

**Support required by School-
Based Support Teams of
special schools to help
teachers reduce barriers to
learning**

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Declaration

I, Jacobeth Makoloko Manana, student number 10994262, do hereby declare that this thesis registered as “Support required by School-Based Support Teams of special schools to help teachers reduce barriers to learning”, is being submitted as my own, original, and independent work. All the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged as references. This work is compliant with North-West University’s code of academic integrity, regulations, rules, and procedures as well as other relevant policies; has been submitted to originality-checking software and falls within the accepted requirements for originality; and has not been submitted before to any institution by me or any other person in fulfilment (or partial fulfilment) of the requirements for the attainment of any qualification.



Jacobeth Makoloko Manana

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Abstract

Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory is the basis for this Participatory Action Learning and Action Research (PALAR) study, which aims to investigate the support needed by School-Based Support Teams (SBSTs) to help teachers at special schools to reduce barriers to learning. The study emphasises the powerful capacity stakeholders have to develop the best ways to support the SBST of the participating school to help teachers reduce barriers to learning. The focus of this research study was guided by the main research question: "What is the support needed by SBSTs to help teachers at special schools to reduce barriers to learning?" A total of six participants became the co-researchers in this study. The participants represented various roles of the SBST, including the coordinator, secretary, School Management Team (SMT) representative, Learning and Teaching Support Material (LTSM) coordinator, Disciplinary Committee coordinator, and school nurse from the special school in Sedibeng East district in Gauteng. They participated in a four-cycle process by engaging in scheduled action learning meetings during which they collaboratively devised and implemented a research plan and came together regularly to share and critically reflect on the emerging findings. Participants were thus actively involved in identifying problems and finding solutions. The qualitative data generation strategies applied in this study include observation, drawing, focus group discussions, an open-ended questionnaire, and a reflective journal. Participation in the action learning process made the stakeholders aware of the value of collaboration, as well as the critical reflection skills of each participating member.

The results indicate that the SBSTs in special schools need support to help teachers to reduce barriers to learning. Forms of support necessary to provide effective support to teachers as well as elements that obstruct the delivery of support for SBSTs were identified. The study makes recommendations for stakeholders on how to improve the situation and suggests topics for further study.

The PALAR process met with some difficulties. Initially, the participants were not willing to share their knowledge and experiences as they did not want to be judged, but they started showing more interest and openness to share ideas as they started to understand that they were going to learn from each other. A further limitation is that during the process of the study the government implemented Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) social distancing regulations. It was difficult to schedule meetings with participants, so the number of meetings were reduced, and participants met under strict physical distancing conditions.

Key Words: School-Based Support Team, Special School, Learners experiencing barriers to learning, Support, Special educational needs, Teaching and learning material, Inclusive education, Teacher assistant, Individual Support Plan (ISP).

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease
DBAC	District Based Accommodations and Concession
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DBST	District-Based Support Team
DoE	Department of Education
DSG	Developmental Support Group
EASPD	Education Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities
ECP	Emancipatory-Critical Paradigm
EFA	Education for All
EWPP6	Education White Paper 6
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FSS	Full-Service School
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
HOD	Head of Department
IE	Inclusive Education
IEP	Individualised Education Plan
ILST	Inclusion Learner Support Team
IQMS	Integrated Quality Management System
ISHT	Integrated School Health Team
ISP	Individual Support Plan
LOLT	Language of Learning and Teaching
LSA	Learning Support Assistant
LSEN	Learners with Special Educational Needs
LTSM	Learning and Teaching Support Material
NCS	National Curriculum Statements
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NICRO	National Institute of Crime Prevention and the Reintegration of Offenders

PALAR	Participatory Action Learning and Action Research
PAR	Participatory Action Research
SANCA	South African Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence
SASA	South African Schools Act
SBAC	School-Based Accommodations and Concession
SBST	School-Based Support Team
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SEP	Special Educational Provision
SGB	School Governing Body
SIAS	Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support
SMT	School Management Team
SNA	Special Needs Assistant
SSRC	Special School Resource Centre
TA	Teacher Assistant
TAT	Teacher Assistant Team
UN	United Nations
UNCRPD	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Chapter 1: Overview of the Study

1.1 Introduction and Background

In South Africa many studies have been conducted on education support services concerning 'mainstream- together with full-service academies' along with the nature of School-Based Support Teams (SBSTs) towards rendering services to learners, teachers, and schools, in accordance with mandate by 'Education White Paper 6' (EWP6) (DoE, 2001). However, SBSTs at special schools remain a least understood group of experts in support services that themselves need support and capacitation. The studies that were conducted on special schools focused on the educational right for Learners with Special Educational Needs (LSEN) along with the needs including the demands encountered by teachers in special schools. Note should be taken that studies did not include the views of members from SBSTs nor what kind of support they also need to help their teachers to effectively handle obstacles to acquiring knowledge in a formal setting. This gave an impression that specialised academies are 'more resourceful with knowledgeable teachers on inclusion and learner support' (Boujut *et al.*, 2016:2874), and therefore, their SBSTs are naturally capable to render services to teachers without any support from the District-Based Support Team (DBST).

Although the aforementioned perception prevails at special schools, these studies provide important information about the support services at special schools. Many South African and international studies confirmed that special school teachers regard their teaching as a challenge and that they rely on their colleagues for receiving help (Boujut *et al.*, 2016:2874). Furthermore, some researchers have endeavoured to determine the attitude of special school teachers to the provision of support (Bekirogullari *et al.*, 2011), managing learners who have specific disabilities inside special schools (Syriopoulou *et al.*, 2012), plus learners' outcomes in a special school (Gutman *et al.*, 2018).

The public often views the 'roles and responsibilities' of SBSTs in special schools as being 'different from that of the mainstream' schools where these teams are involved in teaching, identifying, assessing, and referring poor performing learners, as well as assisting other teachers who are having challenges providing support to learners in their classroom (Hay, 2018:5; Williams, 2010:7). On the other hand, Rulwa-Mnatwana (2014:57) mentions that in "special schools their role includes teaching learners with disabilities, the drawing-up of Individualised Education Plans (IEPs), to feed as well as to cloth those who are unable to, in addition to supporting fellow colleagues". Other challenges mentioned by Van Niekerk and Pienaar (2018:11) are challenges in the organisations (multitudinous-grade teaching), 'adverse arrogances by teachers', together with 'parentages who are not involved'.

Considering the advantage to this study, it is critical to note that support teams inside special schools continue with their roles in special education and in addition they are expected to support teachers. Therefore, one may conclude that the adjustment of these teams to fit in such situations can be difficult and Van Niekerk and Pienaar (2018:12) suggests that, as a result, they also need support from the Department of Education (DoE) to execute such mammoth tasks.

Regarding the application of 'inclusive education' (IE) in special schools, the major observation is that teachers are probable to face, amongst others, "challenging situations such as excessive amounts of direct contact with children, a perceived lack of job success, programme structure, and work overload, scarce collaboration with colleagues, and lack of administrative and parental support" (Jonker, 2005:8). Furthermore, the high ratio of learners to teachers, limited progress attributed to various problems of learners who are impaired, teaching demands affecting teacher's motivation negatively, also exacerbate unappealing working conditions faced by teachers in special schools. These writers further indicate that this has a significant impact not only on their health and wellness, but also on the recruitment, retention, and morale of teachers that turn out to be exasperated because of prolonged durations taken in designing, development of curriculum amendments, plus strategising upon community collaborations (Jonker; 2005:21; Masango, 2013:7). These challenges clearly dictate the need for SBSTs to be highly supported by the DBSTs to address such prevailing problems in special schools to ensure that inclusion is a success. Mahlo (2011:176) and Zwane and Maile (2018:4) find that SBSTs are short of information, also expertise' towards supporting learners and teachers, nonetheless to empower them may perhaps be an approach to advance the employment of IE.

Mpanza and Govender (2022: 273) express that it is generally decided that the DoE in many South African provinces lack determination to support special schools, consequently the establishment of education 'support' provisions is 'inhibited' with SBSTs being inefficient. Rulwa-Mnatwana (2014:57) notes that "some teachers from special schools feel incompetent and that the system of education fails to make available the indispensable support needed to execute their functions". Nel *et al.* (2016:10) accept this idea when they concluded that the government does not put adequate exertion into supporting special schools and underestimates the imperative part that is been played by special schools in providing support to mainstream schools.

Research has suggested several reasons for the continual ineffective functioning of support in special schools. Amongst them the following are cited: the innumerable problems that special academies encountered in their expedition towards executing their part of being

'resource centers', lack of both human and physical resources, poor learner's assessment by district officials, limited professional development opportunities, some of these schools are neglected, defective arrangement of district office-bearers that generate disturbance of schools' planning, as well as valued periods of teaching that is being when wasted when teachers join workshops that are offsite (Maguvhe, 2013; Udoba, 2014; Mulholland & O'Connor, 2016; DBE, 2009; Nkambule & Amsterdam, 2018:5).

The provisioning of support for teachers in special schools is mainly described as being ineffective and teachers are desperate for support. However, according to Nkambule and Amsterdam (2018:5), various studies found that there is some form of support available to teachers in special schools. The findings of these studies mentioned that special schools have special skills offered amongst their staff and have created learning resources to explicitly help learners, for example, 'learners who are visually impaired'. Furthermore, professional staff, as part of their role in the DBST, runs the training workshops within their districts for additional teachers on ways to deliver supplementary support to learners who are visually impaired, as stipulated in EWP6 (DoE, 2001:21). Another way of support is that special schools that create learning-materials for braille and availing them to other schools in the district through a lending system (Nkambule & Amsterdam, 2018). Special Schools as Resource Centres Briefing Document (2010:28) expresses that to ensure effective support in special schools, a helpline is set up for teachers or parents to telephone in with queries and DoE (2001:21) considers this as 'a valuable foundation' of help. In line with the above, it is noteworthy that the SBSTs in these schools have a long way to go in order to effectively support teachers. It is noteworthy to bear in mind that these views are established on what literature on support services in special schools reveals and not on what their SBSTs said. Therefore, it is important for researchers to find out more about the needs of the SBST from special schools in order to effectively support their teachers.

1.2 Problem Statement

The research done in special schools have broaden people's knowledge relating to the demand of support needed aimed at both learners together teachers and the oversight of the SBSTs to perform their roles and responsibilities. As mentioned earlier, this research has informed the understanding of the 'right to education' for LSEN and the necessities plus the demands experienced by special schools teachers (Boujut *et al.*, 2016:2874; Syriopoulou *et al.*, 2012; Rulwa-Mnatwana, 2014). Moreover, none of the research was done on the SBSTs from special institutions, specifically on the necessities of these teams to help teachers reduce obstacles to acquiring knowledge. This constitutes the core of this study: to apprehend the needs of SBSTs in special schools from the perspectives of those who serve in that teams.

1.3 Research Questions

1.3.1 Main research question

The subsequent research question was formulated to guide this study:

What is the support needed by SBSTs to help teachers at special schools to reduce barriers to learning?

1.3.2 Sub-research questions

To further explore the main research question, the following sub-questions were formulated:

1. What is the support given to SBSTs in special schools by role players?
2. Which programmes are in place that would enhance the SBSTs in special schools to perform their roles?
3. What elements are impeding the provision of support by the SBSTs to support teachers in special schools?
4. Which recommendations can be made to capacitate SBSTs in special schools to support teachers to reduce barriers to learning?

1.4 Aim and Objectives of the Study

1.4.1 Aim

The study aims to investigate the support needed by SBSTs to help teachers at special schools to reduce barriers to learning.

1.4.2 Research objectives

The research objectives of this study are as follows:

- To identify forms of support given to SBSTs in special schools by various role players.
- To identify programmes that are in place that will enhance the SBSTs in special schools to better perform their roles.
- To discover elements that hamper the delivery of support by SBSTs to support teachers in special schools.
- To make recommendations to capacitate SBSTs in special schools to support teachers to reduce barriers to learning.

1.5 Key Concepts

1.5.1 Learners experiencing barriers to learning

The notion “learners who have impediments to acquiring knowledge in a formal setting, talks about the learners who have deficiencies, who are considered as ‘possessing special educational needs’ (SEN) either having challenges to acquire formal education like ‘societal pecuniary circumstances’, ‘arrogances’, ‘obstinate curriculum’, ‘linguistic abilities and dialog’, ‘unreachable and hazardous environment’, ‘personal’ or ‘emotional’ issues” (Rulwa-Mnatwana, 2014:6).

1.5.2 Special school

‘Special school’ accommodates learners who require ‘high intensity support on a full- or part-time basis’ (Fourie & Hooijer, 2016:18). Within the school, education encompasses the ‘exclusively planned’ and ‘thoroughly regulated’ preparation of instructional techniques along with modified resources. These types of schools are organised specifically to create ‘special educational provision’ (SEP) aimed at ‘children’ or ‘youthful adults’ who have SEN. According to DoE (2007:5), special schools must ‘cohere’ to all the requests of the policy and legislature appearing in ‘National Education Policy Act (1995)’ coupled with ‘South African Schools Act (SASA) (1996)’ along with EWP6 must direct management, education, plus assistance in special institutions.

1.5.3 School-based support teams

SBSTs remain commonly viewed as an essential strategy for providing ‘learners with support, teachers, along with institutions themselves’; EWP6 (DoE, 2001:21) uses the term Inclusion Learner Support Team (ILST) for the SBST. “The conformation of these teams; however, is not restricted to ‘teachers’ who have ‘specialised abilities plus knowledge’ within parts like ‘learning through assistance’, ‘Life Skills’/‘Guidance’, or reassurance” (Rulwa-Mnatwana, 2014:7). Due to interest, these teachers function in this team voluntarily. “The ‘school management team’ (SMT) members are recommended towards forming part of the team” (Makhalemele, 2011). Furthermore, “the ‘support staff who are non-teaching’ and ‘learner who represents’ may be part of these teams depending on the need of the learner” (Rulwa-Mnatwana, 2014:8). A SBST, what's more, defines “a group that is founded at school that comes up with resolutions’ made up of various stakeholders, and ‘specialists’ offering an opportunity aimed at discourse on the particular desires of students” (Lebona, 2013:6). Classroom teachers are supported, through the course of regular meetings, creation and employment of ‘either teaching or management’ approaches towards helping every learner who needs supplementary assistance, to collectively determine the needs of the institution

and predominantly the challenges within the institution. These teams ought to cooperatively 'develop' approaches to deal with recognised requirements and barriers to learning. The latter should "incorporate overt emphasis on the development of teachers, parent consultation, and support" (Lebona, 2013:53).

1.6 Theoretical Framework

This study remains underpinned by 'Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory'. 'The ecological theory of Bronfenbrenner' explains in what way a 'micro-system' (SBST at an institutional level) is affected and intertwined with the meso-system (district level), exo-system (provincial level), macro-system (DoE at national level), and chrono-system (other wider society-systems, experiences, transitions, and historical events) needed for support' (Leonard, 2002: 16).

The micro-system is the first layer in the Bronfenbrenner theory. It has been described as nearest 'to the child' also presumed as the structure that has direct interaction with the child. Within this 'structure', the child is comprehensively interacting and connecting with additional acquainted 'people'. This can effortlessly transform him/her to become 'no matter what' because it is immediate to the child. "The micro-system includes the 'associations and collaborations' children have with their closest environments" (Berk, 2000). These organisations in this system comprise kinfolk, education academy, neighbours, or child minding surroundings. In this study, the SBST is viewed as being at the micro-level which is expected to implement the policies to support teachers and learners. Mahlo (2011:74) alludes to the fact that "SBSTs directly supports the processes of 'formally imparting knowledge' through recognising and looking into the wants of the school-community, while involving and creating associations with parents and other community stakeholders". Again, for the SBST to provide support effectively, it should be coordinated well and supported by the other structures mentioned below.

The meso-system is the subsequent closest 'environmental layer' to the child, although he/she is not directly in interaction with structures contained in it. "The meso-system offers the link amongst the organisations of the micro-system of the child" (Berk, 2000:34). For instance, the association among the teacher of the child and his/her parents, or among his/her 'church' and his/her vicinity. In this study the district is the meso-level and it is regarded as "the core supplier of support to schools" (Mahlo, 2011:69). She further emphasises that at this level, the SBST depends strongly on support given by the district (DBST) on how to implement IE successfully. According to Matlala (2015:26), "this level is described as the link between the school and the district, and these two surroundings unswervingly and indirectly interconnect and support each other".

The 'exo-system' expresses the 'higher societal system where the child does not operate straight off'. "The development of the child is impacted by the structures in this layer through interaction with some structure in his/her micro-system" (Berk, 2000). The schedules of the workplace of parent or resources of the community-based family are examples. The provincial department which is at the exo-system level is responsible for affecting the policies as per the needs of the province. "Some of the responsibilities of the provincial department are to guide districts on managing schools and to furnish schools with both human and technical resources as a form of support" (Matlala, 2015:25).

The 'macro-system' might be contemplated as the furthest layer in the environment of the child. Even though being unable to outline precisely, this "layer contains cultural values, customs, and laws" (Berk, 2000). According to Hoosen (2016:47), the "macro-level, as determined by Bronfenbrenner's theory, is where policies are established and decisions are made. In this study the macro-level is regarded as the national DoE where policies on establishment of special schools, support structures such as SBST, as well as the kind of support to be provided to these teams, are made".

The 'chrono-system' incorporates measuring time while it communicates to an environment of the child. Components in this structure may be one or the other outward, for instance, the time of a close family member's bereavement, or inward, such as the biological modifications that transpire with the growth of a child (Berk, 2000). According to Barratt (2016a:25), this system expresses "how time connects to the collaboration between systems and the impact each has separately and conjointly". The "chrono-system includes changes and developments over a period of time" (Vlok, 2016:62).

1.7 Research Methodology

1.7.1 Research paradigm

Kivunja and Kuyini (2017:26) state that the term 'paradigm' originates in Greek and it implies pattern. In the research of education, the term paradigm is used to state any worldview of a researcher, which is the understanding, or view point, or philosophies, or principles that enlightens what clarification of research data means. Furthermore, it fundamentally reveals the philosophies of the researcher concerning where he lives and wishes to reside in (Lincoln & Guba, 1985:15). It finds the knowledgeable philosophies and values that outline in what way a researcher sees the 'world', also the way s/he construes or behaves in that 'world' (Creswell *et al.*, 2007:21). Barratt (2016a:14) alludes to the fact "that it is the 'lens' whereby a researcher sees the world". Creswell *et al.* (2007:21) agree that paradigms are viewed as the lens through

which reality is interpreted and further provide a guideline to the approach in which the research is conducted, along with the strategies that need to be employed.

This study will make use of a Participatory Action Learning and Action Research (PALAR) paradigm. In accord with to Wood and Zuber-Skerrit (2013:3), PALAR is fitting for building 'autonomous, reciprocally gratifying relationships amongst participants of the institution and outside education populations'. It is described as a classification of participants in teaching who desire to engross in an act to accomplish precise objectives en route for enhancing their educational situations. It also accentuates mutual learning and action research, which has two aims: (1) to employ planned action to improve circumstances, and (2) to concurrently explore the process of change to expand understanding and as a result create principles to clarify the modification that is happening; because they are responsible for producing research results coming from their participation, scripting and publicising what they learned are major tasks (Wood & Zuber-Skerrit, 2013:3). In action research people do not only discuss their problems, they also think about possible solutions and actions which need to be taken (Creswell *et al.*, 2007:21).

