of thinking adhered to by a particular person, which in this instance is myself as the researcher. Moyo et al., (2015) mention that a researcher's worldview will shape and provide the researcher with a broad direction for what he or she holds to be true. This study was carried out through the lense of an interpretivistic paradigm, as this is integral to a qualitative approach. Interpretivism is based on the assumptions that: human life can only be understood from within, social life is a distinctively human product, the human mind is the purposive source or origin of meaning,

human behaviour is affected by knowledge of the social world; and that the world does not exist independently of human knowledge (Maree, 2011). Therefore, interpretivists believe that reality as we know it is constructed inter-subjectively with those who surround us and through exploration and communications we have with those around us (Creswell, 2005). Lastly, interpretivists assume that research findings do not come from the researcher, but are created through the interpretation of data (Conway, 2017).

An interpretivistic paradigm has been followed in order to address the primary research question of this study and to serve as a guideline for creating meaning with participants, interpreting data and evidence obtained throughout this study. Cohen and Crabtree (2012) warn that an interpretivistic paradigm can fail to account for social behaviour if interpretivists neglect the political and ideological contexts of educational research. Thus, I attempted to address the relevant social and contextual factors of this study in Chapter two (the literature review). Furthermore, the focus of this study is not on social behaviour, but mainly on acquiring in-depth knowledge of how Intermediate Phase teachers support learners experiencing intrinsic barriers to learning in classrooms.

Epistemology describes the relationship between the researcher and the acquired knowledge and how this knowledge became to be understood (Conway, 2017). The methodology of a study is the way in which the researcher approaches the question of epistemology and then attempts to bring the unknown reality into the known by studying the participants' subjective realities and perspectives. This allows the researcher to appreciate the feelings, attitudes and behaviour of the participants (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). In this instance, I had direct interaction with the participants in an in attempt to understand, and create knowledge because I believe that knowledge is created by the 'knower' based on experience. Thus, Intermediate Phase teachers' (the 'knowers') experiences and perceptions on supporting learners who experience intrinsic barriers have been used to create meaning and to generate knowledge.

The ontological dimension of a paradigm refers to its stance on how the nature of reality is understood (Conway, 2017). Dreyer (2008) describes ontology as assumptions that are concerned with what is real regarding the nature of the phenomenon under study. Consequently, there is no single reality, but multiple realities which the researcher must understand in order to study the phenomenon. Maree (2007) suggests that the unknown can only become known by asking questions about the reality of the individual and the

meanings people attribute to events in their lives. This leads to a situation where knowledge is constructed interactively, between the researcher and research participant. The methodology of the interpretive paradigm then needs to ensure that it is possible to create a situation where reality becomes known through positive interaction between the researcher and research participant, which usually requires qualitative research, as is the case in this study (Conway, 2017). Table 3.2 provides a summary of assumptions in the interpretive paradigm, especially applicable to this study.

Table 3.2: Interpretive paradigm

Paradigm	Epistemology	Ontology	Data collection methods
Interprevistic paradigm	Reality can be interpreted and understood, but cannot be controlled. Participants' subjective experiences are important as multiple realities exist.	Knowledge is gained through interactions (i.e., interviews), observations and interpretations. The researcher was empathetic and subjectively involved as knowledge is unique, subjective and personal.	Semi-structured face-to-face individual interviews, open questionnaires, focus group (member checking), and document analysis

Adapted from Lebesa (2015)

3.4 Strategy of inquiry

A strategy of inquiry is a systematic inquiry which aims to describe and explain the phenomenon of interest (Creswell, 2012). This study has employed a case study as a strategy of enquiry. Maree (2011) defines case study research as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context and in which multiple sources of evidence are used. From an interpretivist perspective, this implies striving towards a holistic understanding of how participants relate and interact with each other in a specific situation and how they make meaning of a phenomenon under study (Mike, 2011). This case study is focused on exploring the support strategies employed by Intermediate Phase teachers at a specific mainstream school to support learners experiencing intrinsic barriers to learning in their classrooms.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, a single-instrumental case was used because the focus was on a single phenomenon. This entails a case study of one case (namely the school) for acquiring knowledge of and insight into a specific phenomenon (Yorke, 2010). In an instrumental case study design, one can use data to generate knowledge but then the context, boundaries, unit of analysis and trail of evidence must be described very carefully and clearly (Creswell, 2012). It is of particular importance in this study to highlight that

School A of this case study is just one example of other mainstream schools and that not all mainstream schools/teachers work in the same way. Although a case study design was used where the focus was on one specific school/setting, in order to collect in-depth data, multiple data collection methods had to be used.

3.5 Research site

This case study has been carried out at a mainstream school in the township of Orange Farm in the Vaal Triangle area. Orange Farm is a township situated in the southern region of Johannesburg, South Africa. It was established in the 1980s and many migrants from Johannesburg used open spaces to build shacks because of poor infrastructure around the township. It has a population of about 600 000 people living in an estimated 45 000 households (Malose, 2015).

The school that was the focus of this case study (hereafter called School A) is a combined (Grade R–12) school situated in Orange Farm. It offers academic support to learners who struggle in mathematics and English on weekends, and community outreach is an integral part of this school. The school takes great pride in its feeding scheme and the aftercare facility for orphans, as well as providing support to learners at risk. These learners are provided with an afternoon meal and assisted with homework. Leadership and mentorship programmes are also arranged on weekends and holidays for community members and learners, as well as a number of sports activities for learners. In 2016, School A was reported to have achieved a hundred percent pass rate for a third time in a row (Grade 12) with 80% of the learners attaining university entry for bachelor degrees (EduAfrica, 2014). This school is an Anglican Diocesan school initiated and supported by Education Africa and St John's College. School A is dedicated to the memory of the late Dr Aggrey Klaaste, former chairman of Education Africa, Helen Suzman who was a patron of Education Africa, and Walter Sisulu, a great friend and supporter of Education Africa whose vision of a school in Orange Farm inspired Education Africa to source the necessary funding to build the school and establish the key partnerships to ensure its ongoing success (EduAfrica, 2014). According to Elphick and Elphick (2015), about two-thirds of children with disabilities (i.e., intrinsic barriers to learning) identified in Orange

Farm have moderate to severe intellectual impairments. According to the principal, common diagnoses in this school include epilepsy and specific learning disabilities.

3.6 The role of the researcher

According to Simon (2011), the qualitative researcher is considered as an instrument of data collection. Therefore, I need to describe relevant aspects of myself, including biases, assumptions and experiences to qualify my ability to conduct this research study. As a novice teacher it is important to highlight that my situatedness, biases and assumptions could have affected my study. This included the different cultural and community norms where the school was situated. However, I believe that my knowledge and understanding of my situatedness in this study helped me to be reflective during the study. I debriefed regularly with an independent researcher and my supervisor which ensured that I remained as objective and unbiased as possible during the data collection process, as well as during the data analysis and interpretation. By declaring my situatedness, I could reduce the chances that these factors may have affected the reliability of my research findings.

My role was to administer the open-questionnaires, facilitate interviews and also use probes to stimulate and engage participants, and observe their patterns of behaviours. I have prepared semi-structured questions to initiate or start the interviews and have also been responsible for analysing the selected documents. According to Simon (2011), in an interview, a good qualitative researcher asks probing questions, then listens, and then asks more probing questions to get to deeper levels of the conversation (Simon, 2011) which I have done. I also analysed, transcribed and interpreted the data, while determining if the data collected was rich, valid and reliable.

3.7 Population and sampling

In research the total group is called the population, while the part of the total that is selected is called the sample (Nieuwenhuis, 2011). Maree (2011) and Conway (2017) define sampling as a process used to select a population for a study and then identifying the method to select some part of a group to represent the total. The population of this study is South African Intermediate Phase teachers in public schools, but since the study cannot be carried out throughout the country, a sampling strategy has been used to select participants.

Qualitative research is generally based on non-probability and purposive sampling, rather than probability or random sampling approaches (Creswell, 2012). Purposive sampling refers to where participants are selected because of some characteristics that make them the holders of the data needed for the study (Maree, 2011). Sampling decisions must therefore be made for the explicit purpose of obtaining the richest possible source of information to answer the research question. According to Maree (2011), purposive sampling can include three types of sampling strategies, namely, stratified purposive sampling, criterion sampling, as well as snowball sampling. There are four types of non-probability sampling methods, namely, convenient sampling, quota sampling, snowball sampling and purposive sampling (Maree, 2011). Non-probability sampling is often used in situations where not much time is available and the results are needed urgently, not much money is available, and when the population is difficult to find (Creswell, 2012). Convenient non-probability sampling was used in this study because of the aforementioned challenges, i.e, time constraints and financial constraints. The research site has been chosen conveniently to accommodate the researcher in terms of time and financial challenges. School A is not very far from where I work, therefore, it was convenient in terms of transport and other logistics. However, School A was primarily chosen because it could provide rich data.

Although the sample was convenient purposive sampling, criterion sampling has also been applied for this study. Criterion sampling implies that in order to answer the research question the typical characteristics of the participants to be included in the study must be established by using certain criteria (Maree, 2011). For the purpose of this study, 13 Intermediate Phase teachers and the SBST co-ordinator were asked to take part in this study, because the study was aimed at understanding how learners with intrinsic barriers to learning are supported in the school environment. This sample was believed to be knowledgeable about the topic under study and resultantly also produced rich data for this study. Participants were selected based on the following inclusion and exclusion criteria.

Table 3.3: Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Inclusion	Exclusion
• **Intermediate Phase teacher with more than three years' teaching experience** • **SBST co-ordinator** • **School principal**	• Foundation or Senior Phase teachers with less than three years' teaching experience; and • student teachers

All the Intermediate Phase teachers (four Grade 4 teachers, four Grade 5 teachers and four Grade 6 teachers), the SBST co-ordinator and the school principal have agreed to take part in the study, however the principal was not available for interviews. The inclusion criteria included participants who have more than three years' experience, based on the assumption that they would be experienced enough to identify the learners who have intrinsic barriers to learning, as compared to novice teachers who still have to adapt to the new teaching/work environment.

3.8 DATA COLLECTION

Most qualitative research depends on multi-method collection strategies to collect data, meaning the use of multiple strategies to collect and corroborate data (Conway, 2017). Therefore, various data collection methods were employed in this study. I used open-questionnaires, semi-structured face to face interviews, document analysis and focus groups as data collection methods for this study. It is also important to highlight that in qualitative research, the researchers are primary instruments for gathering and analysing data (Lebesa, 2015). Thus, I was the primary instrument for data collection and data interpretation of this study which allowed me to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under study (Creswell, 2005).

3.8.1 Open-ended questionnaires

This study began with open-ended questionnaires, where participants were asked to complete a questionnaire regarding their knowledge and experience on intrinsic barriers to learning and learner support. Questionnaires were distributed to participants at School A where they expressed, qualified and clarified their understanding and perceptions of the phenomenon under study (Ganga & Maphalala, 2015). The open-ended questions

have been formulated and constructed in a manner that allowed participants to provide rich and relevant information regarding their understanding and knowledge of how they support learners who experience intrinsic barriers in their classrooms. The questions included the following (see Appendix A):

- How would you describe intrinsic barriers to learning?
- How would you describe learner support?
- Which strategies do you believe are necessary to adequately support learners experiencing intrinsic barriers to learning?
- What do you think is the importance of collaboration between teachers and the SBST (school-based support team) with regard to supporting learners who experience intrinsic barriers to learning?
- How can teachers collaborate to ensure that learners experiencing intrinsic barriers are sufficiently supported?

3.8.2 Semi-structured individual interviews

According to Yorke (2010), interviews provide a potent way of understanding others. Interviews are regarded as the foremost data collection tool in accessing people's perceptions, meanings, and definitions of situations and construction of meaning (Nieuwenhuis, 2011). Thus, semi-structured interviews were selected for this study. The semi-structured one-to-one interview is usually used to gain a detailed picture of a participant's beliefs about, or perceptions of, accounts of a particular topic (Conway, 2017). Interviews were conducted at the predetermined time, and an audio recorder was used to record the interviews and all COVID-19 protocols were followed. All the participants and I wore masks during the interviews, and social distance was observed. I was also screened for temperature and sanitised upon my arrival at the school. In semi-structured individual interviews, questions are structured and detailed in advance (Creswell, 2012). A list of semi-structured questions guided by the literature review had been complied for my semi-structured individual interviews. However, the questions were not limited to the literature review, as other questions have also been included to further

probe the participants' responses on the open questionnaires. Participants in this study have been asked to respond to the following questions:

- In the questionnaire you have mentioned the following with regard to the description of intrinsic barriers to learning. Can you please go into further detail specifically with regard to the intrinsic barriers that your learners experience at your school and also link it to the impact it has on classroom teaching and their own learning?

- In the questionnaire you have mentioned the following with regard to learner support. Can you please go into further detail specifically with regard to the learner support that occurs at your school relevant to learners who experience barriers to learning?

- In the questionnaire you have mentioned the following with regard to strategies that teachers use to support learners with intrinsic barriers to learning. Please explain the strategies that teachers/you use to support learners experiencing intrinsic barriers to learning?

Nieuwenhuis (2011) asserts that in order to understand how others construct meaning, we must ask questions in such a way that allow participants to convey the substance of their meaning on their own terms. Thus, a good researcher should be adequately skilled to conduct meaningful interviews in order to gain insight of the phenomenon under study. Therefore, during the interviews, a range of techniques such as probing and clarifying of answers were used which engaged participants and allowed for more elaborate explanation of their responses. I tried my best to give sufficient attention while they responded, and I was focused and non-judgemental during the process (Nieuwenhuis, 2011).

The interviews took place at a prearranged time with the participants, thus at the school after school, with strict compliance to COVID-19 regulations. The interviews varied between 11–18 minutes. An audio recorder was used to record the interviews with the participants' permission. This assisted me to recall and transcribe what was discussed in the interviews.

3.8.3 Document analysis

According to Maree (2014), when using documents as a data collection technique, it is important for researchers to focus on all written communication that may shed light on a phenomenon that is under study. This may include published and unpublished work, company records, reports, e-mails, etc. In this study, I utilised learners' profiles, support forms, as well as SBST minutes to fully understand how learners are supported, the support strategies employed as well as the functionality of the SBST committee of School A. The participants and SBST co-ordinator assisted with the selection of the documents. A learner profile is a document that contains personal information of a learner, learner achievements, challenges as well as other relevant information about a learner (DoE, 2001). A set of three learner profiles per grade of learners who experience intrinsic barriers to learning was randomly chosen, as well as their support forms. I also intended to analyse minutes of School A's recent SBST meetings, to gain deeper insight and understanding of the SBST role on supporting learners and teachers within the institution. However, I experienced some challenges with the learner profiles and the minutes of SBST meetings. Some sections (such as biographical detail and support provided) of the learner profiles were incomplete, while others were reported missing. The SBST coordinator could not provide minutes of previous meetings and some learners who were reported to be experiencing intrinsic barriers to learning had no support forms (SNA 1s and SNA 2s).

3.8.4 Focus group interviews

The semi-structured focus group interview is commonly used in research studies to corroborate data that emerges from other data sources (Creswell, 2012). A focus group interview was conducted as member checking. The purpose of this interview was to clarify and enhance the credibility of the findings. It is important to highlight that the focus group interview was just once-off. It was conducted at School A after school at a pre-arranged time. During the interview, preliminary interpretations and findings were presented and discussed with participants. Participants were given an opportunity to clarify, elaborate and/or confirm the preliminary findings. An audio recorder was again utilised to record the interview. This assisted me to recall and transcribe what was said during the interviews. I applied Creswell's (2012) useful protocol for conducting the interviews, which includes:

- instructions to the interviewee (opening statements);
- discussing key research questions to be asked;
- probes to follow key questions;
- space for recording the interviewer's comments; and
- space in which the researcher records reflective notes.

I have compiled a list of questions that have been asked during the focus group interview. The following questions were included, and have been used to help me to probe and engage the participants during the interview.

- Do you believe that your statements have been correctly captured and interpreted?
- Do you believe the interpretations of the document analysis are appropriate?

3.9 Data interpretation and analysis

Qualitative data analysis tends to be an on-going and interactive (non-linear) process, implying that data collection, processing, analysis and reporting are intertwined (Maree, 2011). Qualitative phases of data collection and analyses are interactive research processes that occur in overlapping cycles. These strategies are flexible and dependent on each other (Yorke, 2010). In this study, data collected by means of varied data collection methods was analysed and interpreted in an integrated manner.

Conway (2017) suggests an analytical spiral of data collection and analysis which is presented in linear form. However, the guideline should not be considered as a recipe to be followed rigidly as the steps may overlap or be carried out in a different sequence (Conway, 2017). The following outline for the process of qualitative data analysis was used as a guideline:

- planning for recording of data;
- data collection and preliminary analyses;
- managing or organising the data;

- reading and writing memos;
- generating categories, themes and sub-themes;
- coding the data;
- testing the emergent understanding (member checking);
- searching for alternative explanations; and
- representing, visualising (i.e., writing the report).

All data collected by electronic or digital means (such as audio tapes) has been transcribed. This has been done by me as I was able to include some non-verbal cues in the transcripts (Maree, 2011). I transcribed the data verbatim collected by the audio recorder and included some non-verbal cues (e.g., pauses, laughter, gestures and facial expressions) in my transcripts to gain a deep understanding of the participants' responses. After transcribing the data collected, I had to go back to the participants and discuss the transcripts to ensure that the transcripts reflected exactly what the participants meant in the interviews. In case of mistakes or misinterpretations, I went back and rectified the misinterpretations. To protect the anonymity of participants, a list of abbreviations has been complied and codes were used to refer to participants. The abbreviations are listed in Table 3.4.

Table 3.4: Roles and abbreviations

Role	Abbreviation
All Interviews	P1–13
SBST co-ordinator interview	SBSTCO
SBST co-ordinator questionnaire	QSBSTCO
Document analysis	DA
Questionnaire responses	QP1–14

Thematic analysis has been employed to analyse the data as a comprehensive whole and not as separate units. This implies searching for themes that emerge as being important to the description of the studied phenomenon. The process involves identifying

themes through careful reading and re-reading of data, recognising patterns within the data where emerging themes become categories for analysis (Fereday, 2006).

The questions asked in the open questionnaire determined the categories which was consequently determined deductively. These categories include: describing intrinsic barriers to learning, describing learner support, strategies to support learners with intrinsic barriers to learning, the role of SBST, as well as collaboration (cf. Table 4.1). The rest of the data was analysed inductively. Creswell (2012) defines coding as the process of reading carefully through all data sets, line-by-line and dividing it into meaningful analytical units. It is therefore defined as marking segments of data with symbols, descriptive words or unique identifying words. For the purpose of this study, I used inductive codes to code the data and make sense of it. Inductive codes refer to codes developed by the researcher by directly examining the data (Creswell, 2012:71). I used the open codes and put them in an audit trail for finer refinements. I then used the relating open codes to form axial codes which had more reference to the research question. Thereafter, I determined the themes and sub-themes collected from all the data collection instruments from the coded data. During this process, I consulted with my supervisor regarding the interpretation and analysis of the data to ensure that I have done it appropriately.

3.10 Quality criteria

Dependability

Mike (2011) explains that dependability ensures that the research findings are reliable and the research could be repeated. Dependability can be ensured by reporting in detail the processes and methods used in the research study to enable an external researcher to repeat the research with the same participants in the same context and achieve similar results (De Vos, 2005; Mike, 2011). I ascertained that all the procedures I used to obtain my data were clearly documented.

Crystallisation

Maree (2014) states that crystallisation means the processes of utilising various data gathering techniques and data analyses to reinterpret understanding of the phenomenon. I consulted regularly with my supervisor, and also made use of different data collection

methods namely, an open-questionnaire, individual interviews, document analysis, and focus group interviews to compare whether the research results were trustworthy and reliable.

Transferability

According to Mike (2011), transferability is the degree to which research findings can be transferred to other contexts, other than the one being studied. All procedures that were used to collect data were transparent and clear for other researchers to use in a different context. However, findings may differ because schools differ in terms of culture and methods used to support learners who experience barriers to learning.

Member checks

This is when data, analytic categories, interpretations and conclusions are tested with members of those groups from whom the data was originally obtained (Cohen & Crabtree, 2012). To enhance the credibility of the study, the researcher aimed to do stakeholder checks by allowing participants to comment on the interpretations and conclusions of the data. This has been done throughout the data collection, but specifically during the focus group interviews.