The benefit of this paradigm is that the researcher collaborates with participants as co-researchers to gather, analyse, and interpret data for the study (Wood & Zuber-Skerrit, 2013). The relevancy of this paradigm in this study is that the experiences, actions, and plans of the participants will collaboratively develop strategies for support needed by the SBSTs to help teachers at special schools to reduce barriers to learning. These participants will be considered equal partners throughout the process of PALAR (Wood & Zuber-Skerrit, 2013). The participants will collaborate to address the identified challenges since they are all directly affected. The common understanding of the challenges and the identification of necessary changes in the existing strategy to support SBSTs at special schools will be forged and change will be implemented (Braun & Clarke, 2021: 1393).

1.7.2 Research design

A 'strategy' or a 'map' designed for the procedure of discovering clarifications toward a research problem is called research design (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:85). It can be described as a plan or proposal of in what manner an individual anticipates leading the research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985:17). Conway (2017:46) defines it as "a strategic framework for action that serves as a bridge between research questions and the execution or implementation of the research". According to O'Neil and Koekemoer (2016:3), the phrases 'approach', 'design', and 'strategy' are utilised correspondingly within the literature to signify what is usually recognised as a research design.

The design demonstrates what sort of an individual is intended to be studied, where, when, and in which circumstances they are going to be positioned (Jilcha, 2019:2). The research design possesses its inception within the research problem, and then it is studied and speculates numerous most important pronouncements which are made by the investigator trying to determine the preeminent method to the research question (Creswell *et al.*, 2007:96). In this study the team members will have an opportunity to discuss their challenges and think about relevant and possible solutions and the action to be taken to address the main issue.

Qualitative research design will be utilised in this study. As a qualitative researcher I am concerned in “how people (SBSTs) make sense of their world and their experiences in their world (special schools)” (Barratt, 2016a:14).

1.7.3 Selection of participants

‘Sampling’ happens to be the procedure utilised to hand-pick the segment of the populace for a study. (Matlala, 2015:37). Leedy and Ormrod (2005:144) agree that the researcher makes use of a reduced sample when using qualitative methods to obtain data, which has to do with the purpose the researcher has in mind. Therefore, sampling is the usage of a subgroup of a populace to embody the whole population. There are various methods to sampling in research, and two of the methods being ‘probability’ and ‘non-probability’ sampling (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:39). Non-probability sampling includes the following types: theoretical, deviant, sequential, purposive, snowball, case, and volunteer sampling as well as key informant (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:144). In this study ‘purposive sampling’ was exploited to hand-pick partakers. This means that, they were selected because they were available and they were willing to partake, since all partakers “is emblematic of the target population” (Barratt, 2016a:14).

In this study, five teachers serving in the SBST as well as a school nurse, who is also an SBST member, will be chosen. All these members contribute differently to the team, according to their roles, to the learners’ needs as well as the teachers. They are considered as the key informants and expert sources because of their roles and experiences in serving as SBST members at a special school.

Table 1.1: An overview of participants and the rationale for their inclusion

Participant	Gender	Subject taught	Reason for participation/inclusion
2	Females	English Mathematics	Member of SBST (coordinator and secretary)
2	Females	Mathematics Sesotho	Member of SBST (SMT & LTSM coordinator)
1	Male	Woodwork	Member of SBST (Disciplinary Committee coordinator)
1	Female	School nurse	Member of SBST

Source: Author's own construct

1.7.4 Data generation

According to Wood and Zuber-Skerrit (2013:6), PALAR inspires the commitment of participants through four key features in the cycle process: (1) the start-up workshop, (2) the formation of action learning arrangements, (3) recognition of participants, and (4) project accomplishments – and the entire nurture association, deliberation, and acknowledgement, and eventually the erudition of the participant and viable fruitful results.

A space is provided in the *start-up workshop*, so that 'every participant to gather to instigate to discuss in what way and the motive behind working collectively' and to kiln concerted coalition (Wood & Zuber-Skerrit, 2013:6). This workshop idyllically happens in a matter of days, at a location elsewhere from school or communal locations, to permit partakers to put forth their exclusive thoughtfulness to form relationships and to develop plan of action. In this workshop activities deepening connection will be done to assist partakers become acquainted, to build reliance, and to recognise the 'shared pledges that unify them' (Wood & Zuber-Skerrit, 2013:6). Apprehensions and anticipations about power relations are talked about amenably and the PALAR practise is pondered in connection to the assignment the group is venturing to.

After the above-mentioned component which promotes relationships, the second component is the *creation of action learning sets*. According to Zuber-Skerritt (2013), "the relations started during start-up workshop are made deeper and advanced over steady gatherings of every participant, while they gather as an act learning regular, conferencing to think analytically on evolvment of the assignment/s". Wood and Zuber-Skerrit (2013:7) is emphatic that participating and thinking during act learning established gatherings inspire profound learning'.

The third constituent of PALAR is *recognition of the contributions of participant*. According to Wood and Zuber-Skerrit (2013:7), this is where participants are given a chance to detect and

probably share what they learnt overtly and to also commemorate the contributions of every participant to the project's accomplishment. The fourth component, *project achievements*, provides a place to make recommendations and to deliberate more needs that come up from the findings of the assignment and concretes the system for sustained partnership (Wood & Zuber-Skerrit, 2013:8). Projects of action research certainly do not actually come to a certain conclusion.

Throughout these cycles all participants are involved in action learning set meetings where they collaboratively develop a research plan and action it. Participants habitually get together to share and think back on the emerging findings.

As Wood and Zuber-Skerrit (2013) mentioned, the data generation in this study will comprise of four cycles:

In the first cycle participants will collaboratively focus on building relationship, identification of needs, and research goal setting. According to Zuber-Skerritt and Teare (2013), this is whereby the participants will learn more about themselves and how they can contribute to the team. This will be done in the form of a workshop. 'Relationship-building' activities will be done with commitment to enhance the relationships between the participants (Zuber-Skerritt, 2013). Mc Ateer and Wood (2018) are also of the opinion that in this cycle the participants will envision what needs to be achieved over the period of data collection by drawing a symbol and discussing these with fellow participants and in their group develop a collective symbol. The information will be shared amongst the group members, and they will be asked to design a collective symbol to represent their collaborative vision for the project.

The second cycle focus will be on understanding the current situation pertaining to the support needed by the SBST to help teachers at special schools to reduce barriers to learning. In this cycle, three action learning set meetings will be held. In the first action meeting the participants will be engaged in a focus group discussion (FGD) to develop criteria for the support needed by the SBST, share their knowledge of the current situation in provision of support by this team, reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of the team, and discuss ways to investigate how these practices can be adapted to facilitate more efficient support for the SBST in order to assist teachers. In this regard, an open-ended questionnaire will be developed for SBST members. In the second action learning set meeting, the information will be gathered from the participants on possible strategies to enhance the assistance needed by the SBST to help teachers to reduce barriers to learning as well as commence with data analysis, which will be completed in the third action learning set meeting.

The third cycle will consolidate their contributions regarding improving support-provision. The focus will be the development of recommendations to facilitate more efficient support for the SBST to help teachers to reduce barriers towards learning. Participants will discuss the main themes identified in the collected data in the first action learning set, develop a visual interpretation of the themes, and propose strategies related to each of the themes. The visual interpretation will be displayed in the chosen office for the SBST, and team members will be requested to make comments on the proposed strategies.

The fourth cycle is about reflection on the participatory research process and evaluation of the data gathered. In this action learning set the feedback will be discussed and a strategy for the facilitation of needed support for SBST to help teachers to reduce barriers to learning will be developed.

1.7.5 The role of the researcher

There must be clarity on the 'role of researcher' in any study, and that is important for lucidity and the purpose of identification of the role. Firstly, I will enter into a collaborative partnership with participants when collecting and analysing data (Creswell *et al.*, 2007). The intention is to build an understanding between myself and the co-researchers. Secondly, the following will be observed:

As Nieuwenhuis (2010) suggests, I will communicate the necessary information to participants before the commencement of the study. This will give me an opportunity to address all the questions and concerns that might arise. I will explain the consent form information and once clearly understood, I will request them to sign the consent forms.

I will invite the participants to attend the meetings. I will make sure that the invitation contains all the necessary information about the event, for example, the date, time, and venue. I will also ensure that the venue is central to all the participants so that they are not unnecessarily inconvenienced by travel. I will schedule the meetings so that they do not infringe on work time, considering the responsibilities and duties of the potential participants. Finally, the data generation from the meetings will be analysed according to the agreed data analysis method by the co-researchers.

1.7.6 Data analysis

A 'systematic' course of choosing, 'classifying, likening, amalgamating, and explaining data to afford reason of a particular occurrence of interest' is called data analysis (Creswell *et al.*, 2007:21). It talks about 'transmuting data' knowingly to bring out beneficial data and enabling inference. Leedy and Ormrod (2005:85) agree to the explanation which says; data analysis

delivers sequence, form, and sense to the extensive information that is been gathered. Nieuwenhuis (2010:71) claims that “data analysis in a qualitative study lean towards being consistent and repetitious procedure, suggesting that acquiring ‘data’, ‘refining’, ‘scrutinizing’, and ‘announcing; are entwined”. However, in PALAR the latter is incessant because the recurring progression of ‘collecting’ and ‘examining’ data is interwoven, and ‘contemplation’ is assimilated in each meeting of collecting information” (Zuber-Skerritt, 2011). Therefore, in this study all the action learning sets will centre on what the participants have learnt from the last session, and data will be continually co-analysed on a practical level.

In this study, as suggested by Nieuwenhuis (2010), the inductive analysis will be followed so as to demonstrate the attitudes, perceptions, and philosophies of participants in order to inexact their building of an occurrence. The audio recordings from the meetings will be transcribed and thematic analysis will be used to analyse the data. According to Creswell *et al.* (2017:98), themes will be identified by evaluating the data collected, grouping similar categories, and linking emerging themes with the aims and objectives of this research. Prior coding will be used to identify themes. Maree (2007) states that the co-researchers will have pre-set codes which they will determine using the research aims as well as data that emerged from the research. Furthermore, as is deemed important by Maree (2007), I will verify the categories through re-reading initial transcripts to see whether all the essential insights have been captured, and that data is not misinterpreted. In this case, all members of the learning set will be involved in analysing data on a practical level and as the researcher I will analyse data through a theoretical lens.

1.7.7 Trustworthiness

According to Nieuwenhuis (2010:113), “trustworthiness is understood in relation to findings that reverberate with and are confirmed by the participants”. In this respect, the primary researchers and the participants will both confirm the findings. As mentioned by Zuber-Skerritt (2011), “member checking and participant justification will be employed through an incessant process of critical reflection during team and learning-set meetings”. The researchers will employ a multiplicity of “methods of gathering data to guarantee the triangulation of the origin of data” (Maree, 2007).

In this study the trustworthiness will be in line with the below suggestions made by Lodico *et al.* (2010:169-174) and Mertens (2010:259-260):

1.7.7.1 Transferability

Mertens (2010:259) urges that “transferability permits the reader of the study to assemble verdicts, established on comparing the research state to a circumstances they aspire to move

the outcomes to". To guarantee transferability in this study, a comprehensive narrative of my research procedure will be given, the research setting and findings will be explained at every point of the course. Furthermore, the entire information that will be acquired through field notes, observations, and reflections will also be included.

1.7.7.2 Credibility

Mertens (2010:259) asserts that "credibility is instituting if the outcomes from the study are authentic, from the viewpoint of partakers", while Lodico *et al.* (2010:169) believe that it speaks of 'whether or not the views of the participants about the scenery or happenings relate to the 'elucidation of the researcher's views in the research announcement'. To warrant 'credibility' in this study, I will indicate the time spent on data collection and further establish and develop strong relationships with the participants.

1.7.7.3 Dependability

According to Mertens (2010:259), dependability refers to the "steadiness or consistency of the investigation processes used over time". To ensure dependability within this study I will describe the 'data collection' procedure in complexity and all the changes that I will make during the research process will be fully explained.

1.7.7.4 Confirmability

Mertens (2010:260) expresses that confirmability is "when the data can be reaffirmed by someone other than the researcher". To ensure confirmability, after analysis of data I will ask a different student who has a related topic to evaluate my data with the aim to compare codes I derived with the ones she will identify. Furthermore, I will give participants copies of the report and request them to comment whether or not the data was misconstrued.

1.7.8 Ethical considerations

"Ethical research is beyond just the printed result of a study. All the decisions made throughout the entire research process are entailed". (Barratt, 2016a:70). He further states that "ethical research necessitates the researcher's demeanour to be suitable an accountable, in addition ethical enquiry to also be conducted in ways that fulfil the professional responsibilities of researchers, as defined by their professional organisation, the institutions for which they work, and when relevant, the government and public".

This study will follow the ethical principles of qualitative research as suggested by Creswell (2009:87-93):

- Ethical clearance will be obtained from the Ethics Committee of the North-West University to continue with this research.
- Permission will be requested from the Department of Basic Education (DBE) (Gauteng Province) education districts of the special school in which the research will be conducted. Furthermore, I will seek goodwill permission from the School Governing Body (SGB) and the school principal.
- I will present an informed consent form to each participant. People who agree to take part will be provided with forms to fill in and sign. I will explain that workshops and regular meetings will be held by the researcher and the participants as another form of collecting data. Again, I will ask permission to record the focus group discussions from the participants.
- The participants will be informed that the facts and practices uncovered will be retained confidentially. Their right to stay nameless will be esteemed and no personal information will be publicised without their approval. There will be a protection of the identities of the participants.
- Participants will be made aware that their involvement in this research will be voluntary and that they are at liberty to pull out from the research anytime.
- Data that will be collected is going to be reserved in a secure locker at the supervisor's office for a duration determined by the university. In most instances, it will be kept for a period of seven years.
- Anonymity will be ensured throughout the 'analyses and interpretation' of the data. The data will be merely accessible to myself and my supervisors.
- I am going to avoid the usage of prejudiced arguments against the participants regarding their 'gender, ethnicity, or disability'. The conclusions will be established on the data acquired during the empirical study.

1.8 Proposed Layout of the Study

Chapter 1: Overview of the study

Chapter one delivers 'background' plus orientation of the study. Problem statement, the research question, research design, aim as well as objectives, the study's trustworthiness, and ethical considerations are also presented.

Chapter 2: Literature review

This chapter will include a literature study that focusses on the strategies in special schools to assist the SBST to give assistance teachers to reduce hurdles to learning, challenges

encountered by teachers, other stakeholders, and SBST in the support process, as well as the areas of good practice.

Chapter 3: Research methodology

In the above mentioned chapter, focus is on research methodology employed. Details including information about research design, data gathering strategies, as well as sampling will be incorporated.

Chapter 4: Data analysis and interpretation

The emphasis of this chapter will be to analyse information collected. The themes that will be developed and identified from the analysed data will be presented and deliberated.

Chapter 5: Summary, findings, and recommendations

In this chapter, a summary of the findings together with the literature will be presented. Commendations for further studies will also be presented.

1.9 Conclusion

In this chapter, the presentation of the 'overview of the study' was done. The introduction along with background were conversed. The 'problem statement' was undertaken with the research question which directed the research. The aim and objectives of this study were also defined. Research methodology' applied in this study was clarified, beginning with 'paradigmatic perception', research methods, and data gathering strategies, sampling, in addition to data analysis. The 'role of the researcher' together with the 'quality of the point of reference' was conferred, and the chapter ended with 'ethical considerations'.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter includes a literature study that focuses on historical background of IE, looking at its conceptualisation and establishment, as well as levels of educational support. Moreover, the role of teacher assistants (TAs) and the individual support plan (ISP) are explored. In addition, the SBSTs in special schools, the current situation of support provisioning at special schools, and the challenges hindering successful implementation of support in South Africa are discussed. The chapter also presents the theory that underpin this study.

2.2 Historical Background of IE

Numerous forums were summoned internationally to promote the educational rights discourse. Ladbrook (2009:24) explains that in “1990 the World Conference on Education for All (EFA) was held in Jomtien, Thailand”. She added that “the conference highlighted the ‘basic right to education’, the implication of education for a ‘harmless’, ‘improved’, ‘thriving’, and naturally ‘good world’, and the prominence of education for betterment of self and the society’. The conference also emphasised the need of ‘transmission and enrichment’ of common cultural and moral values in providing the identity and the value for both the individual and society”. Anon. (1990:4) cites that “focus was on promoting the universal access to basic education and equity and increasing the means and scope of education as it plays a greater role in society”. All the representatives from 155 governments committed themselves to achieve the above aims declared via the approved ‘Action-Framework to Meet the Needs of Basic Learning’. This conference brought about an international agreement that “education is the very single important sector in the fight against poverty, the empowerment of women, promotion of human rights and democracy, protection of the environment and control of population growth, all imperative concerns regarding sustainable development for twenty-first century” (Matlala, 2016:20).

Besides the above conference, others were convened with the purpose of recognising the rights of people who have infirmities. Consequently, on ‘4 March 1994 the United Nations (UN) General Assembly’ approved a determination about regular guidelines to balance opportunities for people who have infirmities.

Ladbrook (2009:25) reports that in “1994 over 300 partakers from 92 states above and beyond 25 worldwide associations met in Salamanca, Spain, to continue with the goals of the world

symposium in Jomtien (1990). They focused on what are the elementary changes needed in the policy to promote IE, for schools to be able to work with all children, specifically LSEN”.

Many other declarations followed Inclusion in education because it was affirmed as a human right, including the “Salamanca Statement and Action Framework on Special Needs Education, from the ‘World Conference on Special Needs Education, 1994” (Rulwa-Mnatwana, 2014:24). She further describes this as a huge turning point for governments to accept and commit to the EFA vision.

Harmuth (2012:14) emphasises that the aim of Salamanca Conference was to “advance the objectives of education as the primary human right that brought about the policy adjustments for schools to accommodate and benefit all learners, irrespective of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic, or other conditions”. Various countries started to transform and initiate this change in teaching and learning.

Du Plessis (2013:6) reports that the “2000 World Education Forum Action-Framework, Dakar, EFA, in addition to Millennium Development Goals, were specific about the absolute free and obligatory primary education must be accessible to all children by 2015”. Furthermore, in 2005, there was a ‘UN Disability Convention’ that furthered ‘personal rights with debility in growth. This is evidence of what countries (developed and underdeveloped) did to align their system of education to the Salamanca Statement.

Bekirogullari *et al.* (2011:621) report that mainstreaming practices started in USA around 1970s through the validation of ‘the generalising regulation followed by other countries’ followed; through the validation of the spoken-about law, more attention was directed toward the need to teach learners with disabilities collectively with their normal fellow learners. O’Gorman and Drudy (2011:8) state that Ireland, too, has dedicated itself, within its own legislation and policy, to corroborate so that children with disabilities have a proper education. Ireland has conformed to international legislation that endorse rights of human in addition to the privileges of persons who have infirmities to be handled similarly in each domain of lifetime and for those privileges to be strengthened more by nationwide legislature.

Schwartzman (2018:7) mentions that the “Bangladeshi government gave basic education the highest priority and made it obligatory to the whole nation with a comprehensive five-year plan. There was joint support for EFA and various approaches were used, such as mobilising society through information, education, and communication; sensitising partners; and building partnership with other stakeholders including private sectors, NGOs, and religious institutions. All these initiatives were made so as to increase the participation of these groups”.

“Nigeria also observes the steady conversion from seclusion of individuals with special needs in the special school scenery to partial and total amalgamation into mainstream education” (Omede, 2011:297). Zwane and Malale (2018:2) report that Swaziland, too, participates in adhering to the universal policies of education which promote the supply basic education of high-quality for all. They further state that ‘Education for All’ is a commitment to deliver equal opportunities for all children and youth as set out in its highest piece of legislation, with an aim to provide equal education opportunities to all children in the country (Zwane & Malale, 2018:2).

While these changes took place internationally, South Africa too was affected. Gaffney (2014:1), Rulwa-Mnatwana (2014:26), and Nkambule and Amsterdam (2018:1) all state that the system of South African education also experienced extensive modifications in the past two decades whereby there was equality for all. While these modifications were happening, ideologies of education, guidelines and policies shifted towards creating education and training that was extra comprehensive and achievable to all societies. The final goal of these vicissitudes was to rectify the unfairness and injustice of the past. As a result of the investigation and recommendations on all aspects of “special-needs plus supporting amenities in the system of education in Southern Africa, changes have been affected by the National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training (NCSNET) and the National Committee on Education Support Services (NCESS)” (Rulwa-Mnatwana, 2014:2). This Commission was employed by the Ministry of Education through EWP6 (DoE, 2001:5).

With the introduction of EWP6 South Africa began an expedition towards IE with specialised education necessities developing an IE teaching structure. Within the context of the operation of this policy, it was anticipated that all schools across South Africa make means to change to a comprehensive schooling system (Mkhalemele & Payne-van Staden, 2018:983). They further explain that this ‘policy document’ wishes to discourse the damages of inequalities in education system by establishing an inclusive system which affords equality for every learner to obtain admittance to quality education. EWP6 (DoE, 2001) made recommendations that affects daily practices within schools. Furthermore, Harmuth (2012:19) concur that “WP6 made recommendations as to the kind of support that ought to be accessible to schools, as well as the methods of execution appropriate to support systems within schools”. She also clarifies that “the ‘policy paper’ is mainly based ‘on the thoughtfulness that education should take place in a supportive framework”.

Conway (2017:17) agrees that “coinciding with the importance of talking about the inequities of the legacy of apartheid, numerous policies and guidelines were made towards initiating IE”. The aim of the policies was to supply learners with support and to deal with the dissimilar

hurdles to erudition in South African institutions. The projected ‘three-tier structure of support’ in Figure 2.1 below, suggests that “learners need differing levels of support according to the severity of the barriers which they deal with and help in the prospective placement of learners in mainstream, full-service or special schools, each catering for different levels of support needed” as mentioned by (Ndinisa, 2016:1) .

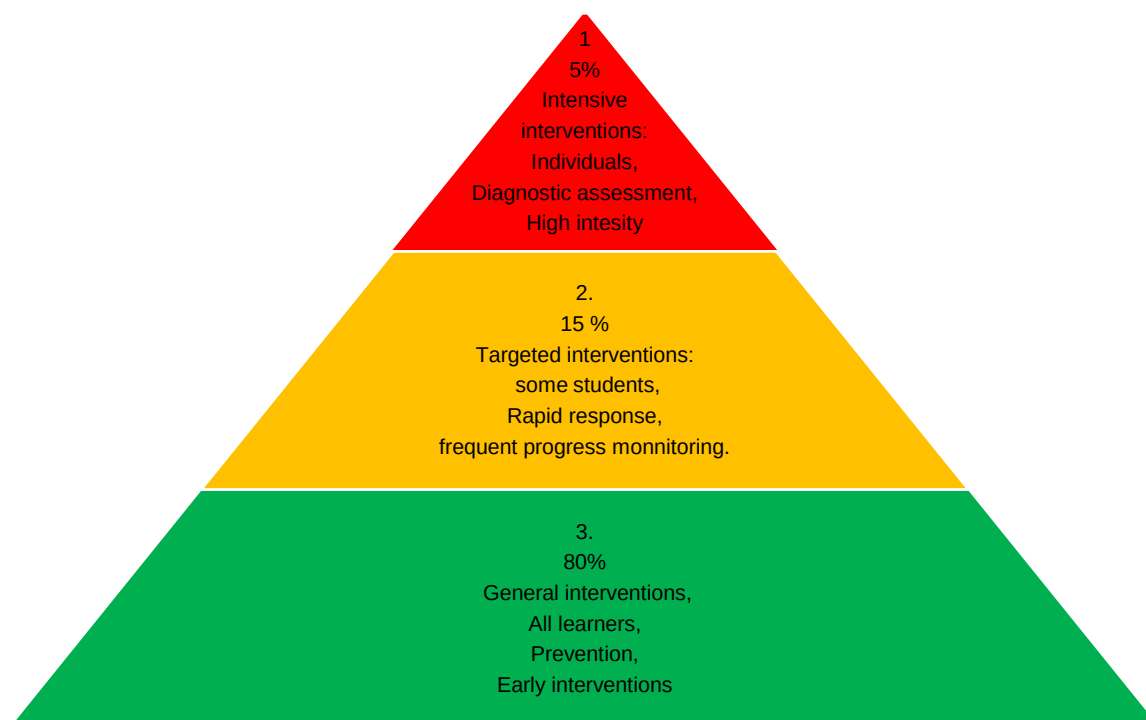


Figure 2.1: Three-tier system of support and early intervention in inclusion

Source: Author's adaptation from Anonymous, Cedar Center

Other policies also brought developments within the ‘education structure’ to include every learner, for instance, South African Constitution (1996) which communicates the basic values in which the country is developed on, namely interracial and gender-free sovereignty and the organic law; social integrity, ‘equitability’, along with the rights of human beings and the liberation (Makhalemele, 2011:26). This Constitution is the umbrella of all policies including White Papers, Bill of Rights, Statutes, and laws, which are developed from it. He further mentions that in accordance with the Bill of Rights (SA, 1996a), everybody is entitled to a basic education. This includes everyone who has hurdles to acquiring knowledge alongside development: they are entitled to education’ from foundation phase to adult basic education.

Dube (2005:28) adds that there is another policy, namely the SASSA (Act 84 of 1996), which caters for the inclusion of LSEN. This policy directs communal schools to grant entrance to all learners and supply the needed educational necessities without prejudice. Makhalemele (2011:27) explains that “in order to avoid prejudice against learners with assistive devices and

special learning support, schools should make adaptations with regards to their facilities so as to accommodate learners with special needs". He also cites the "White Paper on an Integrated National Disability Strategy" that emphasises the importance to make the curriculum accessible to learners with impairments.

The SIAS policy (DoE, 2014:12), in accordance with the policy of the 'United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities' (UNCRPD, 2007), directs in what way, according to Article 24, would be nil non-acceptance of learners based upon their disabilities. This policy further guides how to sensibly accommodate a large array of barriers to learning and development, due to health conditions or disabilities, within classes, at an institution, at home-based, as well as in public.

2.3 Conceptualising IE

Mahlo (2011:34) explains that "IE is currently practised worldwide; however, countries deal with it differently". She says in Australia and Europe there is a rise in an increase in numbers of learners who have specialised needs" that are accommodated and taught within mainstream institutions. Besides the differences in IE, the "world observes equally the rights of the learners and how education systems can be modified to accommodate the miscellany of learners" (Barratt, 2016b:23). O'Gorman and Drudy (2011:4) agree that most developed countries acknowledge and accept the inclusion policy of LSEN to be in mainstream schools.

According to Barratt (2016b:21) and Majoko and Phasha (2018:16), inclusion supports the values and principles which were agreed upon in the Salamanca Statement, that emphasises every person entitlement to education, as per Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1949). Mampane (2017:181) adds that "countries such as Australia, Canada, France, and Germany, like others, dealt with the subject of support for IE by using task forces, long-term studies, short-term professional development, and short-term pay incentives". Lebona (2011:32) elaborates that "in Australia learners with disabilities and other special needs are now progressively enrolled within the general schools; however, they are released during the day, to attend in-depth intervention programmes from a specialist support teacher".

"In the Netherlands mainstream schools enrol learners with special needs; some of those schools focus on a target group of learners with challenges and some work together deeply with special schools" (Lebona, 2011:38). He also reports that cognitive development is largely considered in special needs education. Matela (2007:27) indicates that "in India IE was made public in 2000, and it benefited children with disabilities in mainstream schools". India regarded children with physical disabilities as learners with special needs, therefore for them IE meant

including learners with disabilities in mainstream schools and adopting a learner-centred curriculum (Matela, 2007:29). She also mentions that India believed that there ought to be a partnership between parents and schools because learning takes place both at home and in the classroom.

Zwane and Malale (2018:1) report that Swaziland is a signatory to the universal IE policies and commits to providing high quality basic EFA, giving equal opportunities for all, as mentioned in the legislature. According to Matela (2007:7), IE in Lesotho was developed in 1987 and it was regarded as a “tool to lobby for access to education for disabled children”. She also mentioned that the implementation came with successes as well as constraints such as shortage of teaching and learning resources, scarcity of human resources, and lack of funding and movement of skilled teachers from the departments of education. Lebona (2013:46) together with Makhalemele and Payne-van Staden (2018:983) also state that the support services of education ‘in Southern Africa endured tremendous adjustments’ by the time the IE system was initiated hoping to change the execution ways of support to learners with hurdles to acquiring knowledge and skill. Matlala (2015:1) asserts that being familiar with “the privileges of persons living with incapacities is preserved within the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, namely the rights to self-respect, fairness, and liberty, including admittance to education of calibre”.

The South African Constitution proclaims that “every child, youth, and grownups are eligible to mortal privilege to get education in par with their rudimentary learning requirements in the finest and bursting way ever” (Masango, 2013:2), and Matlala (2015:1) agrees and admits that “all children are capable to learn, with suitable support”. Barratt (2016b:22) and Masango (2013:6) explain that the aim of EWP6 (DoE, 2001) is to afford direction on how IE can be established in teaching conventionally way for every learner ‘blend in’.

In agreement with the South African constitution, South African education policy makers were informed that in reconstituting education, the rights of LSEN would have to be given expected, proper deliberation (Lebona, 2013:42). Gaffney (2014:iv) and Rulwa-Mnatwana (2014:10) explain IE as a system of education embraced by the government South Africa that endorses the holistic growth of each and every learner, regardless who he/she is. They add that it is again the structure which deliberately goes all-out to create a learning atmosphere of common acceptance and respect. This system of education is about tolerance and accepting that every learner is dissimilar and in possession of diverse learning requirements that are intended to be fairly treasured. Conway (2017:2) beliefs that inclusion “intends to ensure that educational organisations, arrangements, and learning approaches to satisfy the desires of every learner”.

IE deals with miscellaneous needs and barriers that affect learning negatively, supports the elimination of learning-barriers, and ensures non-discriminative education (Majoko & Phasha, 2018:15). Matela (2007:5) adds that “IE recognises and celebrates diversity, recognising that people have different “nationality, religion, gender and language of origin, social background, level of education, achievements, economic status and disabilities”. Nel *et al.*, (2016:1) state that IE is presented in education guidelines like EWP6, Special Education – Building an Inclusive Training System, and the SIAS document. The basic function of the policies is to address the formal support structures such as DBSTs, SBSTs/ILSTs, Full-Service Schools (FSSs), Special School Resource Centres (SSRCs), LSEs, and the public. The EWP6 (DoE, 2001) policy, “outlined a national approach to accomplish an inclusive education system and instructed the development of District Based Support Team’s (DBSTs) in all education districts so that they can help the teachers to handle diversity of teaching and learning needs and to make certain that fleeting learning complications are enhanced” (Lebona, 2013:42)

EWP6 (DoE, 2001:7-8) outlines suggested strategies which are required to achieve the change/vision the DoE requires in order to establish IE. Figure 2.2 depicts six EWP6 strategies:



Figure 2.2: Strategies for establishing IE

Source: Author's construct from DoE (2001)

EASPD (2012) describes the following inclusive values which are to be recognised and reinforced in the Index for Inclusion: regard life and death equally important; support all to create a sense of belonging; grow the participation of learners and grownups in knowledge-acquiring processes. EASPD (2012) also mentions initiating “relationships and communities of local schools; minimising segregation, prejudice, and “barriers to learning and participation”; and reforming “cultures, policies, and practices to respond to diversity in the manner that values” equality according to the Index of Inclusion”.

2.4 Establishing IE

“Eliminating barriers to getting entry into education then learning for individuals who have incapacities is important for achieving EFA” (Ahmad, 2012:6). EWP6 (DoE, 2001:6) elaborates that IE means allowing ‘education systems and teaching methods to cater for the prerequisites of every learner and promoting involvement of every learner practices of curriculum of

institutions', while exposing then reducing challenges to erudition. "IE is also about giving learners power by evolving their individual strengths and allowing them to partake critically in the process of learning as well as being productive members of society" (Mahlo, 2011:36).

Vlok (2016:45) adds that "qualitative enhancement of special schools includes the phased conversion to resource centres that provides professional support to schools in the vicinity and integrate DBSTs". According to Makhalemele (2011:46), the "establishment of DBSTs to offer a synchronised support service which is professional that attracts proficiency in further and higher education and local communities, aiming at "special schools and specialised settings for the nominated full-service and other primary schools and educational institutions, began with the 30 districts that belong to the development programme of the national district".

Bekirogullari *et al.* (2011:621) report that people are born with unique differences; and to living their lives autonomously and efficiently, people with special needs ought to attain the abilities and talents needed in everyday life. It is significant that special needs people must be self-reliant in order to live "normal" lives. For the latter to occur, investigation about the individuals' educational needs has to be made by paying attention to their needs and abilities and by offering education environments relevant to their needs. They also said that "a variety of studies were carried out to establish the competence, outcomes and benefits for the children of these practices; and today, educating children with disabilities with their 'normal' peers beginning from early ages with a view to increase their life qualities and ensure their active participation in society has almost begun to be regarded as a pre-condition" (Bekirogullari *et al.*, 2011:621). More reasons to establish IE.

O'Gorman and Drudy (2011:4) declare that the notion of inclusion carries two strong implications: first, that the diversity of learners should be accepted and celebrated among all learners; second, that schools should be attentive communities. Inclusion is seen as "a process that particularly pays attention to those groups who have historically been segregated or have under-achieved in schools" (Ndinisa, 2016:3). According to Rulwa-Mnatwana (2014:28), "the policy has summarised six strategies (levers), as a master plan to instituting an IE and training system" as depicted in Figure 2.3 below:

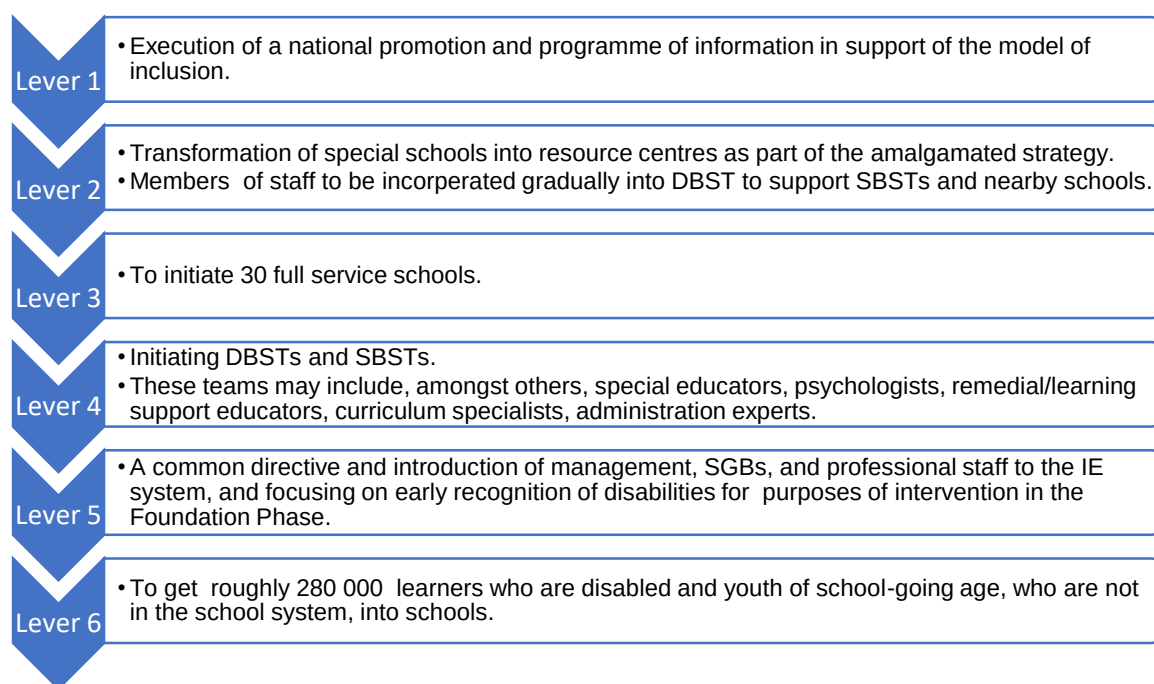


Figure 2.3: Six-lever plan to institute IE and training system

Source: Author's construct from Rulwa-Mnatwana (2014)

According to EWP6 (DoE, 2001), “it is apparent that some learners may need more rigorous and specialised forms of support to be able to develop to their full potential. An IE and training system is organised so that it can provide various levels and kinds of support to learners and teachers”. It also states that “believing in and supporting a policy of inclusive education alone is not sufficient to ensure that such a system will work in practice” (DoE, 2001). Therefore, there will be an investigation on what resources are available in the system and how to improve them in order that they can benefit the development of an inclusive system. There will also be priorities to address EWP6 (DoE, 2001:16).

EWP6 (DoE, 2001:17) compares mainstreaming and inclusion as in Table 2.1 below:

Table 2.1: Comparison of mainstream and IE

Mainstream education	IE
Learners to 'fit in' a specific kind of system or incorporating them into this system.	Acknowledging and taking into account the differences amongst all learners and empowering the similarities.
Supplying supplementary support to some learners in order for them to be able to 'fit in' or be incorporated within the routine of the 'normal' classroom. Assessment of learners is done by specialists who then determine and lay down the technical interventions, like the placing learners in programmes.	Supporting every learner, teachers, and other personnel so as to cater for all the areas of needs. Attention is on teaching and learning methodologies, focusing on the expansion of good strategies of teaching that will be beneficial to everyone.
Attention is on changes that need to happen in learners in order that they can 'fit in'. Attention is on the learner.	Attention is based on conquering challenges in the system that avert it from meeting the entire scale of learning needs. Adaptation of and creating systems of support that are obtainable in the classroom, are important.

Source: Author's construct from DoE (2006)

Mphahlele (2017:8) cites that the "execution of IE is protected by benefits recorded in literature, such as enhanced communication, social abilities, and cognitive skills of special needs children; recognition of special needs children by their peers and teachers; minimised prejudiced attitudes; societies which is inclusive; education systems that is cost-effective; and social unity".

Principles and strategies of EWP6, as stipulated by Nel *et al.*, (2016:7), are outlined in Table 2.2 below.