Conformability

Conformability is described as the extent to which research findings are supported by the data collected (Mike, 2011). In qualitative research the researcher plays an integral part in the data collection process and brings a unique perspective to the research study. Conformability allows external researchers to judge whether the final results of the research correlates with the data collected (Mike, 2011). My supervisors served as external reviewers and ensured the conformability of the data collected.

3.11 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

It is essential for the researcher to consider ethical guidelines when conducting research. I abided and followed the following ethical considerations.

An ethical clearance has been obtained from the appropriate ethics committee of North-West University. An ethics number – NWU-01208-20-S2 – was also obtained from EduREC Scientific Committee of North-West University.

Informed consent and voluntary participation: In this study, participants (teachers) were informed about the voluntary participation to the study and given an informed consent form, which stipulated the purpose of my study, the reasons behind the study and I also informed them about the right to withdraw at any time. A request form was sent to the Gauteng Department of Basic Education (GDE) for ethical approval and the principal of School A was asked to give consent for allowing the study to take place in his school.

Protection from harm: The researcher should ensure that participants are not exposed to any undue physical, emotional or psychological harm (Shenton, 2009). During the study I strived to be honest, respectful and sympathetic towards all participants. Moreover, this was a low risk study. All COVID-19 protocols were adhered to: screening, hand sanitising, social distancing and wearing a face mask.

Privacy, confidentiality and anonymity: According to Forsyth (2010), both the researcher and participants must have a clear understanding regarding confidentiality of the results and findings of the study. In this study all participants' information and shared responses during the study have been kept private and the results were presented in an anonymous manner in order to protect the identities of the participants. However, participants have been informed that confidentiality could not be ensured during focus group interviews, since it involved all participants to be in one interview. All audio recordings will be destroyed as soon as the study has been completed. However, the transcriptions will be kept in a secured and locked facility for a period of five years. The participants will be informed of this.

3.12 Conclusion

In this chapter the research methodology was described and explained. The next chapter will present the findings, as well as the interpretation and discussion thereof.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter reports on the empirical part of the study where the views, experiences and opinions of Intermediate Phase teachers were explored in order to answer the primary and secondary research questions. In order to explore the research topic and facilitate the collection of data and analysis thereof, the study focused on the primary research question: *How do Intermediate Phase teachers support learners who experience intrinsic barriers to learning in their classrooms?*

The following secondary questions also guided the study.

- *What do intrinsic barriers to learning mean?*
- *What does the support of intrinsic barriers entail?*
- *What strategies are used by teachers in a specific primary school to support learners with intrinsic barriers to learning?*
- *What is the role of collaboration in ensuring successful implementation of learner support?*
- *How do teachers collaborate to ensure learners are adequately supported?*
- *What recommendations can be formulated to help Intermediate Phase teachers to provide effective support to learners with intrinsic barriers in a primary school?*

The study was aimed at exploring answers to these questions and gaining as much in-depth information as possible about the research topic through different data collection methods at a particular mainstream school.

As highlighted in Chapter 3, the research was undertaken through 13 open-ended questionnaires, 14 semi-structured interviews, document analysis and one focus group interview with all the participants. The first phase of the study included administering

open-ended questionnaires to provide the participants in this study the opportunity to express, qualify and clarify their understanding and perceptions (Ganga & Maphalala, 2015). The open-ended questions were formulated and constructed so that the responses of the participant could provide me with rich and relevant information regarding their understanding and knowledge of the support strategies for learners with intrinsic barriers to learning. The second phase included a document analysis where learner profiles were analysed and compared against questionnaire responses. The third phase included the individual interviews with participants. The final phase of the study was a follow-up member check in a form of a focus group interview with all the participants in order to bridge the gaps and to verify data that was gathered through the interviews. All these phases were empirical to ensure the gathering of rich data, as well as data saturation.

A thematic analysis was employed to analyse the data (cf. 3.4.5). The main categories were deductively determined as the questions in the initial data collection instrument, namely, the open questionnaire, provided the main categories. However, it is important to mention that the questions were primarily influenced by the literature review and in a lesser way by my own awareness. Thereafter, an inductive analysis was applied. The data gained from the questionnaire responses, interviews and document analysis was disseminated into themes and sub-themes using an open coding process by means of axial codes and rearranging of data. This involved searching for themes being important to the description of the studied phenomenon. The process involved careful reading and re-reading of data and recognising patterns within the data (Fereday, 2006). I have also made use of a sequencing code to highlight from which data set the quotation is taken and which participants' data is used (cf. Table 3.4).

P – Is used to refers to all participants' interviews, e.g., P1.

DA – Is used to refer to document analysis.

QP – Refers to questionnaire responses of participants, e.g., QP1.

SBSTCO – refers to the SBST co-ordinator.

QSBSTCO –refers to responses from the SBST co-ordinator's questionnaire.

During the explanation of themes and categories, the number of participants out of a total of 14 is addressed as follows:

- *few* refers to between one and two participants;
- *some* refers to between three and five participants;
- *many* refers to between six and eight participants, and
- *most* refers to between nine and 14 participants.

Table 4.1 captures all the categories, themes and sub-themes that emerged from the data.

Table 4.1: Categories, themes and sub-themes

Categories	Themes	Subthemes
Category 1: Describing intrinsic barriers to learning	Theme 1: Types of intrinsic barriers to learning	
	Theme 2: Types of intrinsic barriers to learning at the participant school	Sub-theme 1: Asthma
		Sub-theme 2: Hearing
		Sub-theme 3: Blindness
		Sub-theme 4: Cannot transcribe what is written on the board
		Sub-theme 5: Reading and writing
		Sub-theme 6: Low self-esteem
	Theme 3: Inside the learner	
	Theme 4: Born with	

	Theme 5: Complicate learning and development	
Category 2: Describing learner Support	Theme 1: Beyond formal delivery of content	
	Theme 2: Helping the learner	
	Theme 3: Strategies	
	Theme 4: Resources	
	Theme 5: Intervention	
Category 3: Strategies to support learners with intrinsic barriers to learning	Theme 1: Identifying learners	
	Theme 2: Extra mile	Sub-theme 1: During break
		Sub-theme 2: After school
	Theme 3: Work in groups	
	Theme 4: Peer learning	
	Theme 5: Breaking down tasks	
	Theme 6: Lower grade books	
	Theme 7: Change language	
	Theme 8: Lesson planning	
	Theme 9:Teaching aids	Sub-theme 1: Audio
		Sub-theme 2: Visuals
		Sub-theme 3: Technology
	Theme 10: Learner profiles	
	Theme 11: SNA 1 and SNA 2 forms	
Category 4: The role of the SBST		

Category 5: Collaboration	Theme 1: Collaboration among teachers	Sub-theme 1: Per phase
		Sub-theme 2: Per grade
		Sub-theme 3: Per subject
		Sub-theme 4: Sharing methods and strategies
	Theme 2: Collaboration with the SBST	
	Theme 3: Collaboration with the DBST	Sub-theme 1: Support from the DBST
		Sub-theme 2: Training
	Theme 4: Collaboration with parents	
	Theme 5: Referrals	

4.2 Research findings

4.2.1 Category 1: Describing intrinsic barriers to learning

The purpose of this study was to explore how Intermediate Phase teachers support learners who experience intrinsic barriers to learning in their classrooms. For this purpose, I had to determine how teachers understood what intrinsic barriers to learning entail by exploring how they describe intrinsic barriers to learning.

Participants mentioned the different types of intrinsic barriers to learning and many of them described intrinsic barriers to learning as “inside the learner”, “born with it” and “affecting learning and development”.

4.2.1.1 Theme 1: Types of intrinsic barriers to learning

The different types of intrinsic barriers to learning that were mentioned by the participants included:

> QSBSTCO: They include physical, sensory, neurological and developmental impairments, chronic illness (HIV) psycho-social disturbance and intellectual ability.

P2: Okay, when I said chronic illnesses ne, I meant that intrinsic barriers include chronic illnesses, because these learners do have chronic illness. Like now that we are facing COVID-19 there are learners that have chronic illnesses that cannot come to school, I think that is an intrinsic barrier.

P3: Intrinsic barriers include physical, sensory and neurological and development impairments, chronic illness, psycho-social disturbances and different intellectual ability.

4.2.1.2 Theme 2: Types of intrinsic barriers to learning at the participant school

Participants mentioned that the most common intrinsic barriers at the school were asthma, hearing, blindness, cannot transcribe what is written on the board, as well as reading and writing. This was reflected in the participants' responses.

4.2.1.2.1 Sub-theme 1: Asthma

P2: Here at school we experience illnesses, you know I think a barrier also [clarify] … illnesses such as asthma, also … mostly it is asthma. That's the only chronic illness that I know at the moment.

4.2.1.2.2 Sub-theme 2: Hearing

P 3: As I've said like hearing and being able to hear or see what is written on the board?

4.2.1.2.3 Sub-theme 3: Blindness

P4: You know some kids they experience the blindness.

P5: What *mina* (I) am experiencing at the moment now. Her eyesight is impaired, *konje yini* (what do you call this?) …

P12: Just like … if a learner is born blind, but they are not like blind so to say [probe]. Yes, we are having those, sometimes you know when they have to write they can't see clearly from the chalkboard, so they end up writing the wrong spelling.

4.2.1.2.4 Sub-theme 4: Cannot transcribe what is written on the board

P7: sometimes they can't really see, they can't transcribe what is written on the board. It is the impairment, mostly they are born with, it can be genetic you know?

P9: They can't transcribe like the date written here on the board they reserve some of it, because they cannot really transcribe what is written on the board.

P14: We do have, we do have those who cannot read, who cannot transcribe, uhm … I think *ngathi* (I can say) they are dyslexic because of the way they write *intozabo* (their school work).

4.2.1.2.5 Sub-theme 5: Reading and writing

P9: In class? I can basically say that most stem from the inability to read and write which is also caused by external influences, so I can say. Like from parents, previous teachers and all that yes. That's what I can say.

DA1: Needs support in home language, phonics, reading and writing.

DA2: She cannot read and spell words correctly.

DA3: Needs support in reading in the next grade.

DA4: Needs support on (sic) spelling as well as sentence construction.

4.2.1.3 Theme 3: Inside the learner

A few participants described intrinsic barriers to learning as arising from within the learner and is reflected in the following responses:

QP4: Intrinsic learning barriers are the factors that arise from the inside of the learner …

QP7: These barriers are within the individual; learners are born with it due to complications before birth or during birth and some are genetic.

4.2.1.4 Theme 4: Born with

Some participants mentioned that learners are born with intrinsic barriers to learning:

> QP4: Some learners are usually born with these specific characteristics.
>
> P7: These barriers are within the individual; learners are born with it due to complications before birth or during birth and some are genetic.
>
> QP9: Intrinsic barriers are barriers which most learners are usually born with such as physical, physiological impairments and personality characteristics.

4.2.1.5 Theme 5: Complicated learning and development

> QP4: Intrinsic learning barriers are the factors that arise from the inside of the learner but poses the threat to the learner or affect his/her learning such as physical, sensory, chronic illness, psycho social disturbances or impairments (blindness, deafness).
>
> QP7: Intrinsic barriers to learning are barriers that complicate the learner's development and learning.
>
> P9: These barriers hinders learner from performing well academically and also in term of developing well in totality.

4.2.2 Category 2: Describing learner Support

This study was guided by the primary question: *How do intermediate teachers support learners who experience intrinsic barriers to learning in their classrooms?*. In order to fully understand and explore the research question, I needed to get an insight in how participants described learner support. The themes that emerged were "beyond formal delivery", "helping the learner", "strategies", "resources" and "intervention".

4.2.2.1 Theme 1: Beyond formal delivery of content

A few participants indicated that learner support is about "beyond formal delivery of content" and is evidenced in the following statements:

QSBSTCO: It focuses on how the teacher help the learner beyond the formal delivery of content. These may include skill development.

QP2: Learner support it is the intervention that a teacher may offer to a learner, it includes counselling the learner beyond the formal delivery of the content, it includes scaffolding where the teacher identifies the difficulties that the learner may struggle with helping the learner to gain deep understanding of subject and topic being taught.

QP3: It focuses on what the teacher or instructor can or should do to help learners beyond the formal delivery of content or skills.

4.2.2.2 Theme 2: Helping the learner

Helping learners seems to be a consistent theme in many participants' view of describing learner support. The following responses affirm this theme:

QP4: It is to provide effective learning environment to help the learner with learning barriers.

QP7: Learner support is a way of helping a learner to learn, by using different strategies of teaching such as teaching aids to help a learner with learning barriers.

QP8: Learner support is using methods and strategies that will help enhance the learners' understanding and learning disabilities. Resources for learning, such as multimedia, e.g. TV, magazines can be used to help learner.

QP9: Learners support it when the teacher goes an extra mile to help and guide learners who experience any barriers to learning.

QP11: Learner support is a way of helping a learner to learn such as textbook, etc.

4.2.2.3 Theme 3: Strategies

Using different strategies were mentioned by a few participants and is reflected in the following responses:

QP7: Learner support is a way of helping a learner to learn, by using different strategies of teaching, such as teaching aids to help a learner with learning barriers.

QP5: It is the support that is given to learners in the form of resources, strategies, social and emotional support to enable learners with barriers to have an opportunity to learn.

QP8: Learner support is using methods and strategies that will help enhance the learners' understanding and learning disabilities.

4.2.2.4 Theme 4: Resources

Resources to help the learner were mentioned by a few participants and is evident in the following responses:

P6: A teacher makes the content to be much easier or the availability of resources to accommodate learners with intrinsic barriers.

P8: Resources for learning, such as multimedia, e.g., TV, magazines can be used to help learner.

4.2.2.5 Theme 5: Intervention

Learner support was also described as "intervention" by few participants and is reflected in the following responses:

QP2: Learner support it is the intervention that a teacher may offer to a learner, it includes counselling the learner beyond the formal delivery of the content, it includes scaffolding where the teacher identifies the difficulties that the learner may struggle with helping the learner to gain deep understanding of subject and topic being taught.

QP10: Learner support is the intervention offered by teachers to learners with learning barriers. The teachers are required to identify such learners, thereafter refer them to the SBST team.

4.2.3 Category 3: Learner support strategies

During my observations at the school, I noticed that the participants use different strategies to address diverse learner needs. My observations also corresponded with what the participants indicated as learner support strategies. These strategies include

identifying learners who experience intrinsic barriers to learning, going the extra mile during break and after school, as well as working in groups.

4.2.3.1 Theme 1: Identifying learners

Identify learners who experience barriers to learning in their classrooms was reported in the following responses:

> QP2: The teacher can identify the learner and also develop the learner by fostering appropriate skills and abilities to enable sufficient development to the learner.
>
> QP3: By making sure that the school has SBST and by identifying learners who are experiencing intrinsic barriers.
>
> P11: By identifying learners together as subject teachers.

4.2.3.2 Theme 2: Extra mile

Going an extra mile by sometimes staying in class during break and after school to support learners with intrinsic barriers to learning to catch up with work was mentioned by a few participants and is evident in the following responses.

4.2.3.2.1 Sub-theme 1: During break

> P12: Okay when we support these learners we have to go an extra mile to accommodate them right? Normally what we do is that during break, and I know that it's very wrong, because we need to allow them to have break. But normally we assist them during break time or else after school because we knock off at quarter past two so like the 15 minutes you use to do reading with them.

4.2.3.2.2 Sub-theme 2: After school

> P4: But now those kids that suffer with those impairments you have to accommodate them, you actually have to go an extra mile to accommodate them you know. So it is very hard to deal with that one, but as a teacher I would do extra 30 minutes after school so that I can get one-on-one sessions with the learner or maybe I would sometimes when they are busy writing the others, I would call them to where you are sitting [Interviewee's chair] then we engage.

P14: *Re sebedisa tsona di extra classes, di visuals, le dipractical things* (Extra-classes, visual aids, practical things).

P6: So we try them with that bearing in mind that it might be after school were we say “come guys, let’s do that” so that they can try that and know how a sentence is constructed.

P13: So these ones, the one-on-one session I normally do them during lunch or break. Then after school I spend like 30 minutes before I go home. Then those who are struggling, who don’t feel comfortable to asking me in the classroom. They come to me after school to do one-on-one.

4.2.3.3 Theme 3: Work in groups

During the observations I noted that learners are grouped according to strengths and abilities. This was also reflected in the participants’ responses:

P3: So, if you can see that other learners cannot hear clearly, you can do like arrangement in terms of how learners are arranged in the class, for example, those who are having challenges can be seated in front and those who you believe can hear clearly with no challenges of hearing can seated at the back. Encourage learners to work in groups and group them according to their abilities. So when we group them according to their abilities learners can be able to help each other. So by the support of their peers, learners can be able to participate to their abilities.

P3: Where they know that grouping learners according to barriers or knowing that in this class we are dealing with this kind of learners and this class we are dealing with this kind of learners, so that when you do preparation or when you go to that class you know what to expect I think it will also help.

P5: Encourage learners to work in groups and group them according to their abilities. So, when we group them according to their abilities learners can be able to help each other. So, by the support of their peer’s learners can be able to participate to their abilities.

4.2.3.4 Theme 4: Peer-learning

Peer learning was regarded as a learner support strategy by some participants. The following responses affirm this theme:

> QP3: Make learning participative. Encourage peer learning. Break tasks down in smaller steps that will incrementally build into the tasks objectives.

> QP4: Encourage peer learning.

> P5: So, it depends on the child, some see me as unapproachable you know, but maybe when I am teaching reading, they can read better with their peers than me, because … [probe] they understand each other. So peer learning, I have seen it, it really works a lot.

4.2.3.5 Theme 5: Breaking down tasks

During the observations I noticed that the participants use books from previous grades to break down tasks from simple to complex where learners in higher grades who struggle with reading for example are given work on lower grades until they improve. This observation was also confirmed by some of the participants:

> P3: But when you are breaking down it is like you are doing those steps that you think a learner might know to other learners. Some learners when you explain step-by-step it's when they are able to cope in class.

> P4: I will break down these tasks to small pieces, so that maybe they were writing let's say ten questions for that learner who is struggling you can make about two questions today, three questions tomorrow, and also bring objects because most of them learn by manipulating objects.

4.2.3.6 Theme 6: Lower grade books

Some participants mentioned the use of lower grade books to support learners. This is evidenced in the following responses:

> P3: Err, we give extra work, we go down to a lower level to give support to them and then there is an teacher with are working with from LSEN class [probe]. She

assists us with that, and then we go to *amaDBE* books from Grade 1 to Grade 3. Whatever we can get from the lower grades, then the volume of the work again, you can give less work while you are giving others more work, while you give others more work.

P5: There is not much that we have it is just to take books from the lower grade and then … that is just what we do. And then *mina* there's a study guide from *eskolweni* (school) that I use.

P6: So what is also needed is that as a teacher we should also try to render support and try to simplify the content of a book as much as possible for kids to understand.

P11: We support those learners by giving them work at a lower level. Maybe for instance I am a teacher in Grade 4 teaching English. So I will give a learner, maybe work from the previous grade, which is Grade 3.

P12: So, it is like you look for something that will accommodate them, may like you take the content from the previous grade, just like from Grade 6 to Grade 5 in order to accommodate them, so like you support them based on those content so that they may be able to catch up. Like if a learner can't read, ne? You take a book from [probe] the previous grade, especially the Foundation Phase book. So we give them those readers, we lead them as they read. It's like you sit with those learners while you assist him or her while they are reading.

4.2.3.7 Theme 7: Change language

Changing language to help learners understand concepts was asserted by a few participants. This is reflected in the following responses:

SBSTCO: We always tell teachers to change language to accommodate all learners.

P11: We have learners from different backgrounds, so our language of teaching and learning (LOLT) is English, but sometimes when a learner doesn't understand a concept, we try to explain it in their mother tongue.

4.2.3.8 Theme 8: Lesson planning

Some participants mentioned that lesson plans need to include learners with barriers. This is evident in the following responses:

> QP7: Lesson planning need to include learners with barriers and different teaching strategies need to be used, such as teaching aids, audios, picture, etc.
>
> QP9: Lesson plans must be specifically designed for learners with barriers so that their needs will be included.
>
> QP13: Plan classroom groups carefully.
>
> QP14: Lesson plans that will include learners with barriers and different teaching strategies need to use such as video and pictures.

4.2.3.9 Theme 9: Teaching aids

During my observations I noticed that the participants used various teaching aids to address learners' learning needs. Although audio resources were used, such as the audio tapes and radio, the majority of participants seemed to rely more on visual aids in forms of the chalkboard, colour charts, posters, books and flash cards to support learners in their classrooms. The school also has a library which is open after school and during lunch to accommodate learners who prefer a quiet space to do schoolwork.