Table 2.2: Principles and strategies of EWP6

Principles on which EWP6 is based	Strategies to provide different levels of support
▪ All children and youth are able to learn and need support. ▪ Diversity (as well as learning needs) is valuable. ▪ The needs of all learners must be met by education. ▪ Home and community are an imperative source of learning. ▪ Attitudes, behaviours and teaching methodologies must vary so as to meet diverse needs. ▪ Amplified participation of learner in the educational process is imperative. ▪ Strengths of individual learner ought to be encouraged.	▪ Special schools must be improved and converted to resource centres. ▪ Reach children with disabilities not in the school system and out-of-school youth. ▪ Convert 500 primary schools to full-service schools to accommodate full range of learning needs. ▪ Managers and teachers in mainstream schools must be exposed to IE, paying attention to early intervention in the Foundation Phase. ▪ DBSTs as well as ILSTs must be instituted to offer support services. ▪ There must be an implementation of information programme that supports inclusion. ▪ A funding strategy must be put in place.

Source: Author's construct from Nel et al. (2016)

2. 5 Levels of Educational Support

According to Fourie (2016:9) and Mahlo (2011:54), support can be defined as every activity which adds to the capability of a school to act in response to diversity. Consequently, “support should not only be looked upon as a reaction to an individual child who has learning challenges but as an attempt to preclude challenges meanwhile actively working towards building on the wellbeing and academic success of every learner in the school” (Fourie, 2016:9). She also asserts that “current policy proposals regarding education support in South Africa are correlated to the idea that inclusive schools must be health promoting centres of learning” (Fourie, 2016:9. Support comes in different ways.

Masango (2013:9) emphasises that “to support teachers teaching LSEN necessitates a support structure that is sensitive not just to the specific needs of individual teachers, but likewise to the needs of the learners. Detailed training is required by teachers on how to identify and address SEN. Also, an amendment from a content-based approach to an outcomes-based approach demands teachers to work cooperatively as a team in order to

meet the diverse needs of the learners”. To numerous teachers, this method is new and requires a system that will assist them manage with an IE approach. “Knowledge of educational theory, professional knowledge, and expertise is necessary for dealing with barriers to learning since every single one of the teachers are liable for all sorts and kinds of children” (Masango, 2013:10).

According to Tebid (2017:110), the “theory of ecology of Bronfenbrenner tells us how a single person or a set of people at various levels in a social system like the one below, are interchangeably and co-ordinately connected”. Therefore, for the purpose of this study, the National DBE will be referred to as ‘macro-level’ (it is the umbrella body), provincial DBE as exo-system level, the district as meso-level, and lastly the school as the micro-level. The connections will be discussed further in the study.

Fourie (2016:12) and Gaffney (2014:2) confirm that “the South African Education System envisaged the subsequent dissimilar levels and functions for educational support t for the entire country”. These are shown in the diagram below:

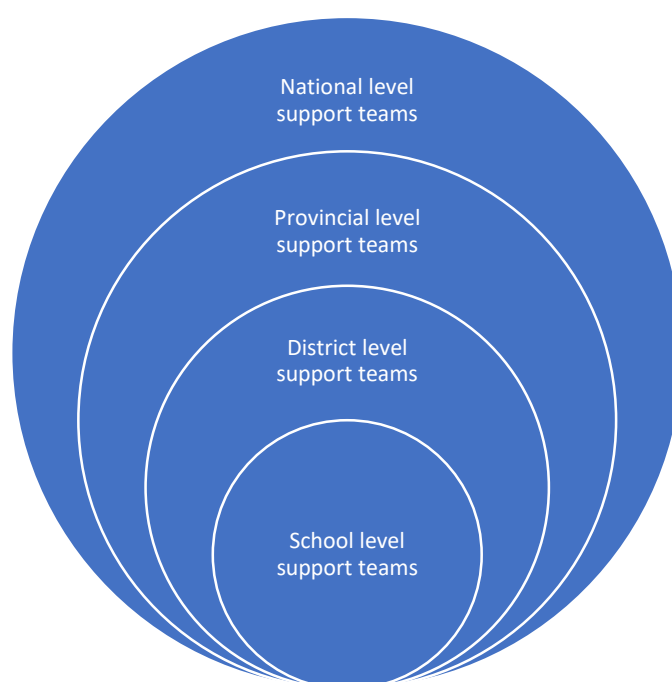


Figure 2.4: Levels of educational support

Source: Drawing adapted by Author from Fourie (2016)

2.5.1 Macro-level support (national level)

According to Fourie (2016:12), the “National DoE supplies national policy and a comprehensive management framework for support”. This policy should be drawn up in “partnership with all the shareholders who are concerned with education” (Lebona, 2013:50).

Examples of such policies that affect teachers and learners in need of support are EWP6, Guidelines for Full-service/Inclusive Schools, SIAS, and Guidelines for Inclusive Learning Programmes (Nel, *et al.*, 2016:3). These policies “are to supply the basis for controlling causes and effects of barriers to learning” (Ladbrook, 2009:37). Lebona (2013:50) and Matlala (2015:24) mention the current constitution for the South African Republic (Republic of South Africa 1996a:6), and the Bill of Rights, as the foundation of the South African democracy. It means that “all the policies in South Africa must be derived and developed from this framework” (Mphahlele, 2017:58).

The “role of the national support team, in partnership with other educational stakeholders, is to invent policies and afford support to provinces as a guide to teachers on how to execute IE” (Matlala, 2015:24). She further states that at national level, policies should flow to a province to guarantee a universal understanding for implementation by districts and schools. Bronfenbrenner’s ecological theory compares national level to a macro-system because it is where policies and decisions are made (Ladbrook, 2009:44). According to Tebid (2017:110), “it is at this level where job descriptions are developed and responsibilities delegated to the three systems in order to aid learners who are having hurdles to learning”. He further emphasise that these dissimilar structures are in a tether collaboration with one another, in addition with other wider systems, and as a result they shape and limit each other.

2.5.1.1 Challenges of macrolevel (national level) support

With regards to EWP6, Ladbrook (2009:46) notes that “the roll out of the paper is being far behind the suggested period”. Regarding the system of support for teachers, EWP6 (DoE, 2001) asserts that ‘education is wider than formal schooling’ and concedes that learning takes place at home and in the community, formally and informally.

Ladbrook (2009:47) maintains that “another difficulty is that scarcity of financial support creates a hindrance in creating the resource centres (special schools and full-service schools) since there is poor funding in the actualisation of policies”. She further explains that even though the implementation of the above falls in the meso-level (provincial level), it is the responsibility of the macrolevel (DoE) to fund and supervise the initiation thereof. After the formulation of policy at the national level implementation is on provincial level.

2.5.2 Exo-system support (provincial level)

The provincial DBE the “national framework of support, according to provincial needs” (Fourie, 2016:12). We are alerted by Lebona (2013:50) that “provinces work on needs-based basis with regards to implementing the policy of IE because of challenges with human and technical

resources, the construction of schools, circulation of finances and resource material, employment of teachers, and admission of LSEN”.

According to Matlala (2015:25), the “province is liable for providing support to schools through both human and technical resources, such as school building, distribution of finances and resource material, employment of teachers, and admission of learners, including learners with barriers to learning”. Lebona (2013:51) also cites the following as “the responsibilities of the provincial DBE in proceeding with IE: ensuring that the budget makes provision for IE; prioritising services of support to all learners in their nearby schools; empowering its special schools to operate as resource centres; managing admissions that there are no learners who are needlessly advised to be placed in special schools; securing inclusive learner transport systems; ensuring that in due course all schools are adequately equipped to be reachable and have the essential individual devices and equipment to support learners with disability”.

2.5.2.1 Challenges of exo-system (provincial level) support

Mahlo (2011:66) laments that “provinces are not on par in relation to the application of the IE policy because the allocation and provision of resources, both humanly and financially, are not the same in various provinces”. Rulwa-Mnatwana (2014:33) mentions that “it seems many provincial managers have inadequate backgrounds to lead and control the implementation of IE in an organised manner”. According to Barratt (2016b:8), “there was a report that the provincial DBE disregards some schools, particularly those in the deep rural areas”. There are also “breaches in the accountabilities of the provincial DBE and on the district level” (Tebid, 2017:12).

Donohue and Bornman (2014:8) report a complaint from the participants of a research study in one of the provinces in South Africa, that ‘they were under an impression that the National Department of Education was not committed to the implementation of the inclusive policy and that it had tried to transfer their responsibilities to others’.

There is not enough funding and resources from the South African DoE to the provincial DBE, and there are unclear guidelines for implementing the IE policy (Donohue & Bornman, 2014:4) and (Mahlo, 2011:67). They maintain that a lack of clear guidelines may impede the delivery of the implementation process. It is obvious, according to Makhalemele (2011:156), that there “is a shortage of support and communication at provincial level, and it must be reinforced”.

2.5.3 Support at meso-level (district level)

Fourie (2016:14) explains that “each province of South Africa has a numerous diverse districts. Every district has teams that are accountable for the management of IE and educational

support in that district. EWP6 pledges itself to the establishment of DBSTs within each district. The composition of these teams will be determined mainly by the needs in the local institutions/schools in each district”.

Matlala (2015:26) adds that “according to Bronfenbrenner’s theory, a meso-system is defined as the relationships between the school and the district. These two environments interact with each other directly. If the district fails to support the SBST or teachers, learners will be negatively affected and they will not be able to respond positively to the curriculum”. According to Fourie (2016:12), the “key function of a DBST is to offer amalgamated support to educational establishments to support the evolution of operative teaching and learning”. In the same breath, DoE (2005:6) declares that the main function of DBSTs is ‘to help education institutions in pointing out and addressing barriers to learning and to advance efficacious teaching and learning’. It also states that assistance is meant for both classroom and organisational support, giving specialised learner and teacher assistance, including curricular and administrative support.

DoE (2005:9) states that classroom support will include ‘direct learning support to learners with special educational need’, as well as continuous training and development of teachers to meet the needs of the learners, including curricular development and providing educational institutions with teaching and learning materials to promote LFA. As for organisational support, there will be “development of both teachers and non-teaching staff, parents, governance, management, and leadership” (Fourie, 2016:15). Meanwhile, with regards to administrative support, there will be support and training in financial management in relation to SASA, including information technology and personnel management training.

Matlala (2015:26) asserts that “teacher support at this level might be directly or indirectly. DoE (2001) in EWP6 directs that the SBST should be supported by the DBST in connecting learner and teacher support. It is at this level that support for teachers should be enhanced by the DBST via the SBST”. The DBST “assesses teaching and learning programmes at schools, suggests adjustments where obligatory, and empower education places to deal with barriers to learning and incorporate diverse learning needs” (Mphahlele, 2017:58).

Similarly, Masango (2013:28) explains that “support for teachers in IE might be given in a numerous ways, including in an advice-giving capacity”. Makhalemele (2011:74) concurs that the aim of this role is to “meliorate the knowledge and skills of teachers to be able them to recognise, evaluate, and plan intercessions in the form of IEPs”. This form of support needs the amenity of everyone or some members of the institute to offer training based at the area for SEN, as stated by DoE (2005:9). They are in agreement that there is an unlimited requisite

for this nature of teacher support. Also, there must be consultations with schools to assist them cultivate personal proficiency and organisation in those capacities, on the other hand, there are challenges with the consultation process.

Nel *et al.* (2016:3) allude to the above-mentioned responsibilities and mentioned the other accountability by DBST which is to arrange for a harmonized specialised support service which focuses on capability in further together with higher education also with confined public, pursuing special institutes and special surroundings, entitled full-service additionally, primary institutions. Lebona (2013:52), Makhalemele and Payne-van Staden (2018:984), and Fourie (2016:14), mention other duties of DBSTs such as the 'authentication of assessment processes' and 'recommendations of the SBSTs', 'supplying teachers with assistive devices and equipment', and 'mobilising resources within the nearby community'. DBSTs must also make sure that FSSs have adequate 'tangible then mortal resources' also afford institutions with 'databases' comprising of experienced or experts" (organised from a central point) (Nel *et al.*, 2016:5).

Mavuso (2013:41) agrees that "in general the DBSTs –are to attend to the requests for assistance from SBSTs, by assessing the requested assistance, assembling additional information needed, and conducting interviews. Furthermore, their role is to guide the process of any concessions, accommodations, strategies, and resources to empower SBSTs, as well as to identify learners for specialised settings".

Fourie (2016:14), Makhalemele and Payne-van Staden (2018:984), and Lebona (2013:52) confirm that DBSTs will then operate closest to SBSTs in the academy level in helping learners who have obstacles to learning. This emphasis is also in EWP6 (DoE, 2001:47) which is a policy, and it states clearly that there are teams at the provincial level that comprises of provincial, district, regional, head offices staff, and from special schools. "Their basic role will be to evaluate and, through supporting teaching, build the capacity of schools, early childhood and adult basic education and training centres, colleges and further and higher education institutions to recognise and address severe learning difficulties and to accommodate a range of learning needs" (DoE, 2001: 29).

2.5.3.1 The composition of DBST

Ladbrook (2009:38) reports that, included in the DBST, are "staff from provincial, district, regional, and head offices, and from special schools", while Fourie (2016:14) names "Education Support Specialists (ISS unit) working in district offices, curriculum and management experts, other government officials from departments such as Health, Transport, Social Welfare, Correctional Services, Safety and Security, and Public Works, as well as staff

from special and resource schools, full-service schools, and higher education institutions”. Figure 2.5 below summarises levels of support and their purpose.

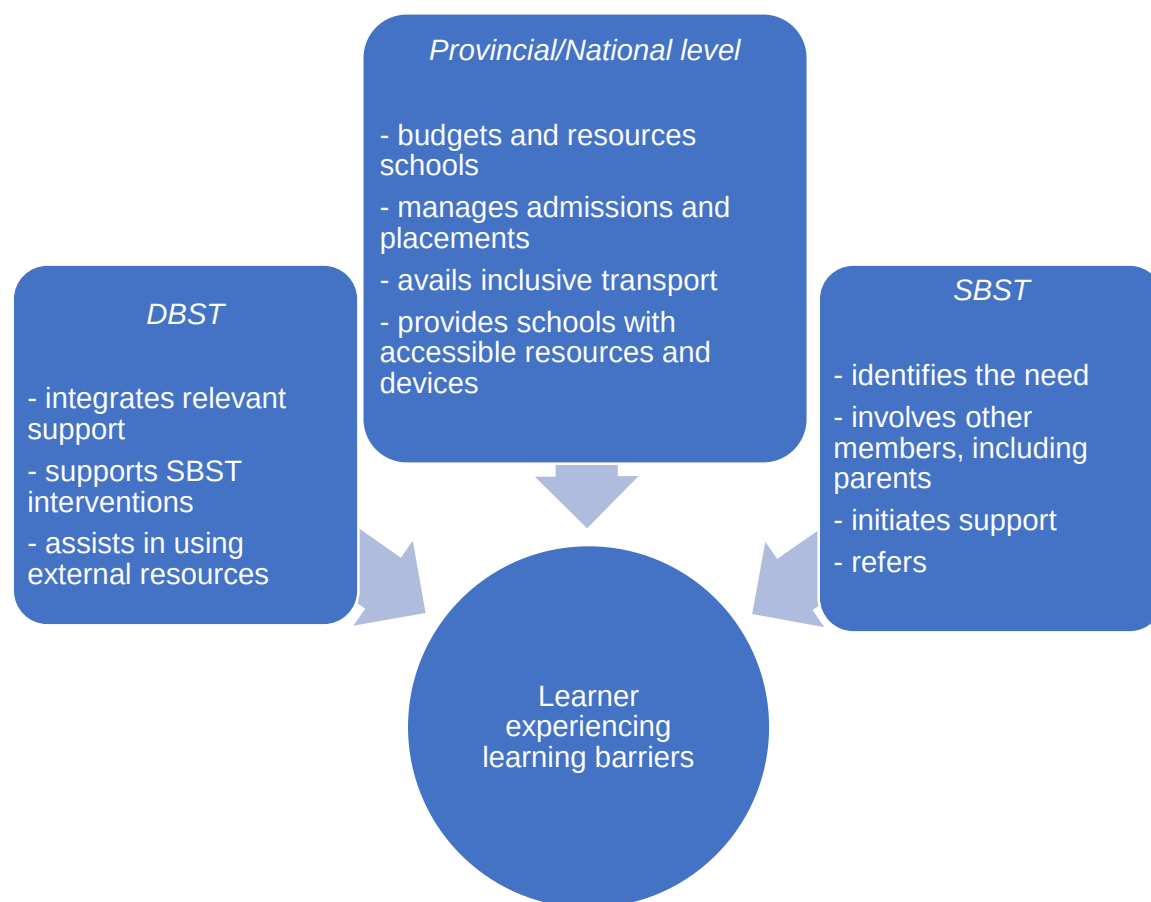


Figure 2.5: Levels of support for LSEN

Source: Author's construct from Fourie (2016) and Mahlo (2011)

2.5.3.2 Challenges experienced by DBSTs in providing support

According to DoE (2005:10), support might be available, but is often fragmented and not coordinated. DoE (2005) explains that ‘to unite support to be coherent it is a challenge, because various professionals of support do not work cooperatively as partners to resolve prevalent issues’. These support providers may include “psychologists, therapists, remedial/learning support teachers, special needs specialists relating to specific disabilities, and other health and welfare professionals employed by the DoE” (Lebona, 2013:52). However, Mphahlele (2017:332) explains that “though the above-mentioned professionals are mandated by the policy from the DoE to be part of the DBSTs, in some provinces they are not available”.

Nel *et al.* (2016:4) discovered that members of DBST undeniably realised the change in their roles besides, they nowadays include the delivery of ‘supplies’ to schools; the ‘assessment

programmes' and 'propositions' for adaptations; and the establishment of collective 'formal' and 'informal' support with populations, institutions of education. Diko *et al.* (2011:16) report that research showed that some districts in larger provinces are allocated an equal number of posts to small districts in smaller provinces. Ultimately the number of officials from these districts do not correspond to the number of schools they should serve and support. Nel *et al.* (2016:10) mention research that the district personnel who should assist and support learners referred to them, are very few in number and that they are allocated many schools and therefore do not give immediate response. They also mentioned lack of time and resources.

Another challenge raised by Diko *et al.* (2011:17) is finances. They report that district officials felt that they needed more money so as to do their obligations commendably and efficiently. At the same time, Makhalemele and Nel (2016:180) cite shortage of human resources, transport, water, and electricity as challenges of DBSTs. They also explained that with regards to transport, the DBST members had to take long trips for lengthy periods which shortened the time to give extensive support to institutions.

Furthermore, DBSTs are hampered by a privation of basic assets like writing materials, vehicles, telephones, computers, plus printers (Diko *et al.*, 2011:17). Officials lamented that the lack of resources negatively affects the support needed at various schools and prevents them from supporting schools effectively. Makhalemele and Tlale (2020:76) state that their research found that DBST members reported principals as a threat to the operation of provision of support in schools, and consequently it became strenuous for them to take charge of the support process.

Regarding curriculum, Diko *et al.* (2011:18) mention that the district officials in charge allege that, according to the new National Curriculum Statements (NCS), curriculum cannot be separated from assessment and that treating them the same is problematic. Nel *et al.* (2016:4) assert that DBST affiliates realised the changed roles they now have

Mdikana and Phasha (2018:158) confirm that the DBST, though the most relevant and often the only means of outside help to schools, are insufficiently resourced. DBST members also felt that they failed to obtain enough coaching from the National DoE and they are not being highly acknowledged by the community (Makhalemele & Nel, 2016:177). Seemingly, the DBST duties are not being performed effectively, which might be because of inadequate support provided by the National DoE as well as provincial DoE.