However, the participants felt that the government should do more in terms of providing them with resources. These include "visual aids for the visually impaired" (P9).

> P9: maybe using more visuals or pictures let me so to say works, because it my work on a learner A but not work on a learner B. But we try to mix up to see which one best fit different learners.

In addition, the participants mentioned that they use teaching aids such as audio tapes and visual aids. This is evidenced in the following responses.

4.2.3.9.1 Sub-theme 1: Audio

> P4: Like you bring the brighter colours for the blind, you bring your audio …

QP7: Lesson planning need to include learners with barriers and different teaching strategies need to be used such as teaching aids, audios, picture, etc.

4.2.3.9.2 Sub-theme 2: Visuals

P2: Also a learner, like when a classroom has teaching aids the learner can already see that okay I need to read this, and teaching aids help because in the classroom when the teacher is not there, learners can read on the board/wall.

QP6: Lesson plans that will include learners with barriers and different teaching strategies need to use such as video and pictures

P9: I'll go an extra mile to assist the learner using pictures.

P11: As I've mentioned earlier on, the other strategy was visual aids. You use visual aids when the learner cannot really be vocal. Try to use that.

P12: Teaching aids, because I think other learners learn through seeing. So I think if we can get like teaching aids like the charts and all of those things *ja* (yes), I think that is where they can assist.

QP14: I'll go an extra mile to assist the learner using pictures, because I think the learner can learn more if they see something.

P14: *Re sebedisa tsona di extra classes, di visuals, le dipractical things* (Extra-clasess, visual aids, practical things).

4.2.3.9.3 Sub-theme 3: Technology

QP4: Technology and task breakdown

P6: Lastly, learners with hearing impairments should be provided with hearing aids to help amplify the voice of the teacher.

P8: Visual and teaching technology in the classroom can be of great help to learners with intrinsic barriers as they will be learning about practical experiences in the classroom environment.

4.2.3.10 Theme 10: Learner profiles

As mentioned earlier in Chapter two, the department of education has introduced a number of documents that teachers can utilise in order to support learners, which include learner profiles (cf. 2.8.1.4), as well as the SNA 1 and SNA 2 forms as part of the SIAS policy (cf. 2.8.1.4). During the classroom observation it appeared that the participants utilised the learner profile to provide them with more information about the learner and keep record of their progress. This was evident in their responses where most of them said that they used the learner profile to monitor learners' progress, but that it is sometimes not completed properly.

> P5: Can I be brutally honest? Okay … [laughs], *amaprofiles* (the profiles) yes they are there. But sometimes you get a profile with just the personal information and nothing, so there is not much to take from a profile to use, there is not much.

> P9: Err, we actually talk about it because we have a book … A learner profile, so we talk about a learner, we see that we all go through the same problems in our respective subjects with a certain learner so we can draft one overall report when it comes to learner profile.

> P11: The learner profile is very important because it should be having the information about the learner from the previous grade. But sometimes you find that they even get to us they are not filled in properly, you don't get such information that you are looking for. Because some teachers have skipped the part of the previous grade, so now we have to start afresh. Some of them do not even have those profiles, because some of them are from other schools.

4.2.3.11 Theme 11: SNA 1 and SNA 2 forms

Furthermore a few participants also stated that they use the support forms (SNA 1 and SNA 2) for referral. This is evident in the following responses:

> P5: Yes, they do that, and if they feel that the child can cope in the mainstream, then the child can be in the mainstream but if the child cannot cope we complete the SNA 1 and SNA 2 and take it back to the coordinator for appointment with the district to do and do proper screening.

P13: Then those who are really struggling we refer them to that class by filling the SNA 1 and SNA 2 forms, you understand?

4.2.4 Category 4: The role of the SBST

With regard to the role of the SBST in ensuring successful implementation of learner support some participants described the SBST as non-existent and not functioning. This is confirmed in the following responses:

P4: There is none *Mnr* (mister), can I say it blandly? There is none. I for one I do not know the function. I know the function of the SBST, but I have never seen it effective and put into practice in my work environment, never!

P9: Err, our SBST is something that is not functional in our school, so we don't get any much support from them.

P12: [laughs] *Theta inyane* (be honest) yes we do have the SBST [probe] but to speak the honest truth it is not functional [laughs]. It is not, like especially if you are new in this field, ne? I think that's when you need support from them, so that they guide you in terms of supporting these learners, then you just go around and ask "how am I supposed to assist these learners?" but then the functionality of it [laughs], I wouldn't say it's functional because I believe that if it was functional we would be having like meetings, maybe once per term or more frequently I don't know.

However not all the participants expressed negative experience with regard to the SBST, some described the SBST as fairly functional. The SBST provides teachers with learner support books, strategies on how to support learners and other resources. In addition, learners who have severe learning barriers are referred to the SBST, the committee then completes support forms (SNA 1 and SNA2) for those learners, and then those learners are referred to the LSEN class (cf. 4.4.2) at the school.

P2: Yes, actually the SBST helps the learner also, as much as you've helped the learner. You take the learner to the SBST and the SBST also intervenes and helps the learner.

P3: Like … Learners with barriers to learning, like with SBST we can have like a list of learners with challenges and then some other learners here at our school. We are having an LSEN class, some other learners are being referred there [clarifying].

P5: What the SBST does, is that we identify and give to the coordinator, the coordinator will give some strategies and few activities to give to the learner and then if the activities are not working, we take the learner to the LSEN class.

The SBST co-ordinator also mentioned that they have regular meetings with the teachers where they give reports on the progress of the referred learners. I requested to see the minutes of their previous meetings to analyse what they discuss in their meetings. Unfortunately the co-ordinator could not provide those minutes. I could not confirm if they are not available or if the participant simply did not want to give them to me, maybe because of confidentiality issues.

4.2.5 Category 5: Collaboration

The importance of collaboration is captured in the following response: To establish a supportive relationship with the learner. Collaboration encourages learning and teaching experience (P3).

The category of collaboration can be divided into the following themes: collaboration among teachers which include the following sub-themes; collaboration per phase, per grade and per subject, as well as sharing methods and strategies.

4.2.5.1 Theme 1: Collaboration among teachers

During the observations, I became aware of an ethos of team work and willingness among the participants to help each other to support learners. A sharing of resources in order to support learners was evident which appeared to lead to a positive working environment. Although the participants reported meetings per phase, grade and subject, I noted the

regular meetings between grade teachers to discuss their challenges as well as strategies on how to support learners. For example, the Grade 4 teachers would gather to discuss learners who they have identified as experience barriers to learning, while filling in the support forms and also devising strategies on how to support the identified learners. However, the meetings seem not to be held or conducted in a formal structured manner as there are no minutes taken. These observations were also reflected in participants' responses.

4.2.5.1.1 Sub-theme 1: Per phase

> P2: You know it's not really difficult in the Intermediate Phase, because as teachers get together and identify those learners. And also when we have identified those learners a teacher in a specific subject can intervene in their own way, for example, a teacher in maths can intervene in maths and a teacher in natural science can intervene in natural science, also in language and all of those subjects. That is how we do collaboration.

4.2.5.1.2 Sub-theme 2: Per grade

> P3: Teachers can collaborate by helping each other by identifying those learners, and then they can also do class arrangements.

> P4: Well, I would say maybe per grade. At this time for me it works as a grade, because my grade peer colleagues, we collaborate, we come up with uniform standard thing, we discuss issues, we come up with certain maybe how to fight whatever and come up with solutions. But as a school I wouldn't say much that we what what what.

> P5: In my grade what we do, is that we identify the learners and then we make sure that we support to the learners. We get extra books for the support and then that is where we do the support. And then we get material from other teachers that we can use (inaudible) and then we use that for those support books.

> P11: Normally we meet as the Grade 4 teachers, as I've said earlier on that we are classroom based. So we normally collaborate, we work together as a team

whereby we try to identify learners in each and every class and then try to work towards that.

P14: *Ketlore eng?* (What can I say?) [greetings] As teachers, like *aker rona harele matichere a Grade 7 emong le emong ona le subject ya hae eo a tichang, re kanna ra kopana. Emong le emong a bue problem eo ya nang le yona ka ngwana maybe reka fumana hore* we all have the same problem with one child (We as Grade 7 teachers who teach different subjects, can meet and discuss the problems we encounter in our classrooms from learners, maybe we'll realise that we have the same problem with a specific learner). *So reka kopana ha bontshana hore re mothusa jwang rele matichere a different subjects* (So we can meet and discuss how we can help the learners as teachers of different subjects).

4.2.5.1.3 Sub-theme 3: Per subject

P9: Teachers can form different groups for each subject to assist one another in terms of supporting learners or he regular workshops

P11: By identifying learners together as subject teachers. Thereafter teachers work as a unity in supporting learners with barriers.

P12: I think if we can form groups, especially like for each subject and meet, because you will find that the experience that I am having is not the same as the other teachers. So once we meet as teachers and design a group, specifically for each subject like let's say I am teaching English and like other teachers in other grades who are also teaching English, then we meet and then discuss how we are going to assist these learners moving forward. So I think it can help if we can have such groups.

P13: Alright, we as teachers normally we discuss [probe], then another teacher for example English teacher will tell me that "hey *Mnr* (mister)I have a struggle the learners cannot even write their names", then *mina* (myself) as a maths teacher we are only doing numbers you understand?

P14: Teachers can form groups for each subject to assist one another in terms of supporting learners.

4.2.5.1.4 Sub-theme 4: Sharing methods and strategies

Participants also explained that they collaborate to share methods and strategies on how to support learners in their respective classrooms. This is evidenced in the following responses:

P4: A professionally trained teacher can assist teachers in general classrooms with strategies on how to adequately support the learner with intrinsic barriers.

P5: Teachers can have groups in which they will meet up and discuss strategies that can be used to empower the learners and update one another on the progress registered.

P8: Teachers can collaborate by sharing methods and strategies that works for intrinsic barrier learners, also by giving feedback on the progress and development of learners. Team work.

P9: Teachers can form different groups for each subject to assist one another in terms of supporting learners or have regular workshops

4.2.5.2 Theme 2: Collaboration with the SBST

The participants asserted collaboration with the SBST as important and is affirmed in the following responses:

P5: The SBST will be able to give more strategies to deal with each learner's individual needs/barrier and a decision can be taken to further refer the learner for screening.

P9: Collaboration between teachers and SBST is important because the SBST may provide more strategies and resources in helping learners with barriers.

P11: It is very vital that the two structures work well together, so that the learner can be assisted effectively. The role of the SBST is to give more strategies to teacher and it needs to be effective.

SBSTCO: Teachers teaching inclusive education need a special training in special needs education as to work collaboratively with other teachers in order to provide support to learners in their classrooms.

P4: It is important to discuss the findings on the learning barriers from both sides so that the SBST will determine the needs of the learner support, support the teacher and coordinate the necessary screening and assessment.

P6: Collaboration is that of paramount as it helps to identify, support and at least remedy the challenges that learners with intrinsic barriers are faced with.

P8: To also ensure that development of the learner is considered and appropriately supported.

P11: *Ja* (Yes), they give us ways of how you can assist a learner. You can try this way, that way, different approaches.

4.2.5.3 Theme 3: Collaboration with the DBST

I had an interview with the SBST co-ordinator to find out more about collaboration between the structures. She indicated that there was some collaboration between the school and the DSBT, particularly with regards to assessment and placement of learners in the relevant schools and LSEN class. As highlighted in the previous section, the SBST committee is responsible for completion of support forms of learners who experience barriers to learning and the submission of those forms to the DSBT. The DBST then sends a group of specialists to assess the identified learners. Furthermore, learners are given an LSEN number and then later placed in the LSEN or full-service schools.

Two subthemes emerged from this theme, namely support from the DBST and training.

4.2.5.3.1 Sub-theme 1: Support from the DBST

Some participants stated the following:

SBSTCO: *Bayeza bangezi* (They do come sometimes) *mina* (I) like now there are a few that I am writing for *amaSNA1* and SNA 2, and then we'll be submitting and waiting for the district to come and support.

P4: Then the district will assess the child to see if they belong to the special class by giving them their LSEN number.

P4: We are really not getting much support [probe] from the district but I also think that our mainstream schools maybe still knowledge on how to accommodate learners with barriers you understand? We need a lot of workshops on to such what what what. So we are not getting the support from them.

P14: *Yare support mahn, ya re support. Ba refa di study materials, eya re thola everything from the district etla re supporta and le di facilitator di very cooperative* (yes we do have, it is very supportive, we get everything from the district we get everything that van support us and facilitators are very cooperative).

Although the SBST coordinator stated that there is collaboration between these structures, she indicated that the level of support was not enough, as they only get visits from the DBST once or twice annually.

SBSTCO: We do have collaboration especially *hare refera bana ba sokolang* (when we refer learners who experience barriers). They come once or twice per year to assess learners. Others are sent to special schools and others go to the LSEN class.

P4: It is once in a while you know. It's really once in a while because we also have a special class.

Moreover, teachers seem to have little or no knowledge about the district based support team, this was evident in their responses when asked about collaboration between the school and the DBST:

P2: I am not aware.

P5: I would just like to add that we are not getting the support we need, because it is also discouraging to do your work when you do not have the support you need. You will go an extra mile, giving extra work, more work sheets, lower level *eng,*

eng (what not) but when you take it for submission that these ones are not capable of going to the next grade.

P11: Errr, *hai* I wouldn't comment much on that one [laughs].

P13: I cannot really say that, I will never say… I will be committing myself to something I don't know.

4.2.5.3.2 Sub-theme 2: Training

One other positive aspect that the participants mentioned was that they had workshops and training quarterly at the beginning of every term conducted by the district. However, the participants stated that the workshops were only based on curriculum matters and not on learner support. This is evidenced in the following responses:

P6: They once conducted this workshop, I think it was scriber. Yes, I think it was a scriber workshop whereby they were giving us strategies of saying that if a learner at times can be able to speak but fail in terms of writing.

P9: *Ja* (Yes), we do get workshops, but it's a general workshop it doesn't deal particular with learners at risk, even though sometimes we do pose some questions in the workshop on how do we deal with certain kind, but it's not something formal.

4.2.5.4 Theme 4: Collaboration with parents

The participants mentioned that parents were not cooperative, especially when it came to supporting learners who experience barriers. Furthermore, the participants asserted that parents also failed to avail themselves whenever they were asked to come to school to discuss the learners' progress.

P5: I don't know what happened, I have not seen the parent since it was lockdown.

P4: I would just like to add that we are not getting the support we need, because it is also discouraging to do your work when you do not have the support you need.

P7: Parents need to be educated by teachers about their exact roles and what is expected from them to support the learning of their children who experience intellectual barriers to learning.

P7: The relationship is not good, because parents feel like we are criticizing their children.

P11: *Tjo tjo batho bao ba sokodisa* (those people are giving us problems), they only come for report cards.

P12: To tell you the truth, they are not involved, that's the honest truth. Because sometimes you find that if you are having challenges you write a letter and issue it to a parent. But only to find that the parents don't come to school, so that's the challenge we are having. We don't have the parent involvement.

4.2.5.5 Theme 5: Referrals

Referrals was identified as a prominent theme within the category of collaboration. This is evident in the following responses:

P3: Like ... Learners with barriers to learning, like with SBST we can have like a list of learners with challenges and then some other learners here at our school. We are having an LSEN class, some other learners are being referred there.

P5: What the SBST does, is that we identify and give to the coordinator, the coordinator will give some strategies and few activities to give to the learner and then if the activities are not working, we take the learner to the LSEN class. We are having an LSEN class; some other learners are being referred there [clarifying].

P6: Number one we have a school-based support team (SBST) what we do is, we work as a team and then we also like do referrals. We do give referrals like when one cannot do a particular job, maybe a certain teacher can try to help out, but with the SBST it is the one where we normally say this is "this is where we rely on" and then they'll take the matter forward.

P11: If the learner really can't say that word then the learner really needs to be referred, and be assessed by the specialist.

P13: Err, we refer learners, particularly those who are struggling. Then we have that remedial class, the LSEN class. Then those who are really struggling we refer them to that class by filling the SNA 1 and SNA 2 forms, you understand?

P14: Then you call the parent, *oyetsa meeting le bona, o ba bontshe hore this person ona le problem e so and so* (arrange a meeting with them to show them that the learner has a problem) and then you refer it to the LSEN class.

In the next section the findings will be discussed and interpreted.

4.3 Discussion and interpretation

This study was aimed at exploring the strategies that Intermediate Phase teachers use to support learners who experience intrinsic barriers to learning in their classrooms. In this section the categories, themes and sub-themes that emerged from the data gathered from interviews, semi-structures questionnaires and document analysis are discussed and interpreted under eight categories (cf. Table 4.1) as specified: describing intrinsic barriers to learning (cf. 4.2.1); describing learner support (cf. 4.2.2); strategies to support learners with intrinsic barriers to learning (cf. 4.2.3); the role of the SBST (cf. 4.2.4); and collaboration (cf. 4.2.5). Furthermore, these findings are discussed and linked to the literature that was presented in Chapter 2.

4.3.1 Defining intrinsic barriers to learning

The participants mentioned different types of barriers to learning, such as physical, sensory, neurological and developmental impairments, chronic illness (HIV), psycho-social disturbance and intellectual ability. COVID-19 has been included by one participant as a chronic illness. The participants reported the following impairments as intrinsic barriers to learning occurring at the school where the study was conducted, namely: asthma, hearing problems, blindness, cannot transcribe what is written on the board, as well as reading and writing. Nel et al. (2016) describe intrinsic barriers as neurological

disabilities, developmental impairments, psychological disturbances and various intellectual abilities, sensory and learning disabilities (cf. 2.4). In addition, intrinsic barriers to learning were also depicted as “inside” the learner, as well as “born with” and “complicating learning and development”. From these descriptions it seems as if the participants have a general understanding what intrinsic barriers to learning entail, but an in-depth knowledge which could assist in the support of these learners appears to be lacking. A report by the Human Rights Watch (HRW) in South Africa asserted that children with disabilities are affected by a number of factors, including a dearth of teaching knowledge, training and skills (HRW, 2015). Many of these intrinsic barriers to learning can be a result of being born with it due to genetics or birth complications, but they can also be acquired due to medical or traumatic causes (Nel, Nel et al., 2016; cf. 2.4) which the participants did not mention. Furthermore, despite the fact that these are intrinsic barriers to learning and “within” the learner, Booth (2011) asserts that children with disabilities should be seen as whole people and their participation in education and society should not depend only on overcoming their disabilities, but must include the acknowledgement of their identities that have to do with their background, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, etc. None of the participants referred to the issue that learners with intrinsic barriers to learning could also experience barriers to learning as a result of background issues. Since the case study focuses on a full-service school, where a range of barriers to learning must be accommodated, it is important that teachers’ lack of knowledge and skill do not become a barrier in itself (DoE, 2010). Examples of a possible lack of knowledge and skills are exampled in the subsequent paragraphs.

Participants indicated that some learners at the school are asthmatic. Asthma is a respiratory illness which affects the lungs of an individual and according to A’Bear (2014), HIV, asthma and lung diseases are prevalent diseases which can affect school children. Furthermore, children who suffer from chronic illnesses have been known to often stay out of school because of spending long periods of time in hospital due to the illness (Muntanero & Forteza, 2014). This was evident in one of the interviews where a participant cited that one of her learners had been absent from school because of asthma. Chronic diseases, such as the current COVID-19 illness, result in learners being absent from school regularly and in many instances for long times which could impact on successful learning and development (Mahaye, 2020).

Hearing problems and blindness, which are sensory impairments, were mentioned by participants. Sensory impairments refer to an impairment in one or more senses, such as sight, vision, hearing or taste (A'Bear, 2014). According to participants, some learners in the school have hearing impairments (cf. 4.2.1.2.2), as well as visual impairments such as blindness (cf. 4.2.1.2.3). Anatia, Sabers and Stinson (2007) defines a hearing impairment as loss of hearing that prevents a person from hearing sounds through the ears. However, the impairment varies from learner to learner (Bell & Swart, 2018). Therefore, teachers need to be flexible and use various strategies to accommodate such learners in their classrooms, which may include facial expressions, gestures and other body languages (Durocher et al., 2019). None of these were mentioned as learner support strategies by the participants. In addition to hearing impairments, participants also cited blindness as another intrinsic barrier at the school. Maindi (2018) explains that in an education context, learners are categorised as either partially sighted, have low vision, are legally blind or are totally blind which indicates that there are different levels of being visually impaired and consequently need various learning support measures (cf. 4.2.3). For example, they may require adaptations in light, size print or sometimes even braille and learners who are totally blind are those who learn via braille or other non-visual media (Shivani & Rampersad, 2018) Yet, participants did not mention these as learning support strategies (cf.4.2.2.3) and also did not state the degree of impairment that learners experienced but rather used the word "blind" to refer to learners who have visual impairments at the school. However, during the observations I did not notice any learner who were totally blind and moreover this school do not have the equipment (e.g., braille) and facilities (e.g., appropriate infrastructure) to accommodate such learners. One can therefore assume that learners in this school are partially sighted, have a low vision or are short-sighted.