2.5.4 Support at micro-level (school Level)

An ILST (also referred to as SBST) is an ‘inside’ support team in an institute of education and it works together with DBST and additional collaborators to deal with the needs from that institution (Lebona, 2013:53). Fourie (2016:12) agrees that this support team identifies and deals with challenges to learning in the immediate setting, advancing teaching and learning that is effective (DoE, 2001:48). Masango (2013:7) further states that “EWP6 directs schools to develop a SBST that will work together with the DBST to render support to teachers teaching at inclusive schools”.

Nel *et al.* (2016:4) emphasise that EWP6 (DoE, 2001) declares this; ILST (SBST) is the primary measure of help in schools. If ILST is unable to support them, DBST is the secondary measure that ought to take up responsibility after the ILST of the school – thus they render supplementary support to school community and also keep an eye on this support provision.

Masango (2013:12) defines the SBST as “a structure that supports teachers experiencing the challenges of teaching inclusive education”. DoE (2005:27) mentions that “SBST provides support to teachers by advocating classroom-based interventions for students who are struggling academically or behaviourally. Its task is about good teaching. SBST permits documentation of high-quality instruction done by teachers with a student and it is also about using resources wisely”. According to Mdikana and Phasha (2018:157), SBSTs afford ‘due care and protection’ to learners with learning, academic, social, and developmental challenges.

Matlala (2015:15) adds that another duty of SBST includes “referring to the DBST, to examine the progress of learners, as well as to develop an Individual Support Plan (ISP) for students who cannot cope and achieve academically or behaviourally. The ISP should be viewed as the same as an IEP for special education students”. Gaffney (2014:2) outlines the primary function of SBSTs as “putting properly co-ordinated learner and teacher support services in place that will enable the learning and teaching process by identifying and addressing learner, teacher, and institutional needs”.

According to Mahlo (2011:69), SBSTs work together with teachers. DoE (2005:26) reinforces the purpose of SBSTs, namely, ‘to make certain that every student is granted a chance to achieve and be prosperous within the general education classroom by ensuring that there is a structured support system for both teachers and parents when the student is encountering challenges’. Furthermore, SBSTs develop teacher-development support plans, interventions, guide the implementation, and, if necessary, involve DBST to review ISPs, or to recommend placement.

In addition to the aforementioned, Fourie (2016:16) cites the following as roles of support teams: “meet frequently to talk about learners, parents, and teachers in need of support; develop the policy of school concerning an internal referring system; monitor the progress of learners; preserve records concerning support activities; and develop resource networks in the local communities. She also states that the support team should establish communication amongst learners, staff, parents, and other groups, and deliver commendations and response to the SMT, SAT, SGB, and other relevant role players about inclusive practices that accommodate and overcome barriers to learning”. Makhalemele and Van Staden (2020:160) express that SBSTs has a ‘huge task’ of training teachers on curriculum adaptation.

Hammond and Ingalls (1999:18) and Rulwa-Mnatwana (2014:8) affirm that SBST members should receive administrative support to realise the purpose for their team activities, as well as adequate training in implementing the intervention strategies and learn effective “teaming” skills.

In addition, Mphahlele (2005:26) cites the following skills as necessary for the members of SBSTs: “intrapersonal, interpersonal, problem-solving, planning, and group-/teamwork skills”. “With these skills they will be able to counsel both learners and parents, refer to outside professionals when there is a need, assist teachers in planning appropriate interventions, and provide encouragement and guidance” (Fourie, 2016:16).

2.5.4.1 Challenges at micro-level (school level) support

Amod (2018:14) mentions that the “SBST members experienced time limitations because they were expected to perform their SBST duties together with existing teaching and administrative work”. The other challenge mentioned by Tebid (2017:115) is that “SBSTs at a number of mainstream schools were not functional because they were short of human resources as well as appropriate knowledge”.

Members of SBSTs know that, according to EWP6, they are responsible for training teachers regarding adaptation of the curriculum, but Makhalemele and Payne-van Staden (2020:165) ascertained through research that SBST members themselves often lack training and are therefore unable to support teachers. Through this research, it was also found that some teachers do not ask for help from the SBST who can then not freely discuss curriculum adaptation.

A further challenge faced by supporting teams, as mentioned by Nel *et al.* (2016:10), is that some teachers are demotivated to fill in referral forms. In addition, they describe difficulty in meeting parents due to transport issues, parents who are not available, or those who are

uninterested. Amod (2018:14) states that SBSTs struggle to meet with parents, due to language barriers when they come from neighbouring African countries. She further mentions that sometimes learners that are referred to other government sectors such as the Social and Health Departments, are at times treated sluggishly. Added to this are common external barriers to learners, such as their psycho-social environment, for example, poverty, parental unemployment, substance abuse, child-headed homes and high dominance of chronic diseases, which pose challenges to both learners and parents/caregivers.

2.5.4.2 Composition of a SBST

The structure of professionals on these teams varies across schools. In an operative pre-referral team, all the members of the team are considered equal in their skill and must admit that their principal focus of operation is to support teachers in the school with student concerns, according to Hammond and Ingalls (1999:17). This team may also include teachers, volunteers, members of the SMT, components of DBST, and additional stakeholders from public, like health care providers, additional state sections, plus NGOs, as per the need of that school (Nel *et al.*, 2016:58).

Matlala (2015:14), Fourie (2016:15), Rulwa-Mnatwana (2014:7), and Mahlo (2011:2) describe the core team of the SBST as composed of certain people, as seen in Figure 2.6 below.

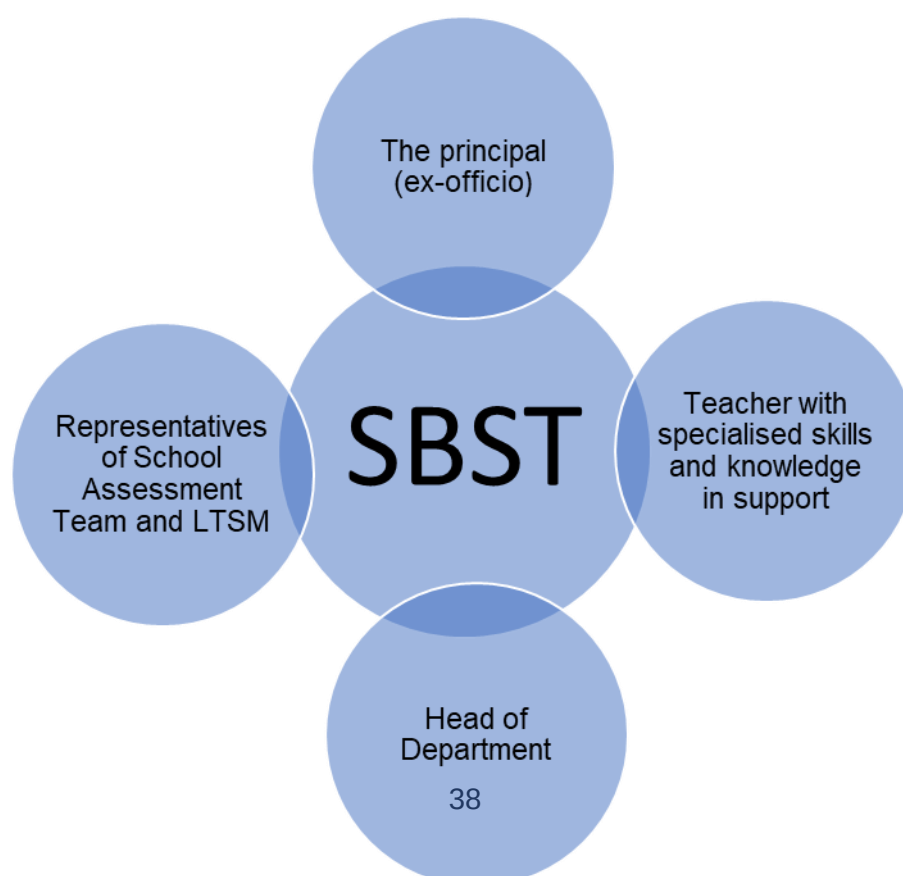


Figure 2.6: The composition of SBSTs

Source: Author's construct from Matlala (2015)

2.6 Teacher Assistants (TAs)

Giangreco and Doyle (2007:429), Sharma and Salend (2016:118), and Suleymanov (2016:93) report that “in certain countries schools employ people to help classroom teachers and special teachers in their endeavour to teach students with challenges and they are identified by a range of designations, for example TA, learning support assistant (LSA), teacher aide, paraprofessional, paraeducator, and special needs assistant (SNA)”. Cassim (2016:7) adds that “they must comprehend and support the specific needs of the specific learner and enforce his/her self-esteem”.

“When teaching learners in inclusive classrooms one might also require co-teaching as an assistant teacher in a single classroom setting, whereby a teacher teaches the lesson and the co-teacher assists” (Masango, 2013:8). He also says, “in inclusive schools, co-teachers are called inclusion support facilitators and they are accountable for presenting some student instruction, problem-solving with teachers, and coordinating the services the learners receive, making sure that the needs of learners with moderate, severe, or multiple disabilities are being met” (Minondo et al., 2001)

These supporting personnel can be used effectively in developing inclusive education (Rose, 2020: 17). However, he points out that the economic limitations, unclear roles and responsibilities of the supporting personnel as well as TAs, unreliable access to training and professional development may inhibit the development of inclusive education.

Suleymanov (2016:93) explains that the presence of a TA is considered an essential approach to supporting IE. Figure 2.7 clarifies five essential steps to ensure the successful integration of TAs into the classroom:

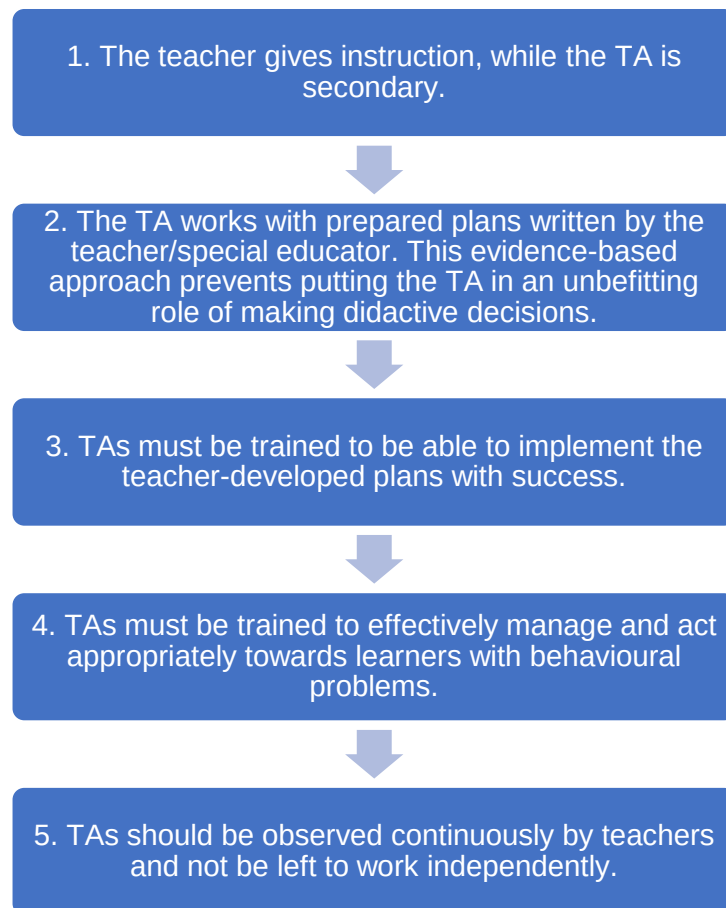


Figure 2.7: Incorporating TAs in schools and special schools

Source: Author's construct from Suleymanov (2016)

A successfully integrated TA can also perform supplemental instructional roles, teaching the class while the teacher has more time to work directly with an individual student. Different countries have different terms for TAs in IE, as explained by Giangreco and Doyle (2007:429):

Spain – TAs, also known as *educadores*, are not used in ordinary schools but are available in special schools in order to aid teachers of specialising education, reach areas of needs of 'learners with severe infirmities', including affording own upkeep. A synergetic partners (psychologists, therapists, and specialising teachers) help broad-spectrum teachers, with joint accountability for meeting the diverse educational necessities of every learner. A request prevails that for more relevant coaching for TAs when entering the profession and for them to be part of planning with the teachers they support, to be adequately informed about the lessons.

Singapore – learners with 'mild disabilities' remain incorporated in the universal teaching classrooms in Singapore. Those with disabilities get little support from mainstream schools. Classroom teachers are the only ones who are expected to them, normally with not ample

support. Currently, the usage of TAs is inapplicable in Singapore even though the Singapore Teachers Union has requested them.

South Africa – it is said that the usage of assistants is mainly restricted to the wealthier schools in South Africa, because government does not subsidise it. A researcher in one of the research projects explained that she has observed parents hire assistants to provide for the physical needs of the child, because he/she had austere disability. The plan is to able the school to welcome the child.

2.6.1 Challenges affecting TAs

There are circumstances in conventional institutions whereby the teacher wants to transfer entirely his/her responsibilities to a TA, and parents did not find it acceptable. Descriptive research has recorded that having teacher assistants can result into a extensive array of unintended harmful effects such as (1) being separated from peers, (2) needless dependencies, (3) intrusion with the engagement of the teacher, (4) meddling with peer connections, (5) limited associations between students and TAs, (6) shaming, (7) reduced access to proficient instruction, (8) loss of independency by learners with disabilities, (9) harm of personhood, and (10) danger of being browbeaten (Giangreco & Doyle, 2007:430; Sharma & Salend, 2016:118; Suleymanov, 2016:93).

2.7 Individual Support Plan (ISP)

Bornman and Rose (2017:47) describe the ISP as “a plan which is written which explains the supplementary support needs, and points out the target and action to be taken in order to help the learner”. They also indicate that some learners require ISPs for a shorter duration, but others for a longer period. They emphasise that the ISP should be reviewed regularly to ensure its continued relevance. Nel *et al.* (2016:69) agree that included in the learner intervention support is his/her parents/care-givers’ concern for the assessment and development of the ISP.

Fourie (2016:13) asserts that ‘the National Strategy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support’ (DoE, 2014) recommends a documentation unfolding various measures of powerful support needed. The document indicates how far a learner is capable to partake in normal learning accomplishments. Besides that, it points out the learning regions in which the needs of the child are biggest and the kind of adjustment that is essential. The SIAS policy is aimed at making decent education more accessible for learners at risk who have learning barriers and it guides the system on in what manner to strategies, plan financially, and programme support measures (DoE, 2014:10). Matlala (2015:17) clarifies that SIAS specifies

that “often learners had challenges in the learning process, which are the results of a wide range of experiences at the school, in the classroom, at home and in the community. This policy is an integral tool for early identification, management, and support of learners with barriers to learning”.

Nel *et al.* (2016:75) advise that it is indispensable that ‘learners who have challenges to learning’ be recognised at the ‘earliest possible moment’, so that there may be early intervention and support, which acknowledges a collaborative approach to the successful employment of the SIAS strategy. Bornman and Rose (2017:47) and DoE (2014:16) mention that for the SIAS process to be developed and effectively implemented proficiency of certain structures are vital. Collaboration between the school community, the SBST, the DBST, and extra health care providers as per area of need are essential.

Teachers must get data and identify learners who are in danger of not achieving in the classroom, to offer intermediations from the classroom that are made by teachers to deal with and support the requirements of recognised learners. Learners must keenly be active in the learning process. Harmuth (2012:33) explains that “the learners become involved in the process, and they start with what they already know, survey possibilities, question, determine the conclusion, and review the consequence. These learners will be actively learning through their peers, and collaborating in groups, engaging their total being”.

DBSTs attend to the appeal for assistance from SBSTs, by assessing the requested assistance, accumulating additional information needed, and carry out interviews. They lead the process of concessions, accommodations, approaches, and asserts to strengthen the plans of the SBST, as well as to differentiate learners for specialised settings in accordance with the SIAS policy (DoE, 2014:16).

2.8 SBSTs in Special Schools

This study was informed by the fact that a number of studies have been done on support services at conventional and full-service schools also the nature of SBSTs in rendering services to support learners, teachers, and schools, as mandated by EWP6 (DoE, 2001:6). However, SBSTs at special schools remain inadequately understood under experts in support services and requires a form of support and empowerment that is different from that of SBSTs from mainstream schools. Neither their views nor the support they needed were considered and, unfortunately, they are one of the imperative structures of support in IE.

Makhalemele and Tlale (2020:75) indicate that SBSTs from specialising schools request knowledge so that they can support teachers effectively. This will prevent teachers from feeling

“unsupported and ill-equipped” when confronted by complications of implementing this new policy of inclusion. Unfortunately, according to Amod (2018:3) and Makhalemele and Tlale (2020:75), literature shows that, in South Africa, teachers at special schools are not effectively supported because SBSTs at those schools are “non-functional or non-existing”.

Fourie (2016:4) mentions that “collaboration practices are an imperative aspect of an effective SBST and it should take place inside the school and between the schools, also link with close-by schools and communities and network with other stakeholders”. IE policies that do not distinctively clarify the SBSTs - roles and responsibilities at special schools worsen the process of successfully implementing the policy (Makhalemele & Tlale, 2020:77). They accede that SBSTs at public schools mainly focus on teaching, identifying, assessing, and referring learners with have hurdles to learning (who cannot cope) as well as supporting other teachers in their classes. The roles and duties of SBSTs at special institutions vary from the typical schools. They added that the roles of SBST in special schools incorporate teaching learners with disabilities, drawing up IEPs, feeding and dressing learners who are unable to feed and dress themselves, and also support other teachers. In the end, these support teams feel inundated with work.

Maguvhe (2013:714) discovered through a research study that district officials do not look into special needs issues, but only look into issues of “grievance procedures, conflict resolution and other education administration processes”.

2.9 Current Situation of Support Provisioning at Special Schools

A study conducted by Nkambule and Amsterdam (2018:5), found that most of participants articulated admiration for support they got either internally or externally, nonetheless then again complained that district administrators plan external workshops devoid of bearing in mind the programs of schools, or that they visit schools at inconvenient times. As a result, this leads to the disturbance of programs in the institution thus precious teaching time is wasted when teachers join external workshops.

Furthermore, Zwane and Malale (2018:4) mention that the worst is that the state does not recompense achievements of teachers through proper reimbursement after receiving relevant qualifications, even though these qualifications empower teachers and increase their confidence to include and support learners who have diverse wants. They also mentioned that those teachers self-funded their studies to upgrade their skills in teaching learners with disabilities. When they are then not properly reimbursed, they feel demoralised and develop negative attitudes towards IE. This impacts negatively towards the support of learners with

special needs because negativity towards IE is an extra hurdle that is not needed and leads to further shortage of teachers with relevant qualifications. Donohue and Bornman (2014:9) confirm this and said that “schools presently are in shortage of teachers with the capacity and knowledge to teach learners with diverse needs in a single classroom without increasing their workload excessively”.

Amod (2018:15) asserts that team members (from a previous study) also reported experiencing time shortages as they have to perform the duties and responsibilities of the SBST in addition to classroom teaching. The process of some of the learner cases referred to government departments was reported to be time-consuming. Participants in this study expressed that they had rather referred learner cases to the Social Services Department for further assistance.