According to participants some learners at the school could not transcribe what is written on the board (cf. 4.2.1.2.4). Karimi (2013) highlights different types of learning disabilities that consist of reading (i.e., dyslexia) mathematics (i.e., dyscalculia) and writing (i.e.y, dysgraphia). These conditions can be caused by a dysfunction in the central nervous system (Angelka & Goran, 2018). Even so, one cannot conclude that the learners in School A who failed to transcribe had dysgraphia. There are a lot factors in class that could be contributing to learners' failure to transcribe, such as a visual problem, the size of the teacher's hand writing on the board, the style of writing the teacher uses to write,

as well as where the learner is seated in the classroom (Roni & Merga, 2019). Reading and writing (cf. 4.2.1.2.5) was also mentioned as other intrinsic barriers that learners experienced in the school. This finding concurs with PIRLS results of 2016 that revealed that 78 percent of South African learners could not read at grade level (Spaull, 2017). Moreover, Phala and Hugo (2016) assert that Intermediate Phase learners read below their grade level. One participant (P9) in particular cited that other barriers to learning stemmed from the learners' inability to read and write.

> *In class? I can basically say that most stem from the inability to read and write which is also caused by external influences, so I can say. Like from parents, previous teachers and all that yes. That's what I can say.*

This statement concurs with Ntinda et al. (2019) that learners with sensory impairments, which occurs in the case study school, may have poor reading levels and experience low academic achievements.

4.3.2 Describing learner support

To explore how the participants understand learner support they were asked to describe learner support from their own perspective and understanding.

It transpired from the findings that participants seem to have a basic understanding of learner support as most of them described learner support as helping the learner (cf. 4.2.2.2), beyond formal delivery (cf. 4.2.2.1) or an intervention (cf. 4.2.2.4) to help learners (cf. 4.2.2.2) by using strategies and resources (cf. 4.2.2.4). These descriptions concur with Engelbrecht et al.'s (2016) explanation of learner support as applying different strategies and interventions that enable teachers to cope with a diversity of learning and teaching needs in a classroom. It also appears that participants' definition of learner support originates from the EWP6 (DoE, 2001) that defines learner support as any form of support, help, support, assistance or guidance given to learners who experience barriers to learning.

It was discussed in Chapter 2 (cf. 2.7) that teachers should use various strategies to accommodate diverse learning needs in their classrooms. In order to answer the primary research question of the study which is "*How do Intermediate Phase teachers support learners who experience intrinsic barriers to learning in their classrooms?"* participants

were asked to describe the strategies they use in their classrooms to support learners who experience intrinsic barriers to learning. A number of themes and sub-themes emerged from participants' responses. The themes include: identifying learners, going the extra mile, working in groups, peer learning, breaking down tasks, using lower grade books, changing the language, as well as using teaching aids, learner profiles and SNA 1 and SNA2 forms.

Identifying learners who have intrinsic barriers to learning is essential in order to ensure that they receive appropriate learning support (Nel, Tlale et al., 2016). This was asserted by one participant who said that "The teacher can identify the learner and also develop the learner by fostering appropriate skills and abilities to enable sufficient development to the learner". Furthermore, most participants mentioned going the *extra mile* (cf. 4.2.3.2) to support learners. They explained that they usually use breaks or extra time after school to provide additional support on a one to one basis with learners who are "struggling". In the current educational system, contact time appears not to be adequate for learners to accumulate all the knowledge and skills they need in order to succeed (Mkhuma et al., 2014). Consequently, teachers extend schools hours and add after-school programmes which are integrated with the curriculum (Mkhuma et al., 2014). During this time additional learning support can be provided and programmes with regard to social skills and cultural experiences can also be presented (Donohue & Bornman, 2014). It is evident from the findings that the "extra mile" is one of the most common strategies that the participants employ to support learners.

In addition, the participants also mentioned *grouping learners* (cf. 4.2.3.3) according to their strengths and abilities. The statements made by the participants seem to indicate that the participants use homogeneous groups where learners with the same abilities are grouped together as this helps them to know with which kind of learners they are dealing. For example, P3 stated: "Where they know that grouping learners according to barriers or knowing that in this class we are dealing with this kind of learners and this class we are dealing with this kind of learners, so that when you do preparation or when you go to that class you know what to expect I think it will also help". In a study by Wang (2013) it was found that heterogeneous grouping based on learner ability seem to be more beneficial for learner achievement and satisfaction, especially for learners with a low intellectual ability, while in certain instances high and medium level ability learners appear

to benefit more in homogeneous groups. Group work can also be used for co-operative learning, and is also known for encouraging peer-learning (cf. 4.2.3.4) where learners work together towards a common goal. One of the participants affirmed that when reading with peers it seems to help with understanding.

Peer learning involves information sharing and managing information while group members encourage each other during the process (Fourie & Hooijer, 2018). Bojuwoye et al. (2014) assert that peer mentoring and study groups also support effective learning by allowing learners to engage in meaningful discussions among themselves in group work, which can also motivate and enhance meaningful learning, as well as social and personal development of learners. Furthermore, Anderson and Boyle(2015) describes peer-learning as a successful teaching strategy in which small groups of learners with different abilities use a variety of learning activities to improve their understanding of a subject. It is also known for motivating and enhancing learners' self-esteem.

Breaking down tasks (cf. 4.2.3.5) was also cited as one of the strategies for supporting learners. Participants also described it as explaining step by step or breaking it down in small pieces, for example, when there are 10 questions for the learner who is struggling, two questions can be done one day and three questions the following day, etc. Breaking down tasks can also involve straddling. Straddled learning implies that learners work on the same thematic knowledge, concepts and skills, but at a lower grade/phase level, but also to the breaking down of tasks from simple to complex (Fourie & Hooijer, 2018). An example of straddling can be where a maths teacher starts with a simple additional sum before moving to explain more complex sums like multiplication or division, or designing lower level assessment tasks using Bloom's taxonomy. Linking to the strategy of breaking down tasks (i.e., straddling), is the use of learning material and books from a lower grade and was also described by the participants (cf. 4.2.3.6).

The school's LoLT is English which seems to be causing barriers to learning and consequently the participants indicate that they *change the language* of teaching to the learners' mother tongue to help them understand concepts better (cf. 4.2.3.7). Yahaya et al. (2010), as well as Nel and Theron (2008) affirm that teaching and learning for many South African learners take place through a language which is not their first language, and does not only place learners at a disadvantage, but it also often leads to significant linguistic difficulties which contribute to learning breakdown. This can also be the case in

school, hence teachers feel the need to change the language to the mother tongue of learners in order to accommodate them (cf. 4.2.3.7).

The participants also referred to *lesson planning* (cf. 4.2.3.8) as another strategy for support where they indicated that it needs to include learners with barriers and plan for different teaching strategies. According to Walton (2017), lesson plans should be carefully planned to accommodate diverse learning needs, and they should include the resources, strategies and activities to be used for catering for learners who experience barriers. However, unfortunately when participants were asked to present examples of the lesson plans, they explained that it was against the school policy to share documents that were in their files and therefore could not provide lesson plans. Thus, I could not confirm their statements and gain more data about how they do their lesson planning.

In order for teachers to successfully support learners who experience intrinsic barriers, a variety of resources, such as *teaching aids* need to be applied (Oliva, 2016). The participants mentioned audio, visual and technological aids. According to the participants, pictures, videos and charts are used as visual aids. I observed that participants seemed to rely more on visual aids in forms of the chalkboard, colour charts, posters, books and flash cards to support learners in their classrooms, but they also used audio tapes and the radio. Using a variety of teaching equipment create a fun atmosphere and learning environment for learners. Grieve and Haining (2011) assert that a fun and positive environment contributes to physical, psychological and instructional development. Videos and audios can also be used for activities, such as listening and speaking in English where learners listen or watch a story and then retell or summarise a story for the teacher. Audio tapes can also be useful for learners who experience visual impairments (cf. 2.3.4.3.2). Furthermore, learners can be assessed on their ability to listen rather than writing and reading ability, for example learners can listen to a story and the teacher can ask learners questions based on the story were the learner responds orally. In addition to the aforementioned resources, participants also mentioned the use of technology (cf. 4.2.3.9.3). Participants mentioned the used of hearing aids to amplify the teachers' voice for those who experience hearing impairments. Unfortunately, advanced technological tools do not seem available at the school. This includes computers, projectors and smart boards, which can also be used to enlarge the font for those with visual impairments and also to accommodate those who experience learning difficulties (cf. 2.3.4.1). Learning

difficulties refer to difficulties in the acquisition and use of listening, speaking, reading and writing (Karimi, 2013) and it has been reported that the use of audio, visual and technological equipment can develop and enhance successful learning.

A requirement of the DBE is to keep record of learners' background and progress through the completion of learner profiles by every teacher (Karimi, 2013). The learner profile was also mentioned by the participants as part of their learning support strategies (cf. 2.8.1.4). According to the SIAS document (cf. 4.2.3.11), the learner profile should have basic information about the learner including documents such as learner's year-end report cards, reports from other professionals (doctors and nurses), parents and other relevant stakeholders (DBE, 2014). However, participants expressed mixed emotions about how the learner profile is utilised in the school. Some teachers mentioned that learner profiles were available, but were not utilised effectively as some profiles lacked important background and personal information on learners. However, during the document analysis I was allowed to view a few profiles that were completed in full. However, these were profiles for learners who were awaiting assessment by the DBST and were experiencing barriers to learning. Thus, it could appear as if the teachers in the school only completed the profiles of learners who have to be assessed by the DBST

The participants also mentioned the use of SNA 1 and SNA 2 forms (cf. 4.2.3.11). According to the SIAS policy, teachers are guided by the SIAS policy in terms of supporting learners (DBE, 2014). According to the SIAS policy, support starts with completing SNA 1; during this stage the teacher must screen all the learners and should be guided by the learner profile (DBE, 2014). The following information is addressed in the SNA 1: the areas of concern, basic information gathered, as well as strengths and needs across a broad spectrum of areas. In cases where support given by teachers proves to be futile, the teacher should report the matter to the SBST who will then need to fill in the SNA 2. The SNA 2 is a document that guides the SBST when a learner is referred to them (SIAS, 2014). Participants mentioned that they used these documents to refer learners who were struggling to the SBST (cf. 4.2.5.2). This concurs with Grieve and Haining (2011), that teachers need to try to support learners in their classrooms before referring them to the SBST. From the findings it seems that participants have knowledge on how to implement these documents as they use various strategies and resources (cf. 4.2.2.3) to support learners before referring them to the SBST.

Based on the findings and the above discussion thereof it appears as the participants are attempting to support learners who have intrinsic barriers to learning through various ways. However, the role of the SBST is critical in the successful implementation of learner support.

4.3.3 The role of the SBST

The SBST play a central role in the support of learners who experience intrinsic barriers to learning at a full-service schools (Dreyer et al., 2012). However, some participants indicated that this team seem to be “non-existent” and “not functioning” (cf. 4.2.5.2), while one participant did affirm that the team is “fairly functional” (cf.4.2.5.2). By fairly functional the participant explained that the “SBST provides teachers with learner support books, strategies on how to support learners and other resources” (cf. 4.2.2.4). The SBST should interact with the DBST who provides integrated specialised services to schools. It is also considered pivotal for SBSTs to develop intensive strategies in supporting teachers to address learning barriers (Sefudi, 2020). They also assist with the SNA1 and SNA 2 forms and referral of learners who experience barriers to the DBST. The role of the SBST is further discussed in the next section (cf. 4.3.5).

Learner support without collaboration between different role players can be challenging (Sefudi, 2020).

4.3.4 Collaboration

Collaboration is defined as the process of two or more parties working together hand-in-hand to achieve a common objective and goal (Adams et al., 2016). Ainscow (2016), further affirm that the collaboration between parents, schools, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), local and regional districts is important for the successful implementation of inclusive education in a full-service school. The Salamanca Statement further recognised that all-inclusive systems and schools are only possible with the co-operation and collaboration of teachers, parents, families, and volunteers committed to inclusion (UNESCO, 1994). In this section, I aim to describe the findings of collaboration amongst different stakeholders as described by the participants. The themes that emerged from this category included collaboration between teachers per phase (cf. 4.2.5.1), per grade (cf. 4.2.5.2) and per subject (cf. 4.2.5.3), as well as sharing methods and strategies. The other themes addressed collaboration with the SBST (cf. 4.2.5.2),

DBST (cf. 4.2.5.3) and parents (cf. 4.2.5.4). The issue of referrals was also identified as a theme (cf. 4.2.5.5).

Walton (2017) asserts that *collaboration between teachers* has a positive impact and contributes to school improvement. This approach involves working together in teams, sharing responsibilities and resources, providing feedback and building trust amongst individuals. When teachers depend on each other for support, they develop relationships based on trust. The participants met in phases, grades and per subject, but during my observations I noted that the teachers at the school mostly met in grades. The participants stated that they usually talk about the problems they experience with learners and how to identify the problem, as well as how to support the learners. The participants also stated that they share resources and also strategies on how to support learners who experience barriers. This concurs with Ainscow (2016), as well as Eloff and Kgwete (2007), who assert that collaboration must be about sharing resources, aiming towards common goals and the ability to work together.

The participants also asserted that *collaboration with the SBST* is important. An SBST is considered as a valuable resource for schools for the implementation of inclusive education as this team is responsible for guiding and supporting inclusive teaching and learning processes at school level (DoE, 2001). It was mentioned by the participants that collaboration with the SBST may provide more strategies and resources to help learners with barriers more effectively. It was also stated that the SBST could help determine the needs of learner support, then support the teacher, as well as coordinate the screening and assessment of learners with barriers. The SBST member emphasised that this team need special training in special needs to work collaboratively with other teachers and provide support to learners (cf. 4.2.5.1). Thus, it is essential that the SBST must be able to identify and support learners, and assist teachers with supporting learners, as well as addressing other sociological needs within the school (Motitswe, 2017). However, the participants had mixed feelings about the effectiveness of the SBST. Most participants described the SBST at the school as very supportive (cf. 4.2.4) in terms of providing them with strategies (cf. 4.2.2.3) on how to support learners who experience barriers to learning and helping them with referrals for further assessment or placement in LSEN classes (cf. 4.2.5.2). Conway (2017) concurs that in cases where support given by the teacher proves to be insufficient and/or ineffective, he or she should report the matter to the SBST who

could then determine if further support is needed in which case the DBST can be asked to assist (DBE, 2014). However, not all participants were satisfied with the SBST as some participants described the SBST as non-functional and that they received little or no support from the SBST. One of the participants was very disappointed in the SBST which was evident in her response: “There is none Mnr (mister), can I say it bluntly? There is none. I for one I do not know the function. I know the function of the SBST, but I have never seen it effective and put into practice in my work environment, never!”. These findings concur with Conway’s (2017) study that most SBST members form part of the teaching staff and therefore often cannot provide sufficient support to other teachers since they also have pressure of curriculum-related matters.

Awareness during my observations was that there seems to be no minute taking when teachers or the SBST meet. However, these minutes could be available, but the participants maybe felt uncomfortable to share them due to confidentiality issues. Thus, it was very difficult to determine how the learner support progress of learners reported to the SBST is measured or monitored. From the above discussion, it is evident that the visibility of the SBST members during collaboration with teachers at the school is essential. Furthermore, participants also referred to *collaboration with the DBST* on supporting learners who experienced intrinsic barriers to learning. The DBST is responsible for assisting teachers in the development of teaching skills with regard to curriculum differentiation, alternative assessment strategies, the use of assistive devices, as well as developing learner support programmes (DoE, 2001). The key responsibilities of the DBSTs are to liaise with and support the SBSTs (cf.2.8.1.2) (DoE, 2001). The SBST participant did not have much to say about the DBST, but mentioned that they do come sometimes, once or twice per year when a learner needs to be assessed for referral to special education. A study by Grieve and Haining (2011) revealed that many learners also wait very long to be assessed by DBST and then only a few learners are assessed. An important statement made by the participants is that while the DBST conducted workshops, the focus was mainly on curriculum content, and did not provide teachers with ways to support learners in their classrooms. Conway’s (2017) study confirm this statement, where teachers pointed out that they had not yet received the training in the implementation of inclusive education, learning support material and adaptive equipment from the Provincial Department of Education as well as from the Local Departmental District Office.

The participants also cited their frustrations with regards to *collaboration with parents*. According to the participants, parents (cf. 4.6.4) are not involved in their children's academics and provide teachers with little or no support. Geldenhuys and Wevers (2013) assert that teachers usually feel frustrated when parents are not involved. Pasha (2012) concurs that teachers are overwhelmed with frustration when parents are not involved in their children's learning which ultimately can weaken their moral. This was reflected in one participant's statement: "I would just like to add that we are not getting the support we need, because it is also discouraging to do your work when you do not have the support you need". In addition, there were also participants who indicated that some parents are still in denial that their children have intrinsic barriers to learning because of a fear of stigma. Moreover, one participant added that the parents feel that teachers criticise their children. Mkhuma (2010) states that parents often ignore teachers who inform them that their children were experiencing barriers to learning. The fear of stigma is real and a worldwide phenomenon. Rohwerder (2018) affirms that stereotypes, prejudice, and stigma result in people with disabilities, as well as their families, experiencing discrimination and exclusion in all aspects of their lives.

A prominent theme that emerged in the data is that participants continuously mentioned referral of learners for assessment to be placed in LSEN classes (cf. 4.2.5.3). In a report on the implementation of EWP6 it was asserted that because there is limited access to adequate support services, a large number of learners are referred out (pushed out) to special education settings (DBE, 2015). The report also emphasised that if "more preventative support can be given for 80% of the learner population, the number of learners that will be referred to special education sites can be contained and the goal of inclusive education attained" (DBE, 2015, p. 53). This predominant practice of referring learners for placement in LSEN classes encourages a medical-deficit approach (cf. 2.7.1) to the support of learners with intrinsic barriers to learning which can result in exclusionary and discriminatory practices (cf. 2.6.3.3) (Elphick & Elphick, 2012). Makhalemele and Nel (2016), as well as Naicker (2013), affirm that although some attempts have been made to try to change the practice of the medical model to facilitate a more effective needs identification, it is important to mention that the medical-deficit model practices still impact on identification, assessment and support procedures and process to this day. Consequently, learners who have been identified within the school context as experiencing barriers to learning are still placed in separate classrooms and labelled in

medical-deficit terms. Materechera (2020) concurs that in some cases learners are placed in a particular learning environment merely because they are labelled as belonging to a category of learners for which a particular kind of educational placement exists. The reason for this can be that there is a lack of knowledge and inadequate training of teachers to deal with the potential needs of a learner with disability (Bouillet & Mirošević, 2015).Mahlo (2011), Mbiza (2018), as well as Mfuthwana and Dreyer (2018) report that teachers feel unprepared to deal with diverse classrooms because their pre-service training did not focus on assisting learners with diverse learning needs, including learners with intrinsic barriers to learning. This subsequently leads to a strong reliance on the medical-deficit model. The solution to this might lie in making sure that newly qualified teachers have a basic understanding of inclusive education (Parveen & Qounsar, 2018). Moreover, I believe that pre-service teachers need to be exposed to environments were a variety of strategies are implemented to support learners who experience diverse learning needs. The latter includes an understanding of barriers in order to modify and adapt teaching methodology in the classroom. Lastly, Ladbrook (2009) mentions that teachers need support from knowledgeable management teams at institution level and from personnel in district offices, in order to implement inclusive education.

4.4 Conclusion to chapter

Chapter 4 provided an analysis and interpretation of data collected through questionnaires, interviews and documents. Managers and teachers throughout the system are not equipped to effectively address the support needs of learners in classrooms and schools that are efficient, welcoming and encouraging participation of all learners in the curriculum (DBE, 2015). Govender (2018) mentions that the tensions between the contents of policy, systemic realities, such as funding constraints, teachers' inadequate knowledge and training, poor infrastructure, an inflexible curriculum and negative attitudes towards inclusion, have become stumbling blocks for an inclusive system. A lack in fully understanding the concept of inclusive education can be an obstacle to putting it into practice (Nyangaria & Ordho, 2015). Sanagi (2016) points out that teachers' misunderstanding of inclusive education will not lead to decent practices which may in turn lead to exclusion, thus making the environment hostile for learners who experience barriers to learning. In this study, participants made no reference of a flexible curriculum, differentiation or accommodation in assessment as learner support strategies.