Not having electronic resources limits the delivery of training material from the DBST to the schools and within schools. Absence of resources in special schools pose challenges to the effective provision of support. According to DoE (2002:75), schools may be furnished with assistive devices, but teachers are not good in using them for learners with developmental delays. Makhalemele (2011:27) advises schools to make sure procure of assistive devices and special learning supports to be inclusive of the miscellaneous needs of learners. He further emphasises that when learners are not provided with the required assistive devices that may help them take part in learning, they end up being the victims of those barriers (Nel *et al.*, 2016:4; Makhalemele, 2011:79). Dube (2005:56) mentions that “study participants named the expensive price of medical equipment such as hearing aids, prosthetic legs, and medication as factors that negatively affect the whole family. Therefore, those in need of, for example, hearing aids, sometimes use one instead of two and this affects their work”.

The necessity of acquiring assistive devices is highlighted by Fourie (2016:31). She affirms that technology enables an inclusion of diverse learners in the classroom to receive teaching, acquire knowledge, communicate, and take charge of their environment.

According to Makhalemele and Payne-van Staden (2018:984), since the beginning of IE in Southern Africa, the responsibility of teachers in all academies, including special schools, have escalated and they have to acclimatise to pressures, suppositions and control of their performance in inclusive classrooms. When IE was initiated, there were speculations whether teachers would be able to manage it. Masango (2013:21) states that “many people took it for granted that teachers were qualified and would therefore be able to do what was envisaged of them. However, many teachers felt anxious and confused since they misunderstood what IE was about”.

Nkambule and Amsterdam (2018:2) report that support for special school teachers predominantly occurs through coaching workshops arranged by subject advisors. The SMTs and developmental support groups (DSGs) from the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) processes, are part of the internal support system for teachers. Based on this, it is revealed that teachers do not obtain meticulous, fitting, and/or adequate support in their schools. Support for teachers facing curricular change was erratic, disjointed, and, for majority of teachers, simply non-existing and the DBE also “acknowledged that school visits from district officials do not focus on areas of support” (Huizinga *et al.*, 2019:116).

Negative attitude of teachers towards inclusion and resistance to change are cited by a number of researchers as considerable barriers to successful teaching and learning (Matlala, 2015:18; Mphahlele, 2017:9; Zwane & Malale, 2018:2; Mphahlele, 2017:10; Amod, 2018:14; Olivier & Williams, 2006:224; Masango, 2013:7). In this regard, Matela (2007:21) stipulates that “the progress of executing the process of inclusion will be impeded if teachers have negative attitudes and cannot accept learners the way they are, despite their disabilities. She further emphasises that ‘real change’ needs dedication which will last for a long time, and if the attitude of teachers regarding inclusion does not change, the successful implementation of this inclusion policy will not materialise”. Therefore, Bekirogullari *et al.* (2011:621) confirm that positive attitudes of teachers regarding learners with disabilities are very important for both disabled and abled learners, and this should be acknowledged for the progress of this policy.

Shortage of training in dealing with diversity within the classroom will disempower teachers and create more challenges towards the application of the policy. Shanda *et al.* (2018:21) explain that teacher-participants observed that it is necessary for learners to get education from teachers who show assertiveness and coached in adapting syllabus to meet their needs. According to Van Niekerk and Pienaar (2018:11), teachers need to be trained by SBSTs, in cooperation with DBSTs and other experts, on in what way to recognise and help learners who have learning infirmities. They state that when teachers are knowledgeable and skilled to handle and support diverse learners, schools run effectively. Masango (2013:13) emphasises that teachers should have outstanding and impartial programmes that supports teaching and connects to their “prior knowledge, intellectual strengths and personal interest”. Even though teachers were trained previously, that training does not adequately prepare them for teaching LSEN. He maintains that teachers at inclusive schools require continuous support, on-the-job training, and chance to progressively implement inclusive policy. Maguvhe (2013:714) affirms that “teachers believe that training is an area that requires urgent attention and this means

that every teacher at a special school should be a specialist who could impart to the diverse needs of learners”.

Van Niekerk and Pienaar (2018:11) report that large class sizes (over-crowding) overwhelms teachers, so that they feel overlaid and overpowered by the extent of their responsibilities. One of the intervention strategies for the support of the learner with hurdles to learning is individuality, whereby every learner is considered and acknowledged as an individual. This implies that the learner can learn at his/her own pace, but with over-crowded classrooms this becomes a challenge (Mphahlele, 2005:23). Zwane and Malale (2018:8) report that teachers lamented that over-crowded classes are most challenging for IE, prohibiting an approach of individuality. Vlok (2015:5) asserts that teachers feel pressured by the DoE to include learners with challenges to learning, yet they finding it hard to support them. Williams (2010:14) maintains that IE becomes more difficult with increased diversity of learners, over-crowded classrooms, and the demanding needs of learners, which results in negative experiences for both teachers and learners, and this creates disciplinary challenges in the classroom.

Regarding negative attitudes of general teachers towards inclusion, Zwane and Malale (2018:4) comment that IE can progress if teachers have positive attitudes towards all learners, but many teachers who have been in the profession an extended time feel they are unknowledgeable and tools to teach diverse learners as they did not undergo training in this regard. “Many teachers are used to working in isolation and these teachers ought to get used to the idea of collaboration, consultation, and cooperation that will result in working as an IE team” (Mphahlele, 2005:19). According to Vlok (2015:52), the “attitudes of teachers towards learners can either become a hurdle or be a positive factor in IE; therefore, teachers should maintain positive attitudes and assumptions with regards to inclusive policies”.

Teacher-learner relationships that is poor, reduces the time for actual learning and teaching is a further barrier to IE. Fourie (2016:32) explains that “learners must feel harmless in the learning setting to be able to learn, and teachers must make a milieu that is psychologically safe and supportive. She further emphasises the value of mutual respect and that teachers should see a learner as a person, not just a disability. In addition to that, teachers ought to have positive expectations about every learner and the learners will perform accordingly”. Vlok (2016:3) agrees that “learners will develop good self-esteem if his/her environment is accepting and inclusive and this ultimately impacts on the learner’s overall well-being”.

Involving parents in teaching and learning is very crucial, more particularly for learners who have difficulties with learning. Non-involvement or too much involvement of parents and other stakeholders negatively impacts the education of children. “Parents ought to therefore be part

of the intervention process” (Mphahlele, 2005:16). Zimba (2018:19) mentions that “in special schools the principal should identify the role of parents and work together with them to develop a working relationship that is good that advances best inclusive practices. He further indicates that there are principals who do not have the skill to involve parents to let them know their role and give them information about the performance of their children, and that can cause difficulties”. Vlok (2016:50) affirms that “family support is fundamental to successful education because the family is where rules and skills are first taught. She emphasises that learners learn better at school when their parents are positively involved and as a result learning is achieved”. DoE (2002:42) states that family disturbances such as domestic violence and other abuse and trauma, parental death, financial difficulties, and substance abuse can cause stress to the learner and are then added risk factors.

Bornman and Rose (2017:303) cite a number of further challenges to IE. (1) Schools in rural parts that service very large geographic areas. (2) Difficult working conditions, including low salaries and inadequately staffed schools. (3) The results of the Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS) pandemic. (4) An old teaching force with many educators older than 50. (5) Good teachers who leave the profession or being employed as administrators instead of teachers. (6) The demands of the curriculum. (7) Lack of educational resources such as materials and TAs.

This section discussed challenges that cause barriers to learning. It clearly shows that there is still a lot to be done to overcome learning obstacles and to successfully establish IE in South Africa. Stakeholders must come together and derive plans to assist this process, from national level down to the schools. Makhalemele and Payne-van Staden (2018:984) confirm that the existing incapacity of DBSTs to help teachers teaching in an IE structure, is deteriorating teachers’ ego and assurance. As a result, these teachers will not accept this process and will develop negative attitudes which will then result in failure of the implementation of IE. The SBST should be capable to support and reduce these challenges so that teaching these learners takes place, successfully. These points back to the fact that SBSTs needs to be supported and capacitated in order to be functional and effective.

2.10 Challenges Hindering Successful Implementation of IE and Support in South Africa

Matlala (2015:17) defines support as “all activities that increase the capacity of a school in responding to diversity”. Nkambule and Amsterdam (2018:1) maintain that supporting teacher is important in education structures world-wide. Generally, teachers are required support as they attempt to acclimatise themselves in the profession; to comprehend alteration creativities;

and actualise policy. Universal changes come with multitude of trials that teachers are unable to tackle with no support. Masango (2013:9) emphasises that “to support teachers who teach LSEN necessitate a structure of support that is responsive not just to the specific needs of individual teachers, as well to the needs of the learners. Teachers need meticulous training in how to recognise and address SEN”. Matlala (2015:9) concurs and explains collaboration as “an obligation to an integrated approach which brings together appropriate human resource to understand and address barriers to learning, this partnership is needed towards supporting teachers to address barriers to learning in the class”.

Barratt (2016b:44) advises that “being unfamiliar with the monetary and human resource limitation of the education system hinders effective support”. EWP6 (DoE, 2001) further suggests any combination of ‘experts operating cooperatively’, in multi-disciplinary teams. Assuming an advice-giving service delivery model will make it possible for these teams to afford support to the majority of learners and staff, thus helping reasonably and relevantly with solutions to most of the challenges facing the education support services and schools.

Stofile (2008:170) explains that it is stated in the EWP6 (DoE, 2001) that there “is a lack of providing support and it accepts the breakdown of the system of education, to address a large number of learners and their diverse needs in South Africa”. Lebona (2011:62) and Vlok (2016:55) also indicate that whilst IE is a means to making sure that there is quality EFA, the existing South African social financial status fails to cater for progressive employment.

Numerous schools short enough teaching materials such as space, furniture, water and power, and transportation, as well as a shortage of trained teachers (Mahlo, 2011:38; Hay, 2018:5). Burgers (2018:25) reports about “the importance and closeness of an individual and his/her environment (the bio-ecological model, Bronfenbrenner). He also explains that there were challenges because of the shortage of physical space and land that is fertilised when practising the asset-based approach at a resource-constrained SSRC”.

According to Makhalemele (2011:66), “policies require a high level of parental involvement, yet presently this is not happening. He elaborates that most teachers complain that parents are uninvolved in their children’s education and other school activities”. Rulwa-Mnatwana (2014:31) mentions “the challenge that teachers have different training backgrounds, education levels, and payment. She also explains that not having relevant pre- and in-service training puts strain on the implementation of IE in South Africa”. Zimba (2018:19) indicates that “when principals are not skilled in providing training to teachers and guidance to parents, it creates further challenges in overcoming barriers to learning”.

Furthermore, there is a “challenge of rigid compliance to a specific curriculum instead of adapting it and allowing it to be malleable so as to meet the diverse needs of the learners” (Rulwa-Mnatwana, 2014:32). She also points out that there is a shortage of time to dedicate attention to individual learners, but there is an expectation to perform, and this causes teachers to struggle further. Mahlo (2011:120) claims that “teachers feel helpless and confused in implementing IE and this is compounded when the district officials do not know the correct assessment tools to use”.

The language of learning and teaching (LOLT) can become a barrier, as stated by Rulwa-Mnatwana (2014:73). This may be a challenge to both parents and learners for instance, when parents’ language is isiXhosa, and they cannot understand the LOLT, they cannot help their children with homework. The children will not achieve well when they do not understand English (LOLT). Problem behaviours such as maltreatment, nonattendance, and not completing activities in class, increase the threat of implementing IE, as do irregular workshops with reduced follow-up which cause further complications. Consequently, teachers who are not entirely trained to address those behavioural challenges will not be able to deal with such learners and this is a problem.

It is worth noting the efforts of policy makers in South Africa to reconstitute education, so that it considers the rights of learners against their al needs (Lebona, 2013:8). He elaborates that strategies were put in place for all learners with deficiencies to access education. For instance, the building of inclusive schools (infrastructure), increasing parental involvement, adapting curriculum and assessment, changing attitudes of teachers, rectifying rural – urban inequalities, and recognising complicated circumstances in the nine provinces in South Africa.

2.11 Theoretical Underpinning of the Study

According to Makhalemele (2011:15), the primary reason to do research is to “comprehend the personal world of an individual’s experience and the role of theory is to consolidate reality or to modify it to be more operative. Much research has been done on support for learners with barriers to learning at the mainstream schools and full-service schools, but little has been done for SBSTs at special schools and the support they require to be effective in their duty to support teachers in reducing barriers to learning”.

To comprehend the experiences and the desires of SBSTs at special schools, this study utilises Bronfenbrenner’s ecological theory to explain how a micro-system (SBST at school level) is affected and intertwined with the meso-system (district level), exo-system (provincial

level), macro-system (DoE at national level), and chrono-system (other wider society-systems, experiences, transitions, and historical events) needed for support.

The 'micro-system' is the first layer, and it is believed that it has the structure which is directly connected to the child. The SBST is one of the structures that is directly linked to the child and expected to employ the policy of EWP6 practically. Mahlo (2011:74) alludes to the fact that "SBST directly supports the processes of teaching and learning by recognising and looking into the learner, the teacher, and the needs of the institution, while involving and creating associations with parents and other community stakeholders. Again, for SBST to provide support effectively, it should be coordinated well and supported by the above-mentioned structures".

The district, or 'meso-level', is the second level and is regarded as "the core supplier of support to schools (Mahlo, 2011:69). She further emphasises that at this level, the school (SBST) depends strongly on support given by the district (DBST) on how to affect IE successfully". According to Matlala (2015:26), this level is described as "the link between the school and the district, and these two environments directly and indirectly interconnect and support each other, but research has shown that the latter remains a challenge".

Next is the provincial department which is the 'exo-system level' and it is responsible for affecting the policy as per the needs of the province. Some of the responsibilities of the provincial department are to "guide districts on managing schools and to furnish schools with both human and technical resources as a form of support" (Matlala, 2015:25). However, it has been discovered that there is meagre support. Hoosen (2016:47) confirms that the DoE is at the macrolevel of Bronfenbrenner's theory, and "it is where policy is established and decisions made, and where support should be given to provinces". The policy should be passed on to provinces to make sure that "there is shared comprehension for applying it by districts and schools, yet it is apparent that EWP6 of 2001 was handed to schools without being clearly introduced" (Matlala, 2015:24). Therefore, teachers are contingently affected because of deficient support and monitoring at this level.

According to Barratt (2016a:25), the aforementioned systems "all relate to the fifth and the last system, namely the chrono-system, which expresses how time connects to the collaboration between systems and the impact each has separately and conjointly". The "chrono-system includes variations and growths over a period of time" (Vlok, 2016:62). These systems are interconnected and summarised in Figure 2.8 below: `

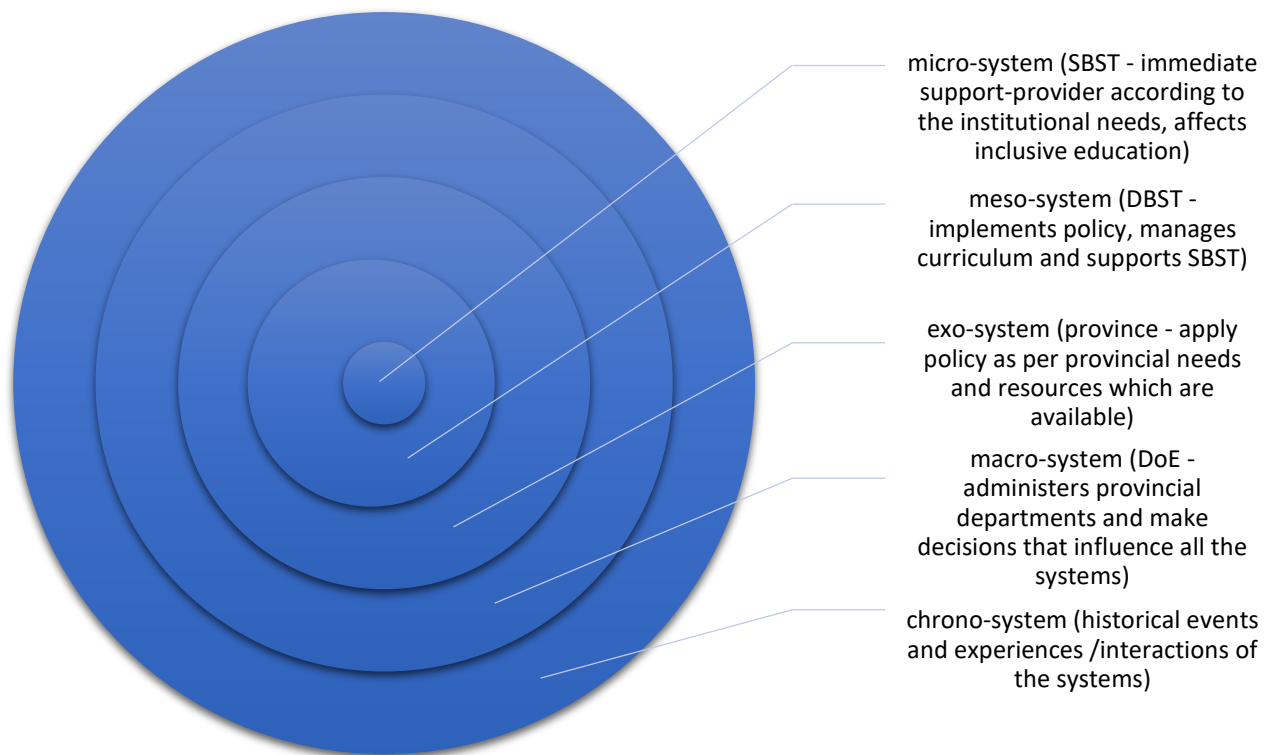


Figure 2.8: Bronfenbrenner's nested system

Source: Author's construct from Vlok (2016)

Vlok (2016:59) believes that “Bronfenbrenner’s nested system theory depicts and emphasises that the lone (SBST) subsist within layers of associations and every layer has an effect on other layers in an unconventional and unique way, and its impact is the strongest regarding support provisioning”. Regarding Bronfenbrenner’s theory, Mahlo (2011:169) asserts that “it is imperative for numerous systems to work cooperatively so as to form an absolute whole”.

The dictum above strengthens ‘Bronfenbrenner’s theory’, which reinforces the study and that the SBST is in the micro-level of this study. The support-provision to the teachers is done by the SBST and therefore all stakeholders from the macrolevel should close the gaps so as to support schools (SBSTs) and implement IE successfully. Ultimately, the literature emphasises the need to use this ecological, holistic approach to support-provisioning.

2.12 Conclusion

Chapter 2 discussed the origin of IE and how it evolved throughout the world, including South Africa. There was a deliberation on IE policy and its implementation, citing the role players, successes, and challenges. The levels of support as well as the challenges experienced in those levels by various stakeholders were outlined. The challenges affecting support-provisioning were discussed, including Bronfenbrenner’s theory which underpins this study.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the research design plus methodologies used for this study and will cover the nature together with the purpose of the paradigm, the process of PALAR, the research method, sampling, the role of the researcher, the data generation process and analysis, and trustworthiness (refer to Table 3.1). Since the study involved voluntary participants as co-researchers, the process to gain permission for approval to conduct the study is explained. A summary is presented at the end of the chapter.

Table 3.1: Summary of research design

Research Design and Methodology	
Research Question	
What is the support needed by SBST to help teachers at special schools to reduce barriers to learning?	
Sub-Questions	
▪ What is the support given to SBSTs in special schools by role players? ▪ Which programmes are in place that would enhance the SBSTs in special schools to perform their roles? ▪ What elements are hampering the provision of support by the SBSTs to support teachers in special schools? ▪ Which suggestions can be directed toward enabling SBSTs in assisting fellow colleagues at special schools in reducing barriers to learning?	
Research Paradigm, Approach, and Design	
▪ Paradigm: PALAR ▪ The approach of inquiry: participatory ▪ Design: qualitative, PALAR	
Research Methods and Strategies	
Participant selection	Six participants were purposively selected; five teachers and the school nurse (P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, and P6).