This may seem to indicate that there is a big gap in their knowledge and skills which make it difficult for them to adequately support leaners who experience intrinsic barriers to learning. In the next chapter conclusions are drawn and recommendations are made.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

5.1 Introduction

The primary purpose of this research study was to explore and determine the strategies used by Intermediate Phase teachers to support learners who experience intrinsic barriers in their classrooms. In the previous chapter the analysed data and findings and a discussion thereof were presented. Based on the findings outlined in Chapter 4, this chapter aims to draw conclusions and make recommendations.

5.2 Overview of the study

Chapter 1 Introduction

Chapter one provided a general overview of the study, including the introduction and rationale for this study. This chapter also contained the research problem, research questions, purpose of the study as well as research concepts.

Chapter 2 Literature review

This chapter outlined the conceptual framework for the study by exploring literature on the research topic – this includes literature on inclusive education, learner support and inclusive education from the South African context.

Chapter 3 Empirical study

This chapter aimed at giving an in-depth description of how the study was carried out. In addition, this chapter also included the research design, paradigm and methodology that were followed in the study as well as ethical guidelines.

Chapter 4 Analysis and interpretation

In Chapter 4 the analysis and interpretation of the raw data from the questionnaires and interviews were presented.

Chapter 5 Conclusion and recommendations

In this chapter the conclusion and recommendations based on the literature review and empirical study are described.

5.3 Summative findings and conclusions from the literature review

The key findings from the literature review that answer the primary (cf. 1.3.1) and secondary questions (cf. 1.3.2) of the study are presented below.

5.3.1 What do intrinsic barriers to learning mean?

Although, the focus of this study was on intrinsic barriers to learning it is important to mention that there are two types of barriers to learning, namely, intrinsic and extrinsic barriers. Intrinsic barriers refer to barriers that are situated within the child (Vlok, 2016), while extrinsic barriers refer to societal and systematic factors that hinder a learner's academic progress (DBE, 2005). Intrinsic barriers may include chronic diseases, neurological, physical, and sensory and learning disabilities (Nel, Nel et al, 2016; Walton et al, 2009). Learners with physical impairments (cf.2.3.2) experience problems with mobility and physical vitality. Physical impairments may include amputations, paralysis, cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy or any other body deformities (Kohzuki, 2014). According to Vlok (2016), physical and intellectual impairments can accompany neurological barriers. Neurological impairments (cf. 2.3.4) include disabilities such as epilepsy, spina bifida, cerebral palsy, brain tumours and muscular dystrophy (Mohamed et al., 2016). Sensory impairments refer to impairments to one or more senses, including hearing and visual impairments (cf. 2.3.4.3).

Learning disabilities (cf. 2.3.4.1) is a general term that refer to a group of disabilities in the acquisition and use of listening, speaking, reading, writing, reasoning or mathematical skills (Pesova et al., 2014). They consist of dyslexia (reading), dyscalculia (difficulty with mathematics) and dysgraphia (difficulty with writing). Lastly, intrinsic barriers can also be due to chronic illnesses that may hinder a learner's daily life and ability to fully participate in their own education (Murphy, 2017). Most of these illnesses are long term or usually permanent, for example, asthma, cancer and HIV/AIDS (2014). All the aforementioned intrinsic barriers to learning vary in terms of severity, from mild to severe (Ishmael, 2018) and can result in limited learning experiences (Maindi, 2018).

5.3.2 What does learner support entail?

The term learner support and inclusive education are interdependent (Kratochvílová, 2014). It refers to how learners with barriers should be acknowledged, identified, assessed and included into the education system, as well as introducing strategies and interventions that will assist teachers to cope with a diversity of learning and teaching needs (Engelbrecht et al., 2016). It should be an on-going process of assessing, identifying and supporting while also considering the learner's background (Nel, Tlale et al, 2016). Furthermore, it also implies a shift from the medical-deficit model (cf. 2.7.1) towards a more socio-ecological approach of supporting learners (cf. 2.7.2). Moreover, during the learning support process the learning environment should be taken into account since it is the place where learning takes place (cf. 2.7.2.1). According to Grieve and Haining (2011), context and learning are key aspects to a supportive environment. Thus, aspects causing difficulty to learning should be modified and adjusted (Fourie & Hooijer, 2018). Learner support also entails the use of various strategies and resources to accommodate learners with intrinsic barriers to learning. The strategies may include co-operative learning (cf. 2.7.2.1), peer mentoring, multi-level teaching, assessment accommodation, curriculum differentiation, straddling and designing down (Fourie & Hooijer, 2018). This support can be at low, moderate or high-density level depending on the needs of the individual learner. Finally, learning support entails collaboration between all relevant stakeholders including learners, teachers, parents, the SBST and the DBST (Weeks & Erradu, 2013).

The DoE initiated policies, such as the EWP6 (DoE, 2001) (cf. 2.6.2.3) laying down foundational principles to assist teachers with implementing inclusive education and learner support. The EWP6 was operationalised by introducing policies, such as the SIAS (cf. 2.8.1.4.) and support structures at school and district level. These structures include SBSTs and (cf. 2.8.1) DBSTs (cf. 2.8.1.1).

However, the literature review has also indicated some complexities, dilemmas and constraints that hinder the provision of support to learners who experience barriers to learning, such as teachers' lack of understanding (cf.2.6.3.1) and lack of training (cf.2.6.3.2), continued segregation of learners with disabilities (i.e., intrinsic barriers to learning) (cf. 2.6.3.3) and limited resources (cf. 2.6.3.4).

Lack of understanding

Teachers' lack of understanding of inclusive education can result in it not being implemented efficiently (Sanagi, 2016). This often leads to the inability to identify and give support to learners who experience barriers to learning (Sanagi, 2016). Kofidou and Mant (2017) postulate that a lack of understanding inclusive education further leads to practices of the former medical-deficit model (cf. 2.7.1) and labelling learners who experience barriers to learning (cf. 2.6.3.1). Cheterechera (2020) affirms that teachers prefer to refer learners with intrinsic barriers to health professionals for support or to place them in separate LSEN classes. Thus, schools still seem to opt for separate classrooms for learners who have intrinsic barriers to learning such as physical, neurological, and sensory and learning disabilities (Cheterechera, 2020).

Lack of training

A study by Nel, Tlale et al. (2016), as well as Eloff and Kgwethe (2007), highlights that a large number of mainstream teachers have no formal qualification in learner support, as most of them only have diplomas and degrees meant for mainstream education. In several studies, teachers indicated that they do not have the necessary skills and competencies to handle learners who experience barriers to learning (Pappas et al., 2018). It is also reported that teachers also feel unprepared to deal with diverse classrooms because their pre-service training did not focus on assisting learners with intrinsic barriers (Engelbrecht et al., 2016).

Continuous separation

Teachers' lack of understanding of and training in inclusive pedagogies appear to exacerbate the continued separation of learners experiencing barriers to learning as well as the reliance on the medical-deficit model (cf. 2.7.1). Naicker (2013) confirms that mainstream teachers struggle to accommodate learners who experience barriers to learning and that they therefore attempt to place them in an environment that they believe is best suitable for their learning which is in a separate LSEN class (cf.2.6.3.3). This subsequently leads to learners who have been identified as experiencing barriers to learning being placed in separate classrooms. In this process, qualified health professionals are regarded as the primary experts to assess learners and place them in separate LSEN classes (Mahlo, 2011).

Limited resources

Chambers (2018) declares that poor quality of teaching and learning is characterised by poor resources. For example, most learners with physical disabilities are still faced with the lack of infrastructure. The reason for this could be that of unequal allocation of funding from the government, since schools receive funding according to different quantiles that are determined according to the standard of living of community members and infrastructural factors around the school (Western Cape Education Department (WCED), 2013). Chambers (2018) further asserts that learners from middle to higher income socio-economic backgrounds are usually at well-resourced institutions, while learners from the lower working class are still concentrated at poorly resourced schools. Consequently, the least advantaged schools fall progressively behind their high performing counterparts in terms of resources and infrastructure for learners with intrinsic barriers to learning (Ainscow, 2016).

5.4 Findings of the empirical study

In this section the findings of the empirical study that best answer the primary and secondary research questions are presented.

5.4.1 What does intrinsic barriers to learning mean?

Participants described intrinsic barriers to learning as any neurological, physical, sensory and chronic illness within the learner (cf. 4.2.1.3) or that a child is born with (cf. 4.2.1.4) and that these disabilities complicate learning and development (cf. 4.2.1.5). Furthermore, the participants mentioned the different barriers to learning that they experienced at the school as asthma (cf. 4.2.1.2.1), hearing problems (cf. 4.2.1.2.2), blindness (cf. 4.2.1.2.3), as well as problems with reading and writing (cf. 4.2.1.2.5), and transcribing from the blackboard (cf. 4.2.1.2.4).

5.4.2 What does support of intrinsic barriers entail?

Participants described learner support as a process of helping the learner beyond formal delivery (cf. 4.2.2.1) or an intervention to help the learner (cf. 4.2.2.2) by using different strategies and resources (cf. 4.3.3). The strategies and resources are discussed in the next section.

5.4.3 What strategies are used by teachers in a specific primary school to support learners with intrinsic barriers?

Participants indicated the use of various strategies to support learners in their classrooms. A number of themes and sub-themes emerged from the participants' responses. These include: identifying learners (cf. 4.2.3.1), going the extra mile (after school or during breaks) (cf. 4.2.3.2), working in groups (cf. 4.2.3.3), peer-learning (cf. 4.2.3.4), breaking down of tasks (cf. 4.2.3.5), using books from lower grades (cf. 4.2.3.6), changing the LoLT (cf. 4.2.3.7), using learner profiles (cf. 4.2.3.10), completing SNA 1 and SNA 2 forms (cf. 4.2.3.11), as well as using teaching aids, i.e., pictures, videos, smart boards, etc. (cf. 4.2.3.9).

5.4.4 Which factors do the teachers in this specific primary school consider as enhancing the provision of support to learners with intrinsic barriers?

It transpired from the findings that having sufficient resources (cf. 4.3.3) and collaboration amongst teachers were some of the factors that contributed to the enhancement of supporting leaners who experience intrinsic barriers. It was evident from the participants' responses that there was a strong collaborative approach between them as they cited meetings per phase (cf. 4.2.5.1.1), per subject (cf. 4.2.5.1.2) and also per grade (cf. 4.2.5.1.3) to discuss strategies on how to support learners amongst other things. Participants further cited the importance of the SBST (cf. 4.3.4). It was stated by participants that collaboration with the SBST may provide more strategies and resources to help learners with barriers more effectively (cf. 4.3.4).

5.4.5 Which factors do the teachers in this specific primary school deem as hindering the provision of support to learners with intrinsic barriers?

The participants mentioned their frustration with regards to their collaboration with parents (cf. 4.3.5) as they explained that parents are not involved in their children's academic life. Furthermore, a lack of providing support by and collaboration with the DBST have also been asserted by participants as a hindering factor. It was reported by the participants that even though workshops are presented by the DBST none of them so far have focused on equipping teachers on learner support and inclusive pedagogies. As has been

mentioned before, this seems to result in learners who have disabilities being referred and placed in LSEN classes as teachers do not feel able to teach and support them (cf. 4.3.5). This does not only promote labelling and exclusion, but also promotes the implementation of the medical-deficit model (cf. 2.7.1).

5.5 Conclusion

It appears evident from the findings that teachers seem to have a basic understanding of intrinsic barriers to learning and how to support learners who experience intrinsic barriers to learning. Most of the participants' responses concurred with the literature review in Chapter two. From these findings one can conclude that learner support is an on-going collaborative approach of identifying, supporting and accommodating learners with diverse learning needs in one classroom. It is based on the principles of inclusive education (cf. 2.6) and social inclusion (cf. 2.5.1), and recognises that everyone can learn. It is further apparent from the findings that teachers are trying their level best to support learners in their classrooms. Participants mentioned the use of strategies, such as preparing lessons for these learners (cf. 4.2.3.8), using books from a lower grade (cf. 4.2.3.6), going the extra mile (cf. 4.2.3.2), allowing learners to work in pairs and groups (cf. 4.2.3.3), changing the LOLT (cf. 4.2.3.7) and the breaking down of tasks (cf. 4.2.3.5), as well using as resources such as visual aids (videos and pictures) and auditory aids (cf. 4.2.3.9).

Participants are also implementing the SIAS policy by filling in the SNA 1 and SNA 2 forms (cf. 4.2.3.11), but the participants report that the DBST only comes once a year (cf. 4.2.5.3.1) to assess learners. This indicates that there are still gaps to be addressed between policy and practice. The reason for this might be the lack of collaboration between schools and the DBST (cf. 4.2.5.3.1). Therefore, DBSTs should strive to conduct workshops that equip teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge to support learners who experience intrinsic barriers to learning. Furthermore, the findings reveal a strong reliance on the medical-deficit model to support learners as most participants cited referring learners for placement in the LSEN class (cf. 4.2.5.5) as a predominant means of support. The referral of learners to the LSEN class is an example of exclusion and promotes labelling. Another stumbling block to successful implementation of learner support is parents' lack of involvement in their children's academic progress. According to the participants, many parents are not involved in their children's academics (cf.

4.2.5.4). As highlighted earlier, collaboration is a key component of learner support. Therefore, all stakeholders should play their role, because if one is not playing its part, then whole learning support process could collapse.

5.6 Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on the findings of my study:

- The DBST should provide strategies and guidance to the SBST and teachers on how to effectively implement policies into learning support practices for learners with intrinsic barriers to learning.

- It will assist appropriate implementation of learner support if teachers share a common vision, understanding of conceptual frameworks and language of inclusion which emphasises the support of learners with intrinsic barriers to learning as far as possible in the mainstream classroom. Furthermore, teachers need to believe in the potential of all learners, and that all learners can learn despite the barriers to learning they experience. Therefore, schools with the assistance of the DBST and/or other stakeholder expertise (such as non-governmental organisations and higher education institutions) could have regular strategic discussions on how to encourage such a vision and understanding.

- Teachers should move away from old practices of implementing the medical-deficit model and more towards a socio-ecological approach to support learners. Thus, the SBST and DBST should guide, train and encourage teachers and parents to implement a socio-ecological approach.

- The DBST must provide comprehensive workshops and ensure that systemic support is provided to teachers and schools that need assistance.

- Explicit guidelines and training about learning support processes from the DBST that promote inclusive education should be provided to SBSTs and teachers to bridge the gaps in understanding and practice between schools and the DBST.

- Parents and teachers need workshops by the SBSTs and DBST on inclusive education to clear misconceptions that special education is the only option for learners with intrinsic barriers to learning.

- Curriculum assessments should be designed to address individual learner needs.

- It is recommended that parents be taken through the process of the screening of learners. Participation of parents in the screening, identification, assessment and support (SIAS) of learners, will help them understand the reasons why their child has been identified as experiencing barriers to learning and how that barrier affects his or her learning and consequently needs help.

- Learners can more easily understand the language they use to communicate at home. It is therefore recommended that teachers acknowledge each learner's mother tongue when teaching new or difficult concepts.

- The DBE should provide teachers and schools with the necessary resources, infrastructure and equipment to assist learners with intrinsic barriers to learning.

5.7 Possible contributions

This research could enable and guide future research with regard to strategies employed by teachers to support learners who experience intrinsic barriers to learning. It could, furthermore be beneficial to inform initial and in-service teacher education programmes. It may also lead to an increased awareness of how teachers support learners with intrinsic barriers to learning and their specific challenges and needs.

5.8 Limitations of the study

The following limitations were experienced in the duration of my study:

- During the initial stage of my study I had envisioned a sample size of 15 participants but during the data gathering process of the study only 14 participants agreed to take part in the study.

- Out of the 14 questionnaires that was administered I was able to only get 12 questionnaires back with the two non-completing participants reporting not having enough time to complete the questionnaires.

- The recent COVID -9 pandemic delayed the data collection process, thus I could not follow the timelines as planned for and I also had to prepare for additional costs to accommodate health rules.

- The case study was conducted in only one school, thus making it difficult to generalise the findings of the study.

- Time constraints was difficult to work around as I had to balance between work and studies.

- Most participants were not available for the member check group interview and only three participants availed themselves for member checking with others stating they were busy with assessments.

5.8 Recommendations for further research

Further research may be conducted on:

- The role of the DBST in the implementation of learner support for learners who experience intrinsic barriers to learning.

- The role of the classroom teachers' attitudes towards learners experiencing intrinsic barriers to learning.

- The experiences of inclusive education specialists at district level on supporting schools on the implementation of learner support for learners who experience intrinsic barriers to learning.

- Collaboration between stakeholders to establish the best way to implement learner support for learners who experience intrinsic barriers to learning.

- The attitude of parents towards learner support for learners who experience intrinsic barriers to learning.

- A study involving learners who experience intrinsic barriers to learning on how they are supported in classrooms.

- Effectiveness of LSEN classes and placing of learners in different schools (such as full-service schools and special schools).

5.9 Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to explore the strategies employed by Intermediate Phase teachers to support intrinsic barriers to learning in their classrooms. For this purpose, a thorough literature review was done, followed by an empirical study which included semi-structured questionnaires, interviews, document analysis as well as focus group in order to gain insight into the research topic and answer the primary and secondary research questions.

It is encouraging to see that teachers are trying their best to support learners who experience intrinsic barriers in their classrooms by using different strategies and skills. Teachers are also trying to practice what is envisaged in the EWP6 (cf. 2.6.2.3) and the WPRPD (cf. 2.6.2.1) However, there are still stumbling blocks to the implementation of successful learner support at schools. These include a lack of collaboration between schools and DBSTs, lack of collaboration between parents and teachers, workshops and support from the district and a strong reliance on the medical-deficit model by teachers.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

A'Bear, D. (2014). Supporting the learning of children with chronic illness. *Canadian Journal of Action Research*, 15(1), 22-39.

Adams, D., Harris, A. & Jones, J. (2016). Teacher-Parent Collaboration for an Inclusive Classroom: Success for Every Child. *Malaysian Online Journal of Educational Sciences*, 4(3), 58-72.

Adewumi, T.M. & Mosito, C. (2019) Experiences of teachers in implementing inclusion of learners with special education needs in selected Fort Beaufort District primary schools, South Africa. *Cogent Education*, 6(1), 1-20.

Adubasim, I.J. & Ugwu, C. (2019). Impact of trauma on neurodevelopment and learning. *Archives in Neurology and Neuroscience*, 3(2), 1-5.

African Union. (1999). African charter on the rights and welfare of the child. http://www.veritaszim.net/sites/veritas_d/files/Convention%20on%20Rights%20Welfare%20of%20the%20Child.pdf

Ahmad, W. (2012). Barriers of Inclusive Education for Children with Intellectual Disability. *Indian Streams Research Journal*, 2(2), 1-7.

Ainscow, M. (2014). Struggling for equity in education: The legacy of Salamanca. In F. Kiuppis & R. S. Hausstätter (Eds.), *Inclusive education twenty years after Salamanca.* (pp. 41-56). Peter Lang.

Ainscow, M. (2016). Collaboration as a strategy for promoting equity in education: possibilities and barriers. *Journal of Professional capital and community.*

Al Salim, Z. A. (2017). *Attitudes of Students with and without Disabilities Toward Physical Education and Their Sports and Activities Preferences in Saudi Arabia*. University of Arkansas.

Anatia, S. D., Sabers, D. L., & Stinson, M. S. (2007) Validity and readability of the classroom participation questionnaire with deaf and hard of hearing students in public school. *Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education, 12*(2), 158-171.

Anderson, J., & Boyle, C. (2015). Inclusive education in Australia: Rhetoric, reality and the road ahead. *Support for Learning, 30*(1), 4-22.

Angelka, K. & Goran, A. (2018). Learning problems in children with mild intellectual disability. *(IJCRSEE) International Journal of Cognitive Research in Science, Engineering and Education*, 6(1), 31-38.

Bell, D., & Swart, E. (2018). Learning Experiences of Students Who Are Hard of Hearing in Higher Education: Case Study of a South African University. *Social Inclusion*, 6(4), 137-148.

Boateng, N. A. (2014). Technical efficiency and primary education in South Africa: evidence from sub-national level analyses. *South African Journal of Education*, 34(2), 1-18.

Bojuwoye, O., Moletsane, M., Stofile, S., Moolla, N., & Sylvester, F. (2014). Learners' experiences of learning support in selected Western Cape schools. *South African Journal of Education*, *34*(1), 1-15.

Booth, T., & Ainscow, M. (2011). Index for inclusion: Developing learning and participation in schools. Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education [Online]. Available: http://www.eenet.org.uk/resources/docs/Index%20English.pdf

Bornman, J. & Donohue, D.K. (2013). South African Teachers' Attitudes toward Learners with Barriers to Learning: Attention-deficit and hyperactivity disorder and little or no functional speech, *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education*, 60(2), 85-104.

Bouillet, D. & Mirošević, J. (2015). Students with Disabilities and Challenges in Educational Practice. *Croatian Journal of Education*, 17(2), 11-26.

Chambers, I. H. (2008). *Thinking differently about education support, justice and the voice of learners? South African Journal of Education, 3(*28*):*77-90.

Cohen, D. & Crabtree, B. (2012). *Qualitative Research: Guidelines project and Triangulation* (3rd ed.). United Kingdom: Blackwell Publishing.

Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996.

Conway, C. (2017). *Teachers' perspectives of learner support in full-service school – A case study* (Doctoral dissertation, Stellenbosch: Stellenbosch University).

Creswell, J. W. (2005). *Educational Research. Qualitative and Quantitative Research.* London: SAGE Publishers.

Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Educational Research. Planning , conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research.* 4th ed. Boston, M.A. Pearson.

De Vos, A. S. (2005). *Qualitative data analysis and interpretation.* Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Debrowski, A. (2021). Nearsighted vs farsighted vision. *All about vision*. https://www.allaboutvision.com/conditions/myopia-faq/nearsightedness-and-farsightedness.htm

Denzin, N. K. & Lincoln, Y. S. (2005). *Handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage Publishers.Department of Basic Education. (2010a). *Education for all*. *Country Report: South Africa*. https://www.education.gov.za/Portals/0/Documents/Reports/EFA%20Country%20Report%202010.pdf?ver=2011-04-07-143626-000

Department of Basic Education. (2010b). *Guidelines for Full-service/Inclusive Schools*. https://www.education.gov.za/Portals/0/Documents/Policies/Inclusive%20Education/Full%20Service%20School%20Guidelines%202010.pdf?ver=2011-02-24-155333-000

Department of Basic Education. (2011). *National curriculum statements: Curriculum and assessment policies: Intermediate Phase*. https://www.education.gov.za/Curriculum/CurriculumAssessmentPolicyStatements(CAPS)/CAPSIntermediate.aspx

Department of Basic Education. (2014). *National strategy on screening, identification, assessment and support*. https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/201409/sias-revised-final-comment.pdf

Department of Education (South Africa). (2015). Revised policy on the minimum requirements for teacher education qualifications. *Government Gazette*, 596, pp. 38-48.

Department of Education. (2001). *Education White Paper 6. Special needs educaton: building an inclusive education and training system.* https://www.education.gov.za/Portals/0/Documents/Legislation/White%20paper/Education%20%20White%20Paper%206.pdf?ver=2008-03-05-104651-000

Department of Education. (2005). *Conceptual and operational guidelines for the implementation of inclusive education: District based support teams.* https://www.education.gov.za/Portals/0/Documents/Policies/Inclusive%20Education/Guidelines%20for%20District%20Based%20Support%20Teams.2005.pdf?ver=2016-04-16-203834-000

Department of Education. (2007). *Guidelines to ensure quality in education and support in special schools and special school resource centres.* https://wcedonline.westerncape.gov.za/Specialised-ed/documents/Guidelines-to-ensure-QualityEducationandSupport.pdf

Department of Education. (2011). *Guidelines for responding to learner diversity in the classroom through Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement*. https://www.education.gov.za/Portals/0/Documents/Publications/GUIDELINES%20FOR%20RESPONDING%20TO%20LEARNER%20DIVERSITY%20%20THROUGH%20CAPS%20(FINAL).pdf?ver=2016-02-24-110910-340

Department of Education. (2017) *Inclusive education for learners with disabilities*. http://plan-international.org/education/inclusive-education

Department of Social Development (South Africa). (2016, March 09). White paper on the rights of persons with disabilities (Notice 230). *Government Gazette,* 39792.

Donald, D., Lazarus, S. & Lolwana, P. (2010). *Educational Psychology in Social Context. Ecosystematic applications in southern Africa (fourth edition).* Cape Town: Oxford University Press.

Donohue, D. & Bornman, J. (2014). The challenges of realising inclusive education in South Africa. *South African Journal of Education*, 34(2), 1-14.

Dreyer, L M. 2017. Constraints to quality education and support for all: A Western Cape case. *South African Journal of Education*, *37*(1), 1-7.

Dreyer, L., Engelbrecht, P., & Swart, E. (2012). Making learning support contextually responsive. *Africa Education Review*, *9*(2), 270-288.

Duerden, M. D., & Witt, P. A. (2010). The impact of direct and indirect experiences on the development of environmental knowledge, attitudes, and behavior. *Journal of Environmental Psychology, 30*(4), 379–392. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jenvp.2010.03.007

Durocher, E., Wang, R. H., Bickenbach, J., Schreiber, D., & Wilson, M. G. (2019). "Just access"? Questions of equity in access and funding for assistive technology. *Ethics & Behaviour, 29(*3), 179-191)

Education Africa. (2014). *Masibambane College.* Retrieved from https://educationafrica.org/project/masibambane-college/

Eloff, I., & Kgwete, L. (2007). South African teachers' voices on support in inclusive education. *Childhood Education, 83*(6), 351-355. Doi: 10.1080/00094056.2007.10522949

Elphick, C. S & Elphick S.I. (2015). Understanding South African Townships. Placesjournal.org/article/south-africa-from-township-town/

Engelbrecht, P. Nel, M., Smit, S., & Van Deventer, M. (2016). The idealism of education policies and the realities in schools: The implementation of inclusive education in South Africa. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 20(5), 520-535.

Engelbrecht, P., Nel, M., Nel, N., & Tlale, D. (2015). Enacting understanding of inclusion in complex contexts: classroom practices of South African teachers. *South African Journal of Education*, *35*(3), 1-10.

Evans, R. & Nthulana, I. (2018). 'Linguistic challenges faced by rural Tshivenda speaking teachers when Grade 4 learners transition to English'. *The Journal for Transdisciplinary Research in Southern Africa,* 14(2), 1-9.

Fereday, J. (2006). Demonstrating rigor using Thematic Analysis. A hybrid approach of inductive and deductive coding and theme development. *International journal of qualitative method, 5*(1), 80-92.

Forsyth, R.D. (2010). Group dynamics. 5th ed. Chigago: CENGAGE Learning.

Fosnot, C. T. (2013). *Constructivism theory perspectives and practice*. Teachers College Press.

Fourie, J., & Hooijer, E. (2018). *Short learning programme: support in inclusive classrooms*. University of Johannesburg. (Learning guide).

Frieze, S. (2015). How Trauma Affects Student Learning and Behaviour. *BU Journal of Graduate Studies in Education*, 7(2), 27-34.

Galaterou, J. & Antoniou, A. S. (2017). Teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education: the role of job stressors and demographic parameters. International *Journal of Special Education*, 3(4), 643-657.

Ganga, E., & Maphala, M. (2015). The questionnaire approach. In Okeke, C. & Van Wyk, M. (Eds.), *Educational Research: An African approach* (pp. 147-152). Cape Town: Oxford.

García, M.M., Toledo, L.D. & Rodríguez, L. H. (2020). Equal opportunities in an inclusive and sustainable education system: an explanatory model. *Sustainability*, 12, 1-20.

Geldenhuys, J. L., & Wevers, N. E. J. (2013). Ecological aspects influencing the implementation of inclusive education in mainstream primary schools in the Eastern Cape, South Africa. *South African Journal of Education*, *33*(3).

Govender, S. (2018). South African teachers' perspectives on support received in implementing curriculum changes. *South African Journal of Education*, 38(2), 1-12.

Grieve, A. M., & Haining, I. (2011). Inclusive practice? Supporting isolated bilingual learners in a mainstream school. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, *15*(7), 763-774.

Gross, J. M. S., Haines, S. J., Hill, C., Francis, G. L., Banning, M.B. &Turnbull, A.P. (2015). Strong School–Community Partnerships in Inclusive Schools Are "Part of the Fabric of the School. We Count on Them". *School Community Journal*, 25(2), 9-34.

Gudyanga, E., Wadesango, N., Hove, E. & Gudyanga, A. (2014). Challenges Faced by Students with Hearing Impairment in Bulawayo Urban Regular Schools. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 5(9), 445-451.

Hanková, M. & Vávrová, S. (2016). Emotional and Social Needs of Integrated Disabled Students in Secondary School Environment. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 217, 229-238.

Hassan, A.E.H. (2015). Emotional and Behavioral Problems of Children with Learning Disabilities. *Journal of Educational Policy and Entrepreneurial Research (JEPER)*, 2(10), 66-74.

Hay, J. (2008). Implementation of the inclusive education paradigm shift in South African education support services. *South African Journal of Education,* 23(2), 230-234.

Hook, J. L. (2010). Gender inequality in the welfare state: Sex segregation in housework, 1965–2003. *American Journal of Sociology, 115*(5), 1480-1523.

Hoseini, B. L., Ajilian, M., Moghaddam, H.T., Khademi, G. & Saeidi, M. (2014). Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) in Children: A Short Review and Literature. *International Journal of Pediatrics*, 2(4-3), 443-450.

Hughes, G. (2017). *Using blended learning to increase learner support and improve retention.* London: Sage Publishers.

Huskin, P. R., Reiser-Robbins, C., & Kwon, S. (2018). Attitudes of undergraduate students toward persons with disabilities: Exploring effects of contact experience on social distance across ten disability types. *Rehabilitation Counseling Bulletin*, *62*(1), 53-63.

Ioannidi, V. & Samara, E. (2019). Children with learning difficulties and conditions of school inclusion - a brief report and a constant challenge of inclusive education. *European Journal of Education Studies*, 6(3), 1-8.

Ireri, B. R., King'endo, M., Wangila, E. & Thuranira, S. (2020), Policy strategies for effective implementation of inclusive education in Kenya. *International Journal of Educational Administration and Policy Studies*, 12(1), 28-42.

Ishmael, D. (2015). Measures for inclusion: Coping with challenges/ barriers faced by learners with physical impairment (PI) in regular schools. IOSR Journal of *Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)*, 20(9), 62-67.

Ismail, S. (2015). Equity and Education. *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioural Sciences*, 2(7), 918-923.

Jelas, Z.M. (2010). Learner Diversity and Inclusive Education: A New Paradigm for Teacher Education in Malaysia. *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 7, 201-204.

Kähkönen, A., Laherto, A, & Lindell, A. (2011). Intrinsic and Extrinsic Barriers to Teaching Nanoscale Science: Finnish Teachers' Perspectives. *Journal of Nano Education*, 3, 1-12.

Kaplan, I., & Lewis, I. (2013). *Promoting inclusive teacher education: Curriculum*. UNESCO Bangkok.

Karimi, (2013). Is there gender difference between learning disabled students' performances in Mathematical activities? (Case Study). *Mathematics Education Trends and Research*, 1-7.

Khan, M.A. & Khan, F. S. (2017). Evaluating the difference in attitude between students and illiterates towards disabled people. *Journal of Psychology and Cognition*, 2(3), 209-213.

Khoaeane, T.J. & Naong, M.N. (2015). How to overcome challenges for meaningful implementation of inclusive education in Lesotho. *Journal of Social Sciences*, 42(3), 289-297.

Kofidou, C. & Mantzikos, C. (2017). Teachers' and students' attitudes and perceptions towards people with disabilities: A review of the literature. *Ekpaideytiki Epikairotita*, (2(3), 3-23.

Kohzuki, M. (2014) Classification of the Physical Disabilities and Actual Conditions of Visceral Impairment in Japan. *Asian Journal of Human Services*, 6, 125-137.

Kratochvílová, J. (2015). Learning conditions - part of the support system for pupils in an inclusive classroom. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 186, 637-643.

Ladbrook, M. W. (2009). *Challenges experience by teachers in the implementation of inclusive education in primary schools in South Africa* (Doctoral dissertation). https://uir.unisa.ac.za/handle/10500/3038

Lambert, T. (2008). Inclusive education. *Journal of the American Academy of Special Education Professionals,* 67-71.

Lawal H., Anyebe E. E., Obiako O. R. & Garba S. N. (2014). Socio-economic challenges of parents of children with neurological disorders: A hospital-based study in North West Nigeria. *International Journal of Nursing and Midwifery*, 6(4), 58-66.

Lebesa, K. M. (2015). *Exploring the school culture in a township primary school* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Pretoria.

Li, R., Sit, C.H.P., Yu, J.J., Sum, R.K.W., Wong, S.H.S., Cheng, K.C.C. & McKenzie, T.L. (2017). Children with physical disabilities at school and home: physical activity and contextual characteristics. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 14, 1-11.

Limaye, S. (2016). Factors influencing the accessibility of education for children with disabilities in India. *Global Education Review*, 3 (3), 43-5.

Mahaye, N. E. (2020). The impact of COVID-19 pandemic on education: navigating forward the pedagogy of blended learning. *Research online*.

Mahlo, D. & Hugo, A. (2013). Learning Support Teachers' Views on the Implementation of Inclusive Education in the Foundation Phase in Gauteng, South Africa, *Journal of Social Sciences*, 37(3), 301-306.

Mahlo, F. D. (2011). *Experiences of learning support teachers in the Foundation Phase with reference to implementation of inclusive education in Gauteng* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of South Africa: UNISA.

Maindi A. B. (2018). Challenges faced by students with visual impairments when learning physics in regular secondary schools. *International Journal of Education, Learning and Development*, 6(9), 38-50.

Makhalemele, T., & Nel, M. (2014). Challenges experienced by district-based support teams in the execution of their functions in a specific South African province. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 20(2), 168-184.

Malose, L. (2015). *The impact of community work programme on violence in Orange Farm.* JHB: CSVR.

Maree, K. (2011). *First Steps in Research.* Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Masitsa, M.G. (2011). Exploring safety in township secondary schools in the Free State Province*. South African Journal of Education,* 31*(1),* 163-174.

Materechera, E. K. (2020). Inclusive education: why it poses a dilemma to some teachers. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, *24*(7), 771-786.

Mbiza, M. (2018). Nine years of Basic Education comes down to “history”. Retrieved from https:// thesouthafrican.com/history-compulsory-subject-schools/

Mcube, V. (2008). Democratisation of education in South Africa: Issues of social justice and the voice of learners? *South African journal of education, 28*(1), 77-90

Mdikana, A. A., & Phasha, N. T. (2018). School-Based care and support for the intellectually disabled learners at risk for sexual abuse: South African teacher carer perspectives. *Journal of Psychology in Africa*, *28*(2), 157-160.

Mfuthwana, T & Dreyer, L M. (2018). Establishing inclusive schools: Teachers’ perceptions of inclusive education teams. *South African Journal of Education, 38*(4), 1-10.

Mike, G. (2011). *Social Research Methods: qualitative and quantitative approaches.* Belmont: Wadsworth.

Mkhuma, I. L. (2012). *The challenges experienced by teachers in identifying learners who experience barriers to learning in a rural full-service school in KwaZulu- Natal* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Zulu Land: UniZulu..

Mkhuma, I. L., Maseko, N. D., & Tlale, L. D. N. (2014). Challenges teachers face in identifying learners who experience barriers to learning: reflection on essential support structures. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, *5*(27 P1), 444-444.

Mohamed, I.N. M. D., Elseed, M. A. & Hamed, A. A.M.D. (2016). Clinical profile of pediatric neurological disorders: outpatient department, Khartoum, Sudan. *Child Neurology Open, 3, 1-5.*

Morgan, J. (2008). *Learner centred classroom: Motivation in classrooms.* Pretoria: Van Schaik Publisher.

Morris, B.J. (2018, May 8). Analysis: South African Deficient education system*. News 24.* Retrieved from http://m.news24.com/Analysis/south-africas-deficient-education-system.

Mortiera, K., Hun, P., Leroy, M., Van de Putte, I. & Van Hove, G. (2010). Communities of practice in inclusive education. *Educational Studies*, 36(3), 345–355.

Motitswe, J.M.C. (2012). *Teaching and Learning Methods in Inclusive Classroom in the Foundation Phase* (MEd-Thesis). University of South Africa: UNISA.

Motitswe, J.M.C. (2017). *A shift from pathological deficit model: towards productive pedagogies in inclusive schools* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation).University of South Africa: UNISA.

Mouton, N., Louw, G.P. & G.L. Strydom. (2013). Critical challenges of the South African school system. *International Business & Economics Research Journal*, 12(1), 31-44.

Moyo, N., Modiba, M., & Simwa, K. (2015). Critical Research: Understanding material constrains and engaging in transformative action research. In Okeke, C. & Van Wyk, M. (Eds.), *Educational Research: An African approach* (pp. 182-196). Cape Town: Oxford.

Mthethwa, G. C. (2015). *The role of inclusive intermediate phase teachers in imparting reading skills to learners in Kwadukuzani circuit* (Unpublished dissertation). University of South Africa: UNISA.

Mudau, S. P. (2004). *The attitudes of foundation phase teachers to the inclusion of learners who experience barriers to learning in the education system* (Doctoral dissertation). https://uir.unisa.ac.za/handle/10500/1952

Muntanera, J. J., Forteza, D. & Salom, M. (2014). The Inclusion of Students with Chronic Diseases in Regular Schools. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 132, 74-79.

Murphy, C. (2017). School success for children experiencing chronic illness: national recommendations for addressing global barriers. *Physical Disabilities*: *Education and Related Services*, 36(2), 8-15.

Murungi, L.N. (2015). Inclusive basic education in South Africa: issues in its conceptualisation and implementation. Per / Pelj, 18(1), 3160-3195.

Muthukrishna, N. & Engelbrecht, P. (2018). Decolonising inclusive education in lower income, Southern African educational contexts. *South African Journal of Education*, 38(4), 1-11.

Naipal, S., & Rampersad, N. (2018). A review of visual impairment. *African Vision and Eye Health*, *77*(1), 1-4.

National Commission on Special Needs in Education in Education and Training (NCSNET) South Africa. National Committee for Education Support Services (NCESS). (1997) *Education for all: from special needs and support to developing quality education for all leaners: summary of public discussion document*.

Ndimande, B. S. (2016). Pedagogy of poverty: School choice and inequalities in post-apartheid South Africa. *Global Education Review, 3*(2).

Nel, K., Rankoana, S.A., Govender, I., Mothibi, K. & Moloantoa, M. (2015). The challenges experienced by students with a physical disability (SWPD) at a higher education institution in South Africa. *African Journal for Physical, Health Education, Recreation and Dance (AJPHERD)*, 1(4), 801-811.

Nel, M. & Grosser, M. M. (2016). An Appreciation of Learning Disabilities in the South African Context. *Learning Disabilities: A Contemporary Journal*, 14(1), 79-92.

Nel, M. & Theron, L.C. (2008). Critique of a language enrichment programme for Grade 4 ESL learners with limited English proficiency: a pilot study. *South African Journal of Education*, 28*(1)*, 203–219.

Nel, M. 2018. Learning support in South Africa. In Eloff, I. & Swart, E. (Eds.), *Understanding educational psychology*. Pretoria: JUTA. p. 271-278.

Nel, M., Nel, N. M, & Hugo, A. (2016). The necessity of providing support to all learners. In Nel, M., Nel, N. M, & Hugo. A. (Eds.), *Learner support in a diverse classroom: A guide for foundation, intermediate and senior phase teachers of language and mathematics* (pp. 3- 24). Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Nel, N., Müller, H., & Rheeders, E. (2011). Support services within inclusive education in Gauteng: The necessity and efficiency of support. *Mevlana International Journal of Education (MIJE)*, *1*(1), 38-53.

Nel, N.M., Tlale, L.D.N, Engelbrecht, P & Nel, M. (2016). Teachers' perceptions of education support structures in the implementation of inclusive education in South Africa. *Koers — Bulletin for Christian Scholarship, 81(3). Available at: https://doi.org/10.19108/KOERS.81.3.2249*.

Nieuwenhuis, J. (2011). Analysing qualitative data. In K. Maree (Ed.), *First steps in Research* (pp. 70-122). Van Schaik.

Nonjinge, G. (2018). South African Schools: A holistic view of South African schooling system.