Data generation activities	Cycle 1: Workshop (1) relationship building, (2) needs identification, and (3) drawing of a symbol. Cycle 2: Action learning set meetings (4) FGD, (5) development of open-ended questionnaire, (6) possible strategies designed. Cycle 3: Develop strategy (7) set themes, (8) visual interpretation Cycle 4: Project achievements (9) reflection and feedback
Data generation strategies	Observations, group discussions, drawing, open-ended questionnaire, and reflective journals.
Data documentation	Audio recordings, field note reflections, and drawings.
Data analysis technique	Inductive data analysis, analysis of themes and sub-themes substantiated by literature review.
Role of the Researcher	
Collaborative and participatory roles facilitate the methodological process between participants from diverse backgrounds.	
Trustworthiness: Quality and Validity Criteria	
Transferability, credibility, dependability, and conformability	
Ethical Considerations	
Protection of confidentiality through adherence to ethical values of respect, beneficence, and democratic justice, informed consent, visual ethics, and institutional ethical clearance.	

Source: Author's own construct

3.2 Purpose of the Research

The 'purpose' of the research was to make recommendations to capacitate SBSTs in special schools to support teachers reduce barriers to learning. A PALAR approach to developing a process to support the SBST goes beyond the specifics of the barriers and focuses on a proactive and transformative way to support the SBST.

3.3 Research Methodology

According to Creswell (2012), the following components comprise the research methodology in the qualitative study: research paradigms, aspects of research design, and data collection

and analytic procedures. Each of these parts is presented for orientation to the study and describes the actions taken.

3.3.1 The nature and purpose of the critical-emancipatory paradigm

Birks and Mills (2011) describe paradigm as a strategy, which outlines the research epistemology, theory, including the methodologies. Table 3.2 below shows the 'features of the emancipatory-critical and participatory paradigm'.

Table 3.2: Characteristics of the emancipatory-critical and participatory paradigm

Meta-theoretical assumptions	Emancipatory-critical and participatory paradigm
Ontology	Participants and their mutual learning processes are inseparable from each other's lived experiences (perceptions).
Epistemology	Knowledge of the participants' learning is intentionally and collectively constituted through emancipatory, meaningful, and participatory interactions during the engagement process.
Research object	The research purpose is interpreted considering the meanings participants assigned to their mutual learning on personal, social, cognitive, and emancipatory experience levels.
Methodological approach	Participatory action research (PAR) strategy of inquiry into mutual learning experiences.
Theory of Truth	Truth as intentional fulfilment: recognition of changed perceptions, attitudes, and behaviour matched with changes in both groups' learning/lived experiences, reflected on and supported with literature.

Source: Author's adaptation from Weber (2004)

Markula and Silk (2011) mentioned that PAR incorporates an emancipatory-critical paradigm (ECP). Mash (2014:1) indicates that this paradigm creates new knowledge by manipulating the reality in which the study is immersed and critically commenting on what is gained.

The ontological focus of the study was on the mutual learning and participation of the participants, who participated in all aspects of the study process, which added to the ECPs concept of change and interpretive reflection on learning processes. Mash (2014:1) said "partakers were disregarded like things to be investigated or matters that needed to be understood as positivist and interpretative approaches would have it, but as active participants. Dialogical procedures helped to produce new epistemology. Deliberation, conversations, and gaining consensus on different parts of the activities disclosed that

participants were actively learning. Participants also recognised the issues and collaborated to find solutions”.

3.3.2 The nature and purpose of the PAR approach

The methodology in action research is a planned yet adaptable procedure for generating supporting knowledge (Polit & Beck, 2010:1451). In this process, the participants are stimulated to grow and change due to their new knowledge. In this regard, the activity is organised into preparation, action, and critical reflection cycles to connect practice and concepts (Reason & Bradbury, 2008).

According to Reason and Bradbury (2008) and Mertler and Charles (2008), within action research, a researcher examines the obtained information, focusing upon common themes then assigning codes to them. Reason and Bradbury (2008) further indicates that codes are classified into ideas and themes once more data is received and examined.

The PAR activities put the knowledge of the participants into effect (Altheide & Schneider, 2012:91). Mash (2014:1) alluded that the participants in this approach must reflect on the research data and concurrently explain what had been gained from the experience to create a new theory supported by propositional knowledge. This new knowledge can then be put into fresh action (Mash, 2014:1). Also, the important benefit of this approach is to expand teaching and learning practices by supporting collaborative learning skills, as well as personal and societal improvements (Altheide & Schneider, 2012:91).

3.3.3 The PAR process

Mertler and Charles (2008) considers PAR as a research method in which participants are actively involved. In this study, the phases were reorganised into four recursive and spiralling loops, which characterised the eight community-wide participation activities as suggested by Zuber-Skerritt (2011). In Figure 3.1 below, the spiralling loops demonstrate each action in the PAR engagement process and ensure stability across them. The four cycles represented are: (1) developing relationships, (2) planning and designing, (3) skill application, and (4) reflection and assessment (Zuber-Skerritt, 2011).

Kindon *et al.* (2007) highlighted that in these phases, the participants moved on to the next activity. After commenting on the procedure using field notes, the situation throughout these activities was studied and captured using visual material, discussions, and actions. During this process Zuber-Skerritt (2011) emphasises that the behaviour of the participants was watched and differences in the process and among the groups were recorded.

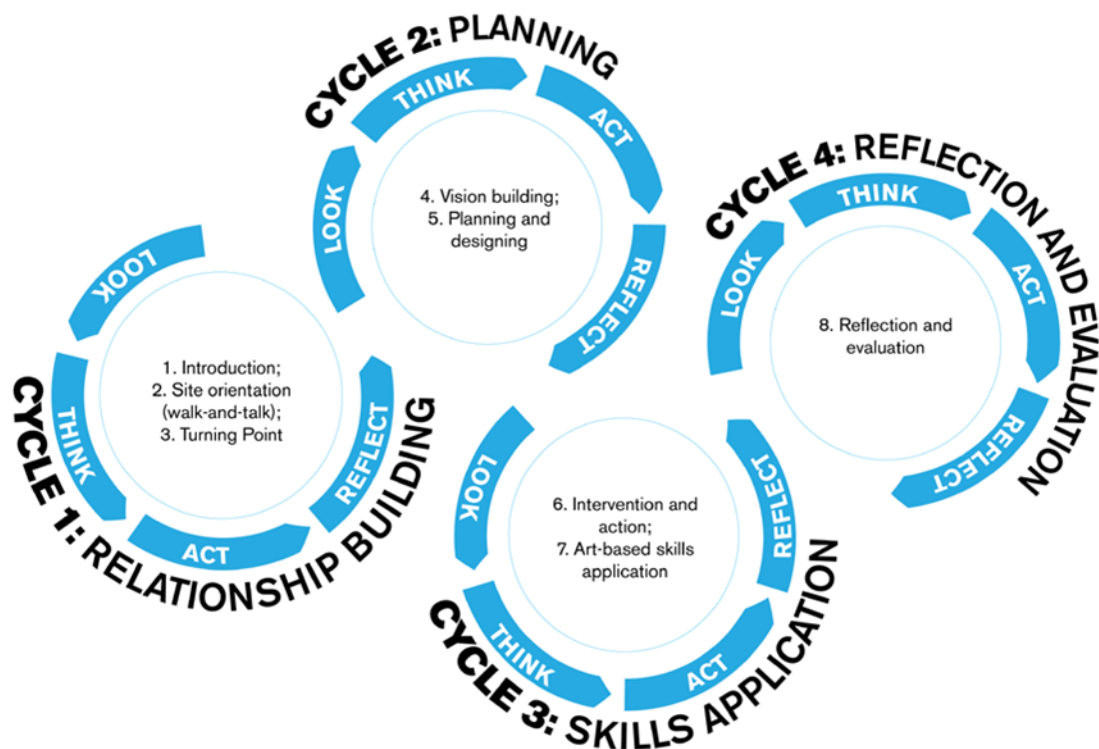


Figure 3.1: The PAR methodology design

Source: Author's construct from Zuber-Skerritt (2011)

3.4 Research Method

The decisions and actions of the researcher when collecting data in a qualitative method result in a study design best suited to the research activity at hand (Lau *et al.*, 2019:136). The research design talks about the strategy and structure of the research that will be utilised in order to get proof to response the research questions (Lebona, 2013:81; Harmuth, 2012:59; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:85). Creswell (2012) mentions that “in this design there are no predetermined actions to take, and it is difficult to replicate the study design”. Also, Miles *et al.* (2020) emphasise that in this instance, the research was conducted in a real-world setting relying on spoken words and personal experiences.

Miles *et al.* (2020) elaborate that the methodologies for opting for evaluating, and observing societal elements, acquiring and filtering data, scrutinising it, and announcing conclusions are examples of research methods. In this study PAR was employed. According to Kindon *et al.* (2007), the PAR process imposes methodological inventions to adjust or react to the needs of unique locations, research issues, plus connections amongst the researcher and partakers.

An acceptable relationship makes participants feel at ease and effectively take part in the discussions.

Ebersöhn *et al.* (2010) add that PAR research employs real, vivid, and colourful approaches, activities, and materials. Indeed, in this study the strategies employed were not based on the participants' writing skills but on their ability to communicate using drawings, or written material.

In the following sections, the actions for recruiting participants and collecting data are described in depth.

3.4.1 Sampling

According to Creswell (2012), a sample is a “subset of a statistical population whose features are studied to learn more about the overall population”. Mphahlele (2017:63) reports that “the selection of the site and participants is defined as sampling in research. A sample is a subset of people who experience the study phenomenon and can supply adequate and suitable information about this study subject”, while Zwane and Malale (2018:5) and Leedy and Ormrod (2005:198) add that sampling is the procedure where you choose components from a populace you are interested in, that by studying them you may justly make a sweeping statement about your outcome towards the population from which they were chosen. The inhabitants of this study involves all teachers within the participating special school.

There are two sampling categories, specifically, probability as well as non-probability sampling. According to Showkat (2017) probability sampling is when each sample has an equal chance of being selected and the sample is chosen randomly, while non-probability sampling, a sample is not chosen randomly but according to a certain criteria/ judgement which allows easy ways of collecting data. Harmuth (2012:69) mentions that “qualitative researchers regard the sampling process as dynamic, and not stagnant, as a result a non-probability sampling strategy was used for this study. Furthermore, participants in this study were chosen for a particular purpose, and that strategy is called purposive sampling”. Purposive sampling is a “selection measure that directs the researcher to select participants who have fitting subjective experiences and characteristics necessary for revealing the proper information for the study” (Rulwa-Mnatwana, 2014:39). The participants were six experienced SBST members from a special school, including the school nurse, who knows the challenges of the support process. Participants participated voluntarily and they were issued letters to elucidate the determination of the study. They were requested to sign consent forms (see Addendum 4) giving the researcher permission to use the data generated during the study.

Table 3.3: Summary of biological characteristics of the participants

Participant	Position at school	Gender	Year (level) taught	Subject taught
P1	Skills-disciplinary coordinator	Male	Year 4	Mathematics
P2	HOD, LTSM coordinator	Female	Year 3	Sesotho
P3	School nurse	Female		
P4	HOD	Male	Year 3	Woodwork
P5	Teacher	Female	Year 1 - 2	Life Orientation
P6	Teacher	Male	Year 2	Mathematics

Source: Author's own construct

3.4.2 The role of a researcher as a participant

In action research, the primary responsibilities of the researcher include managing the entire PAR process and ensuring that data creation is done in an organised manner (Miles *et al.*, 2020). The researcher engaged each of the participants to explain their rights and reassured them of confidentiality. The researcher was required to act as an advocate and engage in the study. Throughout the research study, the researcher kept a reflective and descriptive record in a notebook.

The researcher coveted to understand from the participants (SBST members) what support they needed in order to help their colleagues reduce barriers to learning. Permission to conduct the study was acquired from the participants, principal, SGB, and the DoE (district level).

Leedy and Ormrod (2005:184) emphasise that the researcher is likely to obtain the cooperation of participants and honest responses if he/she is friendly and demonstrates an authentic interest in what they have to contribute. Thus, the researcher cultivated a good connection with the participants, and they participated freely and shared their experiences. The FGDs were conducted in a professional manner and field notes were taken. The researcher observed carefully and was a good listener throughout the fieldwork. The

information was analysed and interpreted fairly, completely, and sensitively by both the researcher and co-researchers.

Harmuth (2012:73) warns that “the human device has limitations and there may be partialities that may influence the study. As a result, the researcher has to be skilled and proficient to generate dependable and valid, well founded data. To uphold the aforementioned, the researcher worked together with her supervisor who is more experienced and knowledgeable with this process”.

3.5 Data Generation Process

In this study data were collected exhausting an interactive method including the participants, process observations, and analysis. Following the guidelines by Neuman and Guggenheim (2011), audio recordings, field note reflections, and drawings were used to document the created content. Furthermore, as recommended by Zuber-Skerritt (2011), four cycles were used in the PALAR method to generate data (see Figure 3.1).

3.5.1 Observations

As stated by Mphahlele (2017:67), observation is “a technique of gathering data whereby a researcher thoroughly records what he/she experiences in a research setting”. Leedy and Ormrod (2005:145) add that observations in a qualitative study are “purposely unstructured and flow freely” and that the benefit thereof is flexibility. The researcher can gain information from unexpected sources as they arise. “Observational data symbolises an immediate image of the event, as it occurs in an ordinary scenery, and it allows the researcher to identify contextual factors” (Zohrabi, 2013:257).

The atmosphere was always conducive to open participation, since participants knew one another and belonged to the same school’s SBST committee. To maintain this openness, the meeting venues were at the participants’ homes, and they felt relaxed to freely participate. Leedy and Ormrod (2005: 199) add that there are two methods of surveillance, namely nonparticipant and participant. The nonparticipant stays detached from interacting while the participant mixes with the collaborators. The PALAR method used in this research ensured the researcher’s active participation in the research, meaning she was a participant observer. While participating the researcher took a back seat and avoided a ‘know it all’ attitude but allowed the participants to feel free, respected, and not judged, to ensure stress-free involvement. There are two types of observation, narrow focus and broad focus observations. Narrow focus is on a single factor to be observed but broad observations include several factors. Broad observations were used in this research, which included the behaviour of the

participants, and both spoken and unspoken responses. The other way of collecting data was by taking field notes, which is discussed in detail below.

3.5.2 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

Van Eeuwijk and Angehm (2017:1) define FGD as “a qualitative research method and data collection technique whereby a group of hand-picked individuals come together to deliberate on a given topic or an issue exhaustively, expedited by a professional, external moderator”. They add that this technique helps to explore the deportment and perceptions, mastery and experiences, and operations shared during the communication with diverse people. Nyumba *et al.* (2018:21) concur and further explain that FGDs are thought to be a “cost-effective and promising alternative in participatory research”.

The focus group in this study comprised of well-informed individuals, who are experienced in working at special schools. They came together for an in-depth, facilitated discussion of the topic: what is the support needed by SBST to help teachers at special schools to reduce barriers to learning? They deliberated about their experiences and challenges, but also formulated recommendations to solve those challenges.

According to Krueger (2002:4), “the initial minutes in FGDs are crucial, since the moderator (researcher) must create an attentive, liberal atmosphere, set ground-rules, and pave the way of the discussion”. He emphasises the prominence of the establishment of the permissive environment and suggested the ensuing pattern for hosting the FGD: “welcome, overview of the topic, ground rules and the first question” (Krueger, 2002:4).

All the above was done in the first cycle of this research, relationship building. In the second cycle, there was vision-building, planning, and designing, then in the third cycle, intervention and action and art-based skills application, and in the last cycle, reflection and evaluation.

3.5.3 Drawings

Mäkelä and Nimkulrat (2014:3) describe drawings as an “exploratory, sense-making process in which the observer and what is been observed are indissolubly destined together in a physical, material space/time relationship”. They further state that drawing is “an engagement which is both active and subjective, and it is appreciated by artistic researchers, not only for what is encoded in the drawing but more importantly for the opportunity given by the drawing to thinking that it is near to the insensible” (Mäkelä & Nimkulrat, 2014:3). Therefore, drawing becomes a conversation between the individual and the drawing. Hurdley (2019:4) concurs and suggest that “participants spending time on a drawing, become engaged, and as a result they become more devoted to the research”.

The partakers in this study, too, used drawings to make sense of their situation and experiences, as SBST members working at a special school. They depicted different professionals needed for support of the SBST as well as some of the challenges they experience. They used the chance given by their drawings to express, clarify, and emphasise how they feel and what they wish for.

3.5.4 Reflective journals

Reflective diaries provide subjective insights that must be triangulated with other opinions. “Potential impediments are identified, and participants are urged to evaluate and reflect on them” (Zuber-Skerritt, 2011). Journaling aids researchers in making inferred information obvious and facilitates the development and building of new knowledge.

A “diary can help individuals become aware of specific underlying processes that might help them find purpose in their work” (Zuber-Skerritt, 2015). “Reflective writing keeps track of observations and practices by documenting and analysing completed actions” (Zuber-Skerritt, 2011).

Each participant was provided with a journal (notepad) to keep track of their thoughts and to remark on the process after each session. During each cycle of the FGD, participants were asked to write in their reflective notebooks about their experiences with the various activities. Before the beginning of a session, participants would refer to their diary entries about the previous session and if there was any incomplete point, they would start with that. Throughout the study, the researcher checked what participants wrote in their diaries to keep track of what they had learned.

3.5.5 Open-ended questionnaire

A questionnaire is “an instrument which is used by respondents to write responses to questions or mark items that show their responses” (Young, 2016:12). In this study, open-ended questionnaire was also utilised to assemble the data, because by using a questionnaire, the answers were well organised. Open-ended questions are questions whereby researchers do not afford answer options; the co-researchers provide their own answers to questions. Questionnaires are generally employed in a survey research design whereby participants reply to a given set of questions or statements. As indicated in Chapter 1, an open-ended questionnaire was developed for the SBST members during the first action meeting of the second cycle. The focus in this cycle was to understand the current situation pertaining to the support needed by SBST to help teachers at special schools to reduce barriers to learning. Participants were exposed to literature relevant to the topic and together developed a questionnaire as an instrument to gather data. Since this study embraced SBST of only one

special school, a questionnaire was an expedient technique in which they could be answered by the various members of the SBST. The questionnaire “enabled rapid data collection and was more cost-effective for this study for the reason that it involved only the duplication and distribution expenses” (Creswell, 2002:361). Young (2016:4) reports that “questionnaires are easy to prepare, they are transferable, and can be made accessible online, which might suit the participants”.

3.6 Data Analysis

The perceptions, attitudes, knowledge, values, feelings, and experiences of the participants were analysed in order to comprehend the significance that they allotted to the PAR process. The data collected, perceived from various angles to pin-point main features in the text, may approve the principle of study, plus usage of unlike sorts of content (visual, written, and spoken).