Ntinda, K., Thwala, S. K. & Tfusi, B. (2019). Experiences of Teachers of Deaf and Hard-of- Hearing Students' in a Special Needs School: An Exploratory Study. *Journal of Education and Training Studies*. 7(7), 79-89.

Nuraini, K. (2016). The Barriers of Teaching Speaking English for EFL Learners. *Journal of English Language, Literature, and Teaching*, 1(1), 7-14.

Nwadinobi, E. (2017). *Experiential Perspectives of Teachers in an Inclusive Classroom* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from Proquest Dissertations and Theses database. (Proquest document ID: 10749437).

Ogundele, M.O. (2018). Behavioural and emotional disorders in childhood: A brief overview for paediatricians. *World Journal of Clinical Pediatrics*, 7(1), 9-26.

Oliva, D.V. (2016). Barriers and resources to learning and participation of inclusive students. *Psychology USP*, 27(3), 492-502.

Pappas, M.A., Papoutsi, C. Drigas, A. S. (2018). Policies, Practices, and Attitudes toward Inclusive Education: The Case of Greece. *Social Sciences*, 7(90),1-16.

Parveen, A. & Qounsar, T. (2018). Inclusive education and the challenges. *National Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Development*, 3(2), 64-68.

Pasha, S. (2012). Readiness of Urban Primary Schools for Inclusive Education in Pakistan. *Journal of Research & Reflections in Education (JRRE), 6*(2).

Pesova, B., Sivevska, D. & Runceva, J. (2014). Early intervention and prevention of students with specific learning disabilities. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 149, 701-708.

Phala, T., & Hugo, A. J. (2016). Reading problems in the intermediate phase: Grade 4 teachers' opinions. *Journal for Language Teaching= Ijenali Yekufundzisa Lulwimi= Tydskrif vir Taalonderrig*, *50*(2), 167-183.

Pieterse, G. (2010). *Establishing a framework for an integrated, holistic, community based educational support structure*', PhD thesis, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University.

Possi, M.K. & Milinga, J. R. (2017). Learner Diversity in Inclusive Classrooms: The Interplay of Language of Instruction, Gender and Disability. *Malaysian Online Journal of Educational Sciences*, 5(3), 28-45.

Pretorius, E. J. (2002). Reading ability and academic performance in South Africa: Are we fiddling while Rome is burning?. *Language Matters: Studies in the Languages of South Africa, 33*(1), 169-196.

Reed, P., Osborne, L. A., & Waddington, E. M. (2012). A comparative study of the impact of mainstream and special school placement on the behaviour of children with Autism Spectrum Disorders. *British Educational Research Journal*, *38*(5), 749-763.

Reeves, C. & Robinson, M. (2014). Assumptions underpinning the conceptualisation of professional learning in teacher education. *South African Journal of Higher Education, 28*(6), 236-253.

Rohwerder, B. (2018). *Disability stigma in developing countries*. https://opendocs.ids.ac.uk/opendocs/bitstream/handle/20.500.12413/13795/Disability_stigma_in_developing_countries.pdf?sequence=1

Roni, S. & Merga, M. K. (2019). The influence of extrinsic and intrinsic variables on children's reading frequency and attitudes: An exploration using an artificial neural network. *Australian Journal of Education*, 63(3), 270-291.

Rosa, E. M., & Tudge, J. (2013). Urie Bronfenbrenner's Theory of Human Development: its Evolution from Ecology to Bioecology. *Journal of Family Theory & Review*, 5(4), 243–258.

Salleh, N. M. & Zainal, K. (2010). How and why the visually impaired students socially behave the way they do. *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 9, 859-863.

Sanagi, T. (2016). Teachers' Misunderstanding the concept of inclusive education. *Contemporary Issues in Education Research*, 9(3), 103-114.

Sefudi, I. N. (2020). The functions of SBST and DBST in South African primary schools. *International Journal of Innovative Science and Research Technology, 5*(7), 1244-1247.

Seidman, S. (2011). *Contested knowledge: Social Theory Today* (4th ed.).United Kingdom: Blackwell Publishing.

Shaffer, D. R. (2008). *Social and personal development*. CENAGE LEARNING.

Sheikh, A., Sheikh, A., Sheikh, Z., & Dhai, S. (2020). Reopening schools after the COVID-19 lockdown. *Journal of Global Health, 10*(1).

Shenton, A. K. (2009). *Strategies for ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research projects.* United Kingdom: Sage Publishers.

Simon, M. (2011) *The role of the researcher.* London: Sage Publishers..

Sincero, S. M. (2012). *Ecological systems theory*. http://explorable.com/ecological-systems-theory.

Siu, Y. T. & Morash, V. S. (2014). Teachers of students with visual impairments and their use of assistive technology: measuring the proficiency of teachers and their identification with a community of practice. *Journal of Visual Impairment & Blindness*, 384-398.

South Africa. Department of Education (DoE). (2001). *Education White Paper 6. Special Needs Education: building an inclusive education and training system*. Pretoria: Government printers.

South Africa. Department of Education (DoE). (2005) *Conceptual and operational guidelines for the implementation of inclusive education: District based support teams.* Pretoria: Government printers,Republic of South Africa (RSA). (1996).

South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) (2013-2017). Research brief on disability and equality in South Africa.

South African Schools Act 84 of 1996.

Spaull, N. (2017). Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) 2016: South African Children's Reading Literacy Achievement. Pretoria: University of Pretoria.

Spies, H.L. (2013). *Teachers‘ readiness to support children with Asperger‘s syndrome within mainstream schools*‘, MA thesis, Department of Educational Psychology, Stellenbosch University.

Stefanini, J.R., Schere, Z.A.P., Schere, E. A. Cavalin, L. A. & Guazzelli, M.S. (2015). Adolescents with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and exposure to violence: parents' opinion. *Latino-Am. Enfermagem*, 23(6), 1090-1096.

Swart, E,. & Pettipher, R. (2018). A framework for understanding inclusion. In Kruger, D., Landsberg, E. & Swart, E. (Eds), *Addressing barriers to learning: A South African perspective* (pp. 3-23). Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Tesfaye, S. & Berhanu, K. (2015). Improving students' participation in active learning methods: group discussions, presentations and demonstrations: a case of Madda Walabu University second year tourism management students of 2014. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 6(22), 29-31.

Theunissen, M. H.C., Velderman, M. K., Cloostermans, A, P. G. & Reijneveld, S. A. (2017). Emotional and behavioural problems in young children with divorced parents. *The European Journal of Public Health*, 27(5), 840-845.

UNESCO. (1990). *World declaration on education for all and framework for action to meet basic learning needs.* UNESCO.

UNESCO. (1994). *World declaration on education for all and framework for action to meet basic learning needs.* UNESCO.

United Nations [UN]. (1989). Conventions on the rights of the child. https://www.ohchr.org/documents/professionalinterest/crc.pdf

United Nations [UN]. (2006). International Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities.html

Vetoniemi, J. & Kärnä, E. 2019. Being included – experiences of social participation of pupils with special education needs in mainstream schools. *International Journal of Inclusive Education,* 1-16.

Vlok, E. (2016). *Learners with barriers to learning experiences of the support provided to them in mainstream school* (Masters dissertation). https://repository.nwu.ac.za/handle/10394/21276

Walton, E. (2015). Global Concerns and Local Realities: The “Making Education Inclusive” Conference in Johannesburg. *Intervention in School and Clinic*, 50(3), 173-177.

Walton, E. (2017). Inclusive education in initial teacher education in South Africa: practical or professional knowledge? *South African Journal of education,* 102(*67)*,102-127.

Walton, E., Nel, N. M., Muller, H., & Lebeloane, O. (2014). ‘You can train us until we are blue in our faces, we are still going to struggle’: Teacher professional learning in a full-service school. *Education as change*, *18*(2), 319-333.

Walton, E., Nel, N., Hugo, H., & Muller, H. (2009). The extent and practice of inclusion in independent schools in South Africa. *South African Journal of Education*, *29*(1), 105-126.

Weeks, F.H. & Erradu, J. (2013). The Intellectually Impaired foundation-phase Learner – How Can the Teacher Support These Learners? SA-eDUC Journal, 10 (1), 1-16.

Western Cape Education Department (2013). *WCED education districts in brief.* https://wcedonline.westerncape.gov.za/branchIDC/Districts/briefly.html

Wienand, M. A. (2011). *Empowering teachers to render learner support to learners who experience reading barriers*‘, MA thesis, Department of Education, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University.

Wilmot, D. & Irwin, P. (2015). South African Teachers’ Perceptions of the Primary Geography Curriculum: An Exploratory Study. *Review of International Geographical Education Online*, 5(2), 138-150.

Wium, A. M. & Wium, B. (2015). The South African national school curriculum: Implications for collaboration between teachers and speech-language therapists working in schools. *South African Journal of Childhood Education*, 5(1), 19-41.

Wolhuter, C.C. (2014). Weaknesses of South African education in the mirror image of international educational development. *South African Journal of Education*, 34(2), 2-25.

Workman, M. 2020. Our education system is broken, and unless we fix it, all else is doomed. Daily maverick: 26 November 2020.

Yahaya, N., Yahaya, A., Ramli, J., Hashim, S. & Zakariya, Z. (2010). The effects of extrinsic motivational factors in learning among students in secondary school in Negeri Sembilan. *International Journal of Psychological Studies*, 2(1), 128-136.

Yorke, C (2010). Collaborative co-teaching of numeracy and literacy as key to inclusion in an independent school. *South African journal of Education, 30* (2), 95-135.

Zimmerman, L. (2017). Learning from the best: reading literacy development practices at a high-performing primary school. *Per Linguam Journal for Language Learning*, 33(2), 36-50.

ANNEXURES A: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Private Bag X6001, Potchefstroom
South Africa 2520

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

Faculty of Education

(Research entity details)

Tel: 018 111 1111
Email: Name.Surname@nwu.ac.za

Contact number:_____

Date ___/____/2020

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM

I herewith wish to request your consent to participate in this research, which involves all intermediate phase teachers and SBST committee members. Before you give consent, please acquaint yourself with the information below.

The details of the research are as follows:

TITLE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT:

HOW DO INTERMEDIATE PHASE TEACHERS SUPPORT LEARNERS WHO EXPERIENCE INTRINSIC BARRIERS TO LEARNING?

ETHICS APPLICATION NUMBER

NWU-01208-20-S2

PROJECT SUPERVISOR: Prof. Mirna Nel
CO-SUPERVISOR:
ADDRESS: Building 7-107, Vanderbijlpark Campus
CONTACT NUMBER: 016 910 3095

MEMBER OF PROJECT TEAM MEd-Student: Mr Bless BNJ
ADDRESS: 31 Tielmanroos St
Vanderbijlpark
Ce 4
1911
CONTACT NUMBER: 0739502258

FACULTY OF EDUCATION RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE
Contact person: Ms Erna Greyling, E-mail: Erna.Greyling@nwu.ac.za, Tel. (018) 299 4656

This study has been approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Education of the North-West University and will be conducted according to the ethical guidelines of this committee. Permission was also asked from the provincial Department of Basic Education/other relevant body (please describe) as well as the school principal (if relevant).

What is this research about?

This qualitative case study aims to explore the strategies employed by Intermediate Phase teachers to support learners who experience intrinsic barriers in mainstream class rooms.

The aims of this research are:

- To determine through a literature review what intrinsic barriers to learning mean.
- To establish through a literature review what the support with regard to intrinsic barriers to learning entails.
- To explore the strategies used by teachers in a specific primary school with regard to supporting learners experiencing intrinsic barriers to learning.
- To explore factors that teachers in a specific primary school deem as hindering to support learners experiencing intrinsic barriers to learning.
- To explore factors that teachers in a specific primary school deem as enhancing the provision of supporting learners who experience intrinsic barriers to learning.

- To establish possible recommendations for helping Intermediate Phase teachers to provide effective support to learners experiencing intrinsic barriers to learning.

Participants

- You have been chosen to be part of this study because you have the characteristics that match the criteria of this study;
- The criterion includes intermediate phase teachers, SBST committee members, SBST co-ordinator(s), and the principal (if available).
- You may also have the necessary experience and knowledge to produce rich data for this study.

What is expected of you as participant?

You will be expected to answer an open questionnaire with regard to the research topic. You will also be expected to attend a once-off face to face individual interview with the researcher which will take approximately 10-15 minutes of your time. During the interview, you will be expected to answer 4 questions with regard to the research topic. The interviews will be after school or on Wednesdays at a prearranged time and venue. Following the interviews, there will also be a once-off follow-up focus group interviews were we will be discussing the preliminary findings and clarifying some of the data.

Benefits to you as participant

There are no direct benefits for participants in this study. However, your input and knowledge could contribute towards raising awareness and generating knowledge on how teachers support learners experiencing intrinsic barriers to learning. Research outcomes can be used as possible recommendations for helping Intermediate Phase teachers to provide effective support to learners experiencing intrinsic barriers to learning.

Risks involved for participants

The risks in this study, and how these will be managed, are summarised in the table below:

.

Probable/possible risks/discomforts	***Strategies to minimize risk/discomfort***
Interview session may take longer than expected	Rest sessions can be incorporated

During interviews some teachers may feel tired	The researcher will serve refreshments during the interview (juice/coke/mineral water).
Audio tape recorder will be used	No names will be made public. Only pseudonyms will be used
Confidentiality cannot be ensured in group interviews	A code of conduct will be agreed upon where the names of the group will only be known to the interviewees, the researcher and the study promoter

Confidentiality and protection of identity

No person in the exception of my Supervisor (Prof Nel, M) and myself will have access to all collected data. The electronically collected data will be encrypted. All data will be kept safe and secured by locking hard copies in locked cupboards in the researcher's home. Data will be stored for five years in a locked cabinet on the North-West University's Vaal Triangle campus.

The data from this study will be reported in the following ways: participants will be given code names. In all of this reporting teachers will not be identified. This means that the reporting will not include their names or details that will help others to know that they participated. This is a once-off study, so the data will not be re-used.

.

Dissemination of findings

- The general findings of the research can be shared with you through an email or presentations if you request it
- If you would like feedback on your personal results, then you can contact me on the provided cell number 0739502258 or email address boitumelobless@ymail.com

- If there is anything else that you should know or do, please feel free to contact my study leader (Supervisor) Prof Mirna Nel at 016 910 3095.

If you have any further questions or enquiries regarding your participation in this research, please contact the researchers for more information.

Yours sincerely

BNJ Bless

DECLARATION BY PARTICIPANT:

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

How do Intermediate Phase teachers support learner who experienced intrinsic barriers to learning?

I declare that:

- I have read this information and consent form and understand what is expected of me in the research.
- I have had a chance to ask questions to the researcher 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 research process before it has finished, if the researcher feels it is in my best interests, or if I do not follow the research procedures, as agreed to.

Signed at (place)_____on (date) _____/_____/20____

_____ _____

Signature of participant **Researcher**

ANNEXURE B: REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH FORM

Private Bag X6001, Potchefstroom
South Africa 2520

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

Faculty of Education

(Research entity details)

Tel: 018 111 1111
Email: Name.Surname@nwu.ac.za

Date: 13-05-2020

GOODWILL PERMISSION: SGB AND SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

I herewith wish to request your permission for all intermediate phase teachers, SBST co-ordinator and the school principal (if available) to participate in this research. The research involves individual face-to-face interviews with the participants, one focus group interview, and a document analysis. Prior to granting permission, please acquaint yourself with the information below.

The details of the research are as follows:

TITLE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT:

Intermediate Phase teachers' support to learners who experience intrinsic barriers to learning: A case study

ETHICS APPLICATION NUMBER

NWU-01208-20-S2

PROJECT SUPERVISOR: Prof. Mirna Nel.
CO-SUPERVISOR: Dr Isabel Payne-van Staden
ADDRESS: Building 7-107, Vanderbijlpark Campus
CONTACT NUMBER: 016 910 3095
MEMBER OF PROJECT TEAM MEd-Student: Mr Boitumelo Bless
ADDRESS: 31 Tielman roos ST
Vanderbijlpark
Ce4

1911
CONTACT NUMBER: 073 950 2258

FACULTY OF EDUCATION RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE
Contact person: Ms Erna Greyling, E-mail: Erna.Greyling@nwu.ac.za, Tel. (018) 299 4656

This study has been approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Education of the North-West University and will be conducted according to the ethical guidelines of this committee. Permission was also obtained from the provincial Department of Basic Education.

What is this research about?

This qualitative case study aims to explore the strategies employed by Intermediate Phase teachers to support learners who experience intrinsic barriers in mainstream class rooms.

The aims of this research are:

- To determine through a literature review what intrinsic barriers to learning mean.
- To establish through a literature review what the support with regard to intrinsic barriers to learning entails.
- To explore the strategies used by teachers in a specific primary school with regard to supporting learners experiencing intrinsic barriers to learning.
- To explore factors that teachers in a specific primary school deem as hindering to support learners experiencing intrinsic barriers to learning.
- To explore factors that teachers in a specific primary school deem as enhancing the provision of supporting learners who experience intrinsic barriers to learning.
- To establish possible recommendations for helping Intermediate Phase teachers to provide effective support to learners experiencing intrinsic barriers to learning.

Participants

- Have been chosen to be part of this study because they have the characteristics that match the criteria of this study;
- The criterion includes intermediate phase teachers, SBST co-ordinator(s), and the principal (if available).
- They may also have the necessary experience and knowledge regarding the research topic to produce rich data for this study.

What is expected of the participants?

Participants will be expected to answer an open questionnaire with regard to the research topic. They will also be expected to attend a once-off face to face individual interview with the researcher which will take approximately10 to 15 minutes of their time. During the interview, they will be expected to answer 4 questions with regard to the research topic. The interviews will be after school or on Wednesdays at a prearranged time and venue (school). Following the interviews,

there will also be a once-off follow-up focus group interviews were we will be discussing the preliminary findings and clarifying some of the data.

The SBST co-ordinator will be asked to assist with the following documents (learner profiles and minutes from previous SBST meetings).

Benefits to the participants

There are no direct benefits for participants in this study. However, the input and knowledge could contribute towards raising awareness and generating knowledge on how teachers support learners experiencing intrinsic barriers to learning. Research outcomes can be used as possible recommendations for helping Intermediate Phase teachers to provide effective support to learners experiencing intrinsic barriers to learning.

Risks involved for participants

The risks in this study, and how these will be managed, are summarised in the table below:

.

Probable/possible risks/discomforts	***Strategies to minimize risk/discomfort***
Interview session may take longer than expected	Rest sessions can be incorporated
During interviews some teachers may feel tired	The researcher will serve refreshments during the interview (juice/coke/mineral water).
An audio tape recorder will be used	No names will be made public. Only pseudonyms will be used
Confidentiality cannot be ensured in group interviews	A code of conduct will be agreed upon where the names of participants in the focus group will only be known to the interviewees, the researcher and the study supervisor

Confidentiality and protection of identity

No person in the exception of my Supervisor (Prof Nel, M) and co-supervisor (Dr Payne-van Staden), and Myself will have access to all collected data. The electronically collected data will be encrypted. All data will be kept safe and secured by locking hard copies in locked cupboards in the researcher's home. Data will be stored for five years in a locked cabinet on the North-West University's Vaal Triangle campus.

The data from this study will be reported in the following ways: participants will be given code names. In all of this reporting teachers will not be identified. This means that the reporting will not

include their names or details that will help others to know that they participated. This is a once-off study, so the data will not be re-used.

Dissemination of findings

- The general findings of the research can be shared with you through an email or presentations if you request it
- If you would like feedback on your personal results, then you can contact me on the provided cell number 0739502258 or email address boitumelobless@ymail.com

- If there is anything else that you should know or do, please feel free to contact my study leader (Supervisor) Prof Mirna Nel at 016 910 3095.

If you have any further questions or enquiries regarding your participation in this research, please contact the researchers for more information.

DECLARATION BY SGB CHAIRPERSON/RELEVANT RESPONSIBLE PERSON:

By signing below, I ……..…… agree to give permission for the research to take place with the identified participants in the study entitled:

[Enter title here]

I declare that:

- I have read this information and consent form and understand what is expected of the participants in the research.
- I have had a chance to ask questions to the researcher and all my questions have been adequately answered.
- I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary and participants will not be pressurised to take part.
- Participants may choose to leave the study at any time and will not be penalised or prejudiced in any way.

- Participants may be asked to leave the research process before it is completed, if the researcher feels it is in their best interests, or if they do not follow the research procedures, as agreed to.

Signed at (place)_____on (date) _____/_____/20____

_____

_____

Signature of the Principal **SGB Signature (Chairperson)**

ANNEXURE C: OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONNAIRE

Participant no: _____

Questions

1. How would you describe intrinsic barriers to learning?

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. How would you describe learner support?

_____

_____

_____

_____

4. Which strategies do teachers / you (participant) use to support learners experiencing intrinsic barriers to learning?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

5. What is the role of your school's SBST (School based support team) with regards to supporting learners who experience intrinsic barriers to learning?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

6. How can teachers collaborate to ensure that learners experiencing intrinsic barriers are adequately supported?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

ANNEXURE C1: PARTICIPANTS' QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

#P	How would you describe intrinsic barriers to learning?
1	They include physical, sensory, neurological and developmental impairments, chronic illness (HIV) psycho-social disturbance and intellectual ability.
2	Intrinsic barriers are barriers that learners experience or have, they include chronic illness that learners may have, the ability for a learner who cannot cope (intellectual ability), and a lack of self-confidence that a learner may experience. Also a learner background can cause learning barriers to a learner. The environment that learner is in can also cause distractions and can be a barrier.
3	Intrinsic barriers include physical, sensory and neurological and development impairments, chronic illness, psycho-social disturbances and different intellectual ability.
4	Intrinsic learning barriers are the factors that arise from the inside of the learner but poses the threat to the learner or affect his/her learning such as physical, sensory, chronic illness, psycho social disturbances or impairments (Blindness, deafness). Some learners are usually born with these specific characteristics.
5	They are barriers that are within the learner, they are what the learners in born with. Intrinsic barriers can be or may be genetic.
6	Are barriers that include the development of pupil such as physical, visual or hearing impairments?
7	Intrinsic barriers to learning are barriers that complicate the learner's development and learning. These barriers are within the individual; learners are born with it due to complications before birth or during birth and some are genetic.
8	Barriers that are within the learner, such as epilepsy and inability to read and write
9	Intrinsic barriers are barriers which most learners are usually born with such as physical, physiological impairments and personality characteristics. These

	barriers hinders learner from performing well academically and also in term of developing well in totality.
11	Intrinsic barriers include chronic illness and deafness, and they are located within the learner. A learner with such a barrier(s) can lack self-confidence and might not be able to cope in class.
13	They are factors that make it difficult for learning to take place effectively such as poverty, content-based curriculum, lack of reading learning in language which is not a home language.
14	They are factors that make it difficult for learning to take place, such as poverty and language.
Q2	**How would you describe learner support?**
1	It focuses on what the teacher help the learner beyond the formal delivery of content. These may include skill development.
2	Learner support it is the intervention that a teacher may offer to a learner, it include counselling the learner beyond the formal delivery of the content, it includes scaffolding where the teacher identifies the difficulties that the learner may struggle with helping the learner to gain deep understanding of subject and topic being taught.
3	It is another critical component of an effective learning environment. It focuses on what the teacher or instructor can or should do to help learners beyond the formal delivery of content or skills.
4	It is to provide effective learning environment to the learner with learning barriers. The component consist of teacher, parent, school based support team (SBST) what they can do to help learners who are experiencing barriers by going extra mile.

5	It is the support that is given to learners in the form of resources, strategies, social and emotional support to enable learners with barriers to have an opportunity to learn.
6	Learner support is a bridge between a teacher and barriers that a pupil may be faced with. A teacher makes the content to be much easier or the availability of resources to accommodate learners with intrinsic barriers.
7	Learner support is a way of helping a learner to learn, by using different strategies of teaching such as teaching aids to help a learner with learning barriers.
8	A way of supporting learners regardless of their problems and challenges
9	Learners support it when the teacher goes an extra mile to help and guide learners who experience any barriers to learning. The teacher may opt for a lower level to accommodate these learners to learner to enable them to overcome their barriers.
11	Learner support is the intervention offered by teachers to learners with learning barriers. The teachers are required to identify such learners, thereafter refer them to the SBST team.
12	
13	The teacher s as mediator of learning must apply his skills in identifying those learners that have barriers to learning and give their necessary support such as one on one sessions more tasks and do remedial work more often.
14	Learner support is a way of helping a leaner to learn such as textbook, etc.
Q3	**Which strategies do you believe are necessary to adequately support learners experiencing intrinsic barriers to learning?**
1	Develop SBST as to find solutions. Develop multilevel teaching (LSEN class) and to develop policy regarding diversity (school community, district based support team) to support teachers regarding approach of support services such as assessments.

2	Scaffolding can help learners by teacher identifying the difficulties the learner is facing or struggling with, also as a teacher providing feedback to the learner's performance encouraging and motivating the learner, giving feedback on tests and also assignments and focusing on individualism as teacher also counselling helps the learner with guidance and administrative on personal issues.
3	Make learning participative. Encourage peer learning. Break tasks down in smaller steps that will incrementally build into the tasks objectives.
4	• Accommodating learners with barriers • Assessment of emotional & social wellbeing of a learners • Encourage peer learning • Specialist support personnel plays a vital role • Occupational therapy • Reduced class size • Planned and specific interventions to address barriers • Technology and task breakdown
5	Finding out about the learner's background in order to be able to provide emotional and social support. Giving extra time for activities or bringing the work to a lower level. Also providing visual aids (increasing material after determining the type of learning barrier.
6	Restructuring the environment to be favourable to the disadvantaged learners. Secondly the font of textbooks should be made bigger and better for those with visual impairments. Lastly, learners with hearing impairments should be provided with hearing aids to help amply the voice of the teacher.
7	Lesson planning need to include learners with barriers and different teaching strategies need to be used such as teaching aids, audios, picture, etc.
8	Providing learners with the necessary skills and prepare them for the future
9	• Scaffolding strategy may be used when learners are struggling with new concepts or ideas.

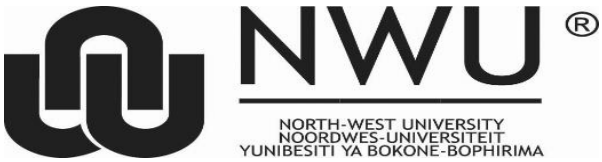
	• Lesson plans must be specifically designed for learners with barriers so that their needs will be included • Teachers may try practical examples during the lessons.
10	
11	By assessing learners background as to know how to go about supporting learners. By breaking tasks down into smaller steps and try to simplify the work as much as possible.
12	
13	• Adapt teaching activities • Plan classroom groups carefully • Avoid distractions • Seat learners with barriers to learning in front.
14	Lesson plans that will include learners with barriers and different teaching strategies need to use such as video and pictures
Q4	**What do you think is the importance of collaboration between teachers and the SBST with regards to supporting learners who experience intrinsic barriers to learning?**
1	Teachers teaching inclusive education need a special training in special needs education as to work collaboratively with other teachers in order to provide support to learners in their classrooms. And also to identify creative processes on addressing challenges
2	The SBST is very important in the collaboration between teachers with regard to learners because that is the team that the teacher reports to when a learner has problems especially intrinsic barriers that are outside and beyond the teachers control.
3	To establish a supportive relationship with the learner. Collaboration encourages learning and teaching experience

4	It is important to discuss the findings on the learning barriers from both sides so that the SBST will determine the needs of the learner support, support the teacher and coordinate the necessary screening and assessment. The SBST will ensure that the learners are given sufficient support and opportunity to be successful.
5	The SBST will be able to give more strategies to deal with each learner's individual needs/barrier and a decision can be taken to further refer the learner for screening
6	Collaboration is that of paramount as it helps to identify, support and at least remedy the challenges that learners with intrinsic barriers are faced with.
7	Parents need to be educated by teachers about their exact roles and what is expected from them to support the learning of their children who experience intellectual barriers to learning. By including that in the curricular, assessment and behavioural.
8	To help teachers and support learners who experience barriers to learning
9	Collaboration between teachers and SBST is important because the SBST may provide more strategies and resources in helping learners with barriers.
10	
11	It is very vital that the two structures work well together, so that the learner can be assisted effectively. The role of the SBST is to give more strategies to teacher and it needs to be effective.
12	
13	The teachers as the classroom manger is the one to identify learners with barriers to learning and with the help of SBST learners can either be referred to special class or even a special school for their special needs.
14	It is important that the structures work well together so that the learners can be assisted effectively

Q5	How can teachers collaborate to ensure that learners experiencing intrinsic barriers are adequately supported?

ANNEXURE D: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

This were predetermined set of questions; other questions were asked during interviews to probe further responses from participants.



Interview questions

1. How would you describe intrinsic barriers to learning?
2. How would you describe learner support?
3. Which strategies do teachers / you (participant) use to support learners experiencing intrinsic barriers to learning?
4. How can teachers collaborate to ensure that learners who experience intrinsic barriers get enough support?
5. How can parents contribute to the support of learners who experience intrinsic barriers to learning?

ANNEXURE D2: EXAMPLE OF INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

Participant: 13

Researcher: Thank you very much for taking time from your busy schedule to be part of my research/study. This is just a follow up from the questionnaires. The first question is basically based on..[pause] your understanding of intrinsic barriers to learning. In your questionnaire you mentioned that err..are factors that make it difficult for learning to take place such as poverty, content based curriculum and lack of learning and reading in language which is not home language neh. Can you please elaborate more on content based curriculum? As well as a lack of reading and learning in language that is not home language.

Participant: Err Mnr nna (myself) I am a maths and history teacher ne. The problem I encounter, especially in Maths, is that learners cannot even understand the questions because most of the questions are in English…meaning they have a problem in reading and writing. [Probing] English! So there's no way we going teach maths in seZulu or Sesotho. Because our home language here at school is English.

Researcher: Thanks Mnr, so with regards to content based curriculum, can you elaborate more on that?

Participant: Alright, in both of my

Researcher: Content based curriculum. What were you implying by that?

Participant: Both of my subjects?

Researcher: Yes..

Participant: Mnr the problem is that, what I've realised since… I arrived here last year, so most of these leaners they are too (???) So what I've realised is that the content (??) they really don't understand the content. You understand? ya I cannot only say in Maths , but I can say in all subjects, because we as teachers we discuss, you understand? So

each and every teacher is complaining about content, content knowledge from previous grade.

Researcher: Now in terms of intrinsic barriers to learning, what are some of the intrinsic barriers that you are experiencing with regards to your leaners, for example most of your colleagues have mentioned err physical and intellectual disabilities with regards to content, like you just mentioned now language is also a barrier [leaners making noise] like you just mentioned now that it becomes a challenge for learners to learn in English since they are not English home language speakers. What are some of the intrinsic barriers you are experiencing in your classroom?

Participant: Err Behaviour, this what you are seeing now. It is a challenge, big challenge! I can say behaviour, then discipline, no discipline. You understand? Then, yes no interest whatsoever in their school work.

Researcher: Yes, I've also experienced that where I work? Now moving on to the second question, the second quest is with regards to support. On your questionnaire you mentioned that learner support is about a teacher working as a mediator err to help learners, one on one sessions and remedial work. Now in terms of the one on one sessions and remedial work, what kind of activities to you gives to those learners?

Participant: Alright, let me explain this. There are those who are, we call them high fliers neh? So those high fliers (best achievers) I give them extra work, because they get bored when we are doing other activities le ba baslow (with the slower ones), so I don't have a problem with that. So these ones, the one on one session I normally do them during lunch or break. Then after school I spend like 30 minutes before I go home. Then those who are struggling , who don't feel comfortable asking me in the classroom. They come to me after school to do one on one.

Researcher: As a means of support? I asked you; question three was on the strategies that you employ neh? I was very impressed by some of the strategies you mentioned there, you mentioned adapting teaching activities, plan classroom groups together and sit the learners with barriers in front. Can you please elaborate more on adapting teaching activities?

Participant: Alright, that [learners make noise] I was talking about the teaching methods ne and strategies, especially in Maths, Maths requires learners to be participative ne, so I give them lot and lots of example with one question. I do it in different ways of forms of informacy so that they can understand it. One question different examples

Researcher: You also mentioned planning class groups carefully, how do you go on about that?

Participant: Mina (Myself) my setting arrangement is this one, as you can see, the traditional one. I prefer the **traditional setting** because my subject does not require group activities, it mostly individual activities. So I can move freely between the learners and see their work when they are setting like this, you understand? And each learner is facing me and I can see who is disruptive or not? Yes, I was talking about the setting arrangement.

Researcher: Okay, thanks Mnn. The last question is on collaboration, how do you as teachers collaborate to ensure that those who are experiencing barriers to learning are adequately supported?

Participant: Alright, we as teachers normally we discuss [probe], then another teacher for example English teacher will tell me that “hey Mnr I have a struggle the leaners cannot even write their names”, then mina (Myself) as a Maths teacher we are only doing numbers you understand? Most of the things we do numbering numbering [probe]. But, I have also picked that learners cannot write. There are those questions that require definitions and descriptions. They have to write in English so they struggle, you understand? Then we collaborate as teachers to assist these learners. But now it is too late , they are in grade 7. There’s nothing that can be done, grade 7 learner who cannot write his or her own name, do you understand [probe]. There was no support done in the previous grades. [probe] [phone rings]

Researcher: As you have just said now that you meet and discuss, what strategies or methodologies do you discuss for example?

Participant: Err.. How best can we assist them to improve in learning, then the only thing we can do is support them.

Researcher: Earlier on you did that you used those strategies as an individual, so which strategies do you discuss as a group, collectively?

Participant: No as a group we haven't done it practically, we have only just discussed it. Each and every teacher is doing it for his or her only success. Collectively we just talk.

Researcher: I also understand that your school has a functioning SBST committee. Now how do they collaborate with teachers to ensure that those learners are adequately supported? In terms of support, what kind of support are you getting from the SBST?

Participant: Err we refer learners, particularly those who are struggling. Then we have that remedial class, the LSEN class. Then those who are really struggling we refer them to that class by filling the SNA 1 and SNA 2 forms, you understand? Then after they have improved later in the year they can come back. We have such learners in this grade. They were there in grade 1 and grade 2, they only joined us recently, and they have already improved [probe].That is how we work with the SBST.

Researcher: Alright Mnr, last question. I promise it's the last one. Now with regards to the DBST, the district based support team. What kinds of support are you getting from them, or rather what kind of support are they offering to the SBST?

Participant: I cannot really say that, I will never say… I will be committing myself to something I don't know.

Researcher: Mnr thanks for your time.

Example of how codes were identified from raw data

Different colours were used to assign codes to data that most emerged from interview transcripts to form themes and categories.

For example: How would you describe intrinsic barriers to learning?

> SBST: They include physical, sensory, neurological and developmental impairments, chronic illness (HIV) psycho-social disturbance and intellectual ability.

P2: Okay, when I said chronic illnesses ne, I meant that intrinsic barriers include chronic illnesses, because these learners do have chronic illness. Like now that we are facing COVID 19 there are learners that have chronic illnesses that cannot come to school, I think that is an intrinsic barrier.

P3: Intrinsic barriers include physical, sensory and neurological and development impairments, chronic illness, psycho-social disturbances and different intellectual ability

P4: Intrinsic learning barriers are the factors that arise from the inside of the learner but poses the threat to the learner or affect his/her learning such as physical, sensory, chronic illness, psycho social disturbances or impairments (Blindness, deafness). Some learners are usually born with these specific characteristics.

P7: Intrinsic barriers to learning are barriers that complicate the learner's development and learning. These barriers are within the individual; learners are born with it due to complications before birth or during birth and some are genetic.

P9: Intrinsic barriers are barriers which most learners are usually born with such as physical, physiological impairments and personality characteristics. These barriers hinders learner from performing well academically and also in term of developing well in totality.

P4: Some learners are usually born with these specific characteristics.

P7: Intrinsic barriers to learning are barriers that complicate the learner's development and learning. These barriers are within the individual; learners are born with it due to complications before birth or during birth and some are genetic.

P9: Intrinsic barriers are barriers which most learners are usually born with such as physical, physiological impairments and personality characteristics. These barriers hinder learner from performing well academically and also in term of developing well in totality.

2. How do you support leaners who experience intrinsic barriers in your classroom?

P3: Err we give extra work, we go down to a lower level to give support to them and then there is an teacher with are working with from LSEN class [probe].She assists us with that, and then we go to amaDBE books from grade 1 to grade 3. Whatever we can get from the lower grades, then the volume of the work again, you can give less work while you are giving others more work, while you give others more work.

P5: There is not much that we have it is just to take books from the lower grade and then… that is just what we do. And then mina there's a study guide from eskolweni (school) that I use.

P6: So what is also needed is that as a teacher we should also try to render support and try to simplify the content of a book as much as possible for kids to understand.

P11: We support those learners by giving them work at a lower level. Maybe for instance I am a teacher in grade 4 teaching English. So I will give a learner, maybe work from the previous grade, which is grade 3

ANNEXURE E: DOCUMENT ANALYSIS (LEARNER PROFILES)

ANY ADDITIONAL NOTES ON LEARNER PERFORMANCE
(FOUNDATION PHASE)

Grade	Date	School	Notes
R	Dec 2011	Refalletse P.sch	He struggle to talk, and struggle in 3 learning areas.
1	Dec 2012	Refalletse.	He was not yet ready to learn. He struggled for the whole year. to handle the pencil when writting. He cant even write his name,
3.	Dec 2015	Refalletse	Tshepiso is struggling in all subjects. He does not show any improvement. He needs special intervention.
SEM	June 2017	Refalletse	Tshepiso Struggles with reading independently handwritting, Sentence construction and Spelling.
STM	06-04-18	Refalletse P.S.	Tshepiso Struggles with phonic awareness he is struggling with pronouncing and blending in Sounds to spell, read nor build 3-4 letter words. He Struggles with multiplication and division giving him lot of examples help.

ANY ADDITIONAL NOTES ON LEARNER PERFORMANCE IN SUPPORT

Grade	Date	Teacher Name	Notes
2	2012.	B.Hlongwane	She cannot read and spell word correctly She has problems in using operational signs correctly.
3	Dec, 2014	V.B. Nomafusi	She does not know how to redd and spell words. Cannot use basic operations.

6

ANY ADDITIONAL NOTES ON LEARNER PERFORMANCE IN SUPPORT

Date	Teacher Name	Notes
28-11-2016	NUEMA N.P	HE NEED SUPPORT IN ALL LEARNING AREAS
2017/06/19	L. Mashilane.	Mpho struggles in all learning areas, reading, spelling, counting forming short sentences is a big problem. Needs intensive support.

6

ANY ADDITIONAL NOTES ON LEARNER PERFORMANCE IN FOUNDATION PHASE

Grade	Date	Teacher Name	Notes
3	2013	SEJANE BA	She is a very quiet boy. He is doing his work very well. He can read Spell and count correctly. He is only untidy when he writes. His handwriting is bad.

8

ANY ADDITIONAL NOTES ON LEARNER PERFORMANCE IN INTERMEDIATE PHASE

Grade	Date	Teacher Name	Notes
3	28.11.2014	Msimanga. K	Needs support in reading in the next grade.
4	30.11.2016	Ms Ngema	He need support in learning phonics, spelling and reading, counting is still a problem
LSEN	27-11-17	Ms Mashilane	Relebohile still needs much support on Spelling as well as Sentence construction. He has however improved on read at level 2 as well as maths.
LSEN	2017/10	L. Mashilane	Shows improvement in all learning areas involving/ including Reading forming of Sentences, Maths, Natural Sciences, Still Struggles with Spelling.

10

ANY ADDITIONAL NOTES ON LEARNER PERFORMANCE

(FOUNDATION PHASE)

Grade	Date	School	Notes
2	2012. 11	Refalletse	She needs support in all the learning areas in the next grade.
3	Nov 2013	Refalletse P.S	Needs support in Home-Language - phonics, reading and writing. Also in FAL, all learning content ie Speaking & Listening, Reading, Writing and Language Usage.

ANNEXURE F: LETTER FROM LANGUAGE EDITOR

Wendy Barrow
Language Practitioner
(Translation and academic editing)

PO Box 435, Parys, 9585
082 776 0852
wl.barrow@yahoo.com
Member: SATI
Member: PEG (BAR002)

22 November 2021

EDITING CERTIFICATE

This certificate serves to confirm that I am a qualified and certified editor. I confirm that the dissertation with the title: **Intermediate Phase teachers' support to learners who experience intrinsic barriers to learning: A case study** has undergone a professional language edit (checking of grammar, spelling, punctuation and register).

The onus rests on the author of the document to work through the proposed changes and accept or reject these changes.

Wendy Barrow

BA Languages (UFS)
BA Hons. (Language Studies) *Cum Laude* (UFS)
MA (Translation Studies) (NWU)
Member of SATI and PEG