According to Braun and Clarke (2006: 6) and Stevens (2023) thematic analysis is “ an approach of identifying, analysing and reporting information/words/topics as well as keywords that form patterns or are repeated and are contained in the data”. To answer the research question, themes were narrowed down. In the first stage recurring phrases were colour-coded according to concurrence. Correlating phrases from the transcripts formed the emergent themes and they were connected to the study questions. During the second stage, the identified themes were connected to the developing sub-themes. Three main themes were created to reply the research question. Through the third stage, the identified themes and sub-themes (in their different colours) were tabulated. The themes, which were developed from this procedure decided on the literature review and it was prepared in facet so as to offer the reader a chance to assess the correctness of the exploration.

3.7 Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness refers to the credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability of the findings from the study. Mahlo (2011:97) points out that “trustworthiness is a method of ensuring rigor in qualitative research devoid of compromise relevancy”. According to Mphahlele (2017:82), the characteristics of trustworthiness of data are “credibility (honesty of research findings), transferability (research findings are applicable to another setting), dependability (research process is logical and well documented) and confirmability (other researchers can corroborate the research findings)”. In the same way Masango (2013:42) affirms that “information should be collected over time and shared with the participants. These features of trustworthiness were addressed to warrant the trustworthiness of this study”.

3.7.1 Credibility

'Credibility' is ascertaining the honesty in the research process (Korstjens & Moser, 2018:121). I did this by being part of the research process and to make sure that data was reliable, the participants re-evaluated the notes and transcripts. I used a tape-recorder during the four group discussions to make certain that I recorded the replies of participants precisely, then lastly, consulted my knowledgeable co-worker in the field to authenticate my understanding and primary findings.

3.7.2 Transferability

Mahlo (2011:98) describes transferability as "the level to which the results from the research can be applied to other contexts and collaborators". Harmuth (2012:72) emphasises that "qualitative study cannot be regarded as credible if it is not transferable". To make sure that transferability is applicable in this study, the findings from the study that is the in-depth information will be applied by the SBST and shared with other SBSTs from IE schools. This information will help SBSTs get the needed support so that they are able to help teachers in inclusion schools reduce barriers to learning.

3.7.3 Dependability

The research is dependable "if its results can be accurately repeated over time" (Barratt, 2016a:70). To achieve dependability the researcher employed focus group discussions, observations, and then transcript analysis to make sense of the experiences of SBST members in an inclusive school. Again, the study was performed under leadership and supervision of study leaders.

3.7.4 Confirmability

Matlala (2015:45) emphasises that "research findings should not be depended on the preferential of the researcher but be objective". To employ confirmability in this study, the rule of triangulation was applied where it reduced the researcher's biases. In the same way not only verbal responses of the participants were considered but also their body language, emotions, and feelings to minimise the researcher's bias.

3.8 Ethical Measures

We must examine the ethical repercussions of what we are planning to do, whenever human beings are going to be the focus of investigation (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:101). Researchers need to look after their research participants, and they are compelled to act in a professional and responsible manner. According to Rulwa-Mnatwana (2014:46), ethics "generally deal with beliefs with reference to what is right or wrong, suitable or unsuitable, moral or immoral. The

below mentioned ethical measures were continuously well-thought-out right through this research in order to provide regulation to the researcher”.

3.8.1 Protection from harm

Researcher made effort not to expose research participants to unwarranted physical or psychological harm. Where the researcher saw that the research was going to cause discomfort psychologically, the researcher made the participants aware in time. Sessions were planned not to harm; for instance, when participants felt exhausted or fatigued there were breaks to recuperate.

3.8.2 Informed consent

It was clarified to the participants and advised that contribution in this study was optional and that they may disengage at any time they wanted to. Written consent to agree to partake in the research, to be observed, to engage in ALS, and for the information acquired to be analysed and documented, was obtained. Also, consent was acquired from the DoE, District level, Sedibeng East specifically, as well as from the SGB of the chosen school because the participants are teachers.

3.8.3 Right to privacy

The researcher considered and respected the right to privacy of the participants during the research process. The participants' names were not used, and this maintained confidentiality and anonymity. They were also guaranteed that the resources (scripts and audiotapes) used during the process were stored and kept safely. The feedback of the findings will be made available to them.

3.9 Chapter Summary

The discussion in this chapter was about the research methodology. This PAR study employed a qualitative method and it followed the PALAR approach. The various techniques used to gather data were highlighted in this section. The role of the researcher was also clarified. Furthermore, the trustworthiness of the study together with the ethical considerations were presented. In the following chapter the gathered data will be rendered.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Interpretation

4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, the research methodology which was used to gather data was presented. In this chapter, I present and discuss the data produced from the participants during the course of this study. The data were gathered through four cycles. During the first cycle the relationship with the co-researcher was developed and strengthened. In this cycle, participants were collaboratively strengthening relationships and envisioning the outcome. The second cycle was planning and designing, where the participants developed strategies to equip SBSTs to support special school teachers to reduce hurdles to learning. In the third cycle the participants put together their contributions and journal them to improve support-provision. In the fourth cycle reflection and evaluation were done. Participants reflected on the participatory research process and evaluated the data generated. These cycles guide the three broad main themes, which are discussed, which arose from the data.

The study made use of a diverse combination of research methods to generate data to provide a reply to the research question. These include FGDs (DS 1), drawing (DS 2), and open-ended questionnaire (DS 3). See table 4.1 for an explanation of abbreviations used. I support my interpretation of the data with written/typed and oral answers of the participants together with visual images, and present literature that relates to the data provided. The proposed study was directed by the subsequent main research question:

What is the support needed by SBSTs to help teachers at special schools to reduce barriers to learning?

To address the above research question, the following subsequent research questions were explored:

1. What is the support given to SBSTs in special schools by role players?
2. Which programmes are in place that would enhance the SBSTs in special schools to perform their roles?
3. What elements are impeding the provision of support by SBSTs to support teachers in special schools?
4. Which recommendation can be made to capacitate SBSTs in special schools to support teachers to reduce barriers to learning?

4.2 Results of the Study

This section and the succeeding sub-sections present the discoveries of the study, together with the discussions. The discoveries are summarised into the subsequent broad themes: Theme 1: empowering SBSTs; Theme 2: obstruction of support-provision, and Theme 3: available programmes to support SBSTs. These themes are discussed in detail with their sub-themes, including explanations. The discussion of every theme in relation to the literature review is also included.

Table 4.1 below shows the abbreviations employed when citing data from different sources. The participants are denoted to as P + a number according to the number of participants in the data set. For instance, Participant 2 from data set FGD is referred to as P2 from DS 1.

Table 4.1: Abbreviations used

Data set	Abbreviation	Participants	Abbreviation
FGD DS 1.1 Relationship building DS 1.2 Identifying roles and functions of SBSTs DS 1.3 Identifying and developing ways to empower SBSTs	DS 1	SBST members Skills-Disciplinary Committee coordinator LTSM coordinator (HOD) School nurse HOD Teacher SBST coordinator	P1 – P6
Drawings	DS 2	SBST members: HODs Teachers School nurse Skills-Disciplinary Committee coordinator	P2 & P4 P5 & P6 P3 P1

Source: Author's own construct

Open-ended questionnaire	DS 3	SBST members: Skills-Disciplinary Committee coordinator LTSM coordinator (HOD) School nurse HOD Teacher SBST coordinator	P1 – P6
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4.2.1 Theme 1: Empowering SBSTs

The purpose of this theme is to investigate and look for information regarding the need to empower SBSTs in special schools by other role-players. The theme focuses on the importance of empowering the SBSTs at special schools so as to help teachers reduce barriers to learning. It should be noted again that role-players may include, amongst others, teachers within and outside the school, parents, and other professionals and organisations. Data for discovering this need to capacitate SBSTs by other role-players was acquired in cycle 2; during group discussion (DS 1) where participants talked about what support is needed for SBSTs to be effective at special schools. In addition, open-ended questions (DS 3) were also employed for showing the same information of the need to empower SBSTs and other role-players, where the participants discussed their experiences.

Participants discussed their experiences and planned strategies to empower SBSTs at special schools. The challenges encountered by participants are the following: sharing a lot of information, prolonging discussions and ending up losing track of the main points and wasting time, also repetition of information. However, the discussions were tapered into sub-theme 1.1.

Table 4.2: Theme 1 and discovered sub-theme 1.1

Theme 1: Empowering SBSTs
Sub-theme 1.1: Forms of support to SBSTs by other role-players

Source: Author's own construct

4.2.1.1 Sub-theme 1.1: Forms of support to SBSTs by other role players

Participants joined in the focus-group discussion, where they discussed and described the importance of empowering SBSTs at special schools. From their discussions the existing

forms of support given to SBSTs in special schools by other role players were discussed. The following forms of support are described in more detail: support from the principal in heading various stakeholder support efforts, support from the SMT, support from other teachers within the school, support of the parents to the SBST, and support of the district officials and specialists.

4.2.1.1.1 Support from the principal in heading various stakeholder support efforts

The study reveals that members of the SBST in the selected school are aware of the necessity to involve the principal in the welfare of the SBST. This was further confirmed by participants who SMT members are regarding the authority that the principal has in the everyday running of the SBST. P2 from DS 1.1 said the following:

"I would say it is very imperative to have the principal who is hands on, on the daily activities of the SBST, because this will 'force' members to align themselves with the policy and its implementation."

P4 from DS 1.1 added that:

"The active principal will be able to resolve conflict between members, advice and recommend where necessary and support the team while acknowledging the coordinator."

Most of the participants were adamant that the part of the principal to support the SBST is mandated by the policies on support services. P6 from DS 1.1 elaborated:

"The support from the principal is also stipulated in White Paper 6, and it is said that they are the promoters of teaching and learning and to reduce barriers to learning they should work together with SBST. For us to be effective in our positions we are going to also need resources for learners with barriers therefore the principal must be part in deciding according to the school's budget."

P1 from DS 1.1 gave an impression of sharing the same sentiments as the previous participant on the mandate of EWP6 that instructed principals to be involved in the SBST. She mentioned the following:

"I agree with my colleague that the principal is appointed by policies to promote teaching and learning and make sure that we are working together to implement the EWP6 as well as SIAS policy, even though it is a struggle sometimes because of her being unavailable. But it becomes better with time as we are allowed to

attend workshops to know our roles and responsibilities and how to assist our fellow colleagues, parents and learners with barriers to learning.”

Mahlo (2011:54) and Salisbury and McGregor (2005:2) explain that a supportive environment where there is an effort from principals is vital to successfully employ IE and without the support of the principal the essence of IE would not be grasped. They also comment that the principal is the key figure in promoting and sustaining the ILST at school. Lebona (2013:132) states that “the level of effectiveness of the SBST is led by the active participation of the principal to ensure that the SBST caters for the diverse learning needs of learners experiencing barriers”.

Furthermore, participants show ‘apprehension of the part of the principal’s in SBST. Some of the participants mentioned different roles of the principal to ensure the existence and effective functioning of the SBST. P6 from DS 2 added that:

“The principals should establish collaborative teams by bringing together the stakeholders who represent different perspectives in roles in the community. They should also master differentiated curriculum to support the SBSTs when it supports fellow colleagues.”

P2 from DS 1.1 reported that:

“If they can attend workshops too, they will be more empowered in promoting and continuously supporting SBSTs, by making sure that the necessary resources are available and used accordingly.”

P4 from DS 1.3 share similar views on the role of the principal:

“Inclusive Education is a challenging process but through the support of our principal we are able to implement it. The principal support us emotionally as well and this better the situation.”

This finding corroborates with literature on the part played by the principal in the support structure at school level. DoE (2006b:68) emphasises that “the principal have a duty to make sure that all policies are executed properly at school level, and it is also believed that the crucial accomplishment of support given to learners, teachers, and parents, is depended on the endeavour and harmonisation completed by the principal” (Makhalemele, 2011:62). He also cites the following roles of the principal: “to support inclusive education policies and carry them out in applied terms, like, operating ILST (SBST) and preserving relations with the DBST, to make sure that the school compiles guidelines like admission policies which agree with the general policy of inclusive education”.

Zimba (2018:18) and Van Niekerk and Pienaar (2018:10) warn that support systems can function as ‘help or obstacle’ to, inclusion if not well headed by the principal. They also explain that the principal must direct the programme of mobilising, distributing, and organising resources, and engage in partnership with local businesses, NGOs, and the public by a public mapping exercise. In this regard, 2 from DS 1.1 mentioned:

“When the principal engages with neighbouring businesses, they respond positively or when they personally call parents of learners who need support, parents do come to school and this in turn helps SBST to be effective in performing their work.”

Makhalemele (2011) affirms that “principals ensure that the ILST works in collaboration with the parents and SGB, to promote the inclusion of children struggling to cope in learning, guaranteeing that all erudition multiplicity is accommodated and making sure that parents and children are involved and well-versed about the process”.

Scarcity of resources in schools seems to be a challenging factor in the support process. However, it is expected that principals ensure that resources are available to his or her school by involving the DBST and other government sectors. This was mentioned by one of the participants when relating the roles of the principal in the support process. P6 from DS 1.2 said:

“As mentioned earlier the SBST will be effective if they have the required resources, and that is the responsibility of the principal. These resources may include physical and human resources. The principal has the authority to request funds from the Department of education and other stakeholders, for example, NGOs and surrounding businesses, and to buy the necessary resources as well as managing them.”

Borrowing from the drawing data set, P5 and P6 from DS 2 drew the picture in Figure 4.1 to indicate a variety of professionals and organisations that the principal has to invite in the support of SBSTs. The participants gave emphasis to the significance of collaboration within a multidisciplinary team. The pillars demonstrate how all stakeholders are to support SBSTs.

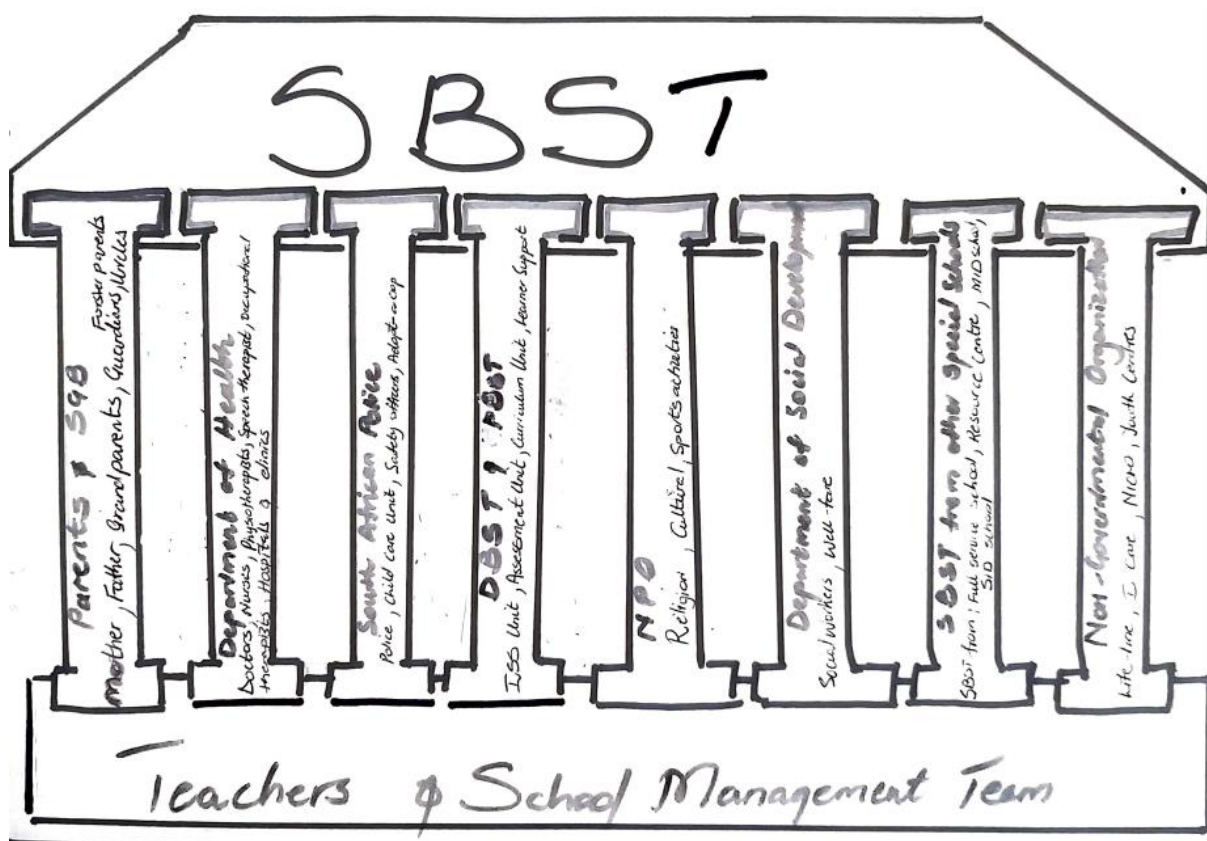


Figure 4.1: Professionals and organisations for SBST support

Source: Drawing by P5 and P6 from DS 2

Although participants are aware of the roles of the principals, they strongly emphasise the retraining of principals by the education districts as essential because it will help principals to effectively support teachers.

P5 from DS 1.2 agrees with the aforementioned and said:

“But I guess retraining of principals is really needed. This will capacitate them to master their roles in supporting the SBST. I’m convinced that a well-trained principal will be able to support the coordinator to manage the SBST effectively.”

According to Mahlo (2011:161) and Barratt (2016b:44), principals require regular trainings in order to know precisely what they are supposed to do regarding supporting the support teams at schools. Lebona (2013) concurs and advises that principals need to be trained and in so doing they will change their attitude and acknowledge what the support team is doing in schools.

Conversely, Stofile (2008:163) states that “some principals complained about the scarcity of funds, absence of support from district, provincial, and national level, and as a result it is not easy to apply inclusion policy”. This finding also emerged in this study as participants believe

that there are inadequate resources invested for support in schools and the department does not support principals in the matter. P5 from DS 1.3 relates:

“I think the department is failing the principals and the implementation of inclusive education, after referring the learner to the school, they will not make a follow up to see if there are necessary resources still for the new learner. They will be emphasising the right of the learner to be admitted and the poor principal cannot turn the learner away and infringe on the rights of the learner. The learner will be admitted with inadequate or no resources and the principal will be told to improvise.”

4.2.1.1.2 Support from the SMT

SMT members, namely; the principal, heads of departments, and deputy principals are supposed to support the activities of the SBST. Most of the participants seemed to point out that the deputy-principal or HOD must be appointed to serve in the SBST to relieve the workload of the principal. P6 from DS 3 said:

“I have seen that principals are mostly unavailable due to their everyday workload but if there is an HOD or deputy principal in the team, it makes it easier for the team to feel supported. If there are any urgent matters to be resolved then the team is able to and the principal is always updated of what is happening in the team.”

Moreover, one of the participants expanded that, in absence of the principal, the SBST rely heavily on the support of each of the SMT members to execute its functions. This participant (P6 from DS 1.2) further added that any member of the SMT in his school is loyal to support the SBST. The below quote by P4 from DS 1.1 affirms this assertion:

“It is easier for us to work together as a team because there is mutual respect, all the members were appointed due to their expertise, therefore when we have the deputy or HOD in our mist they are also given due respect and nothing is concluded without their consultation. We understand that they represent the principal and we also feel supported because we know that our concerns reach the office timeously.”

In research done by Rulwa-Mnatwana (2014:7) and Tebid (2017:115) it was found that the deputy principal, too, needed to recognise and support what the SBSTs do so that the SBSTs will work more effectively. Mphahlele (2017:200) maintains that the support of the school by the SMT is a policy requirement. He further adds that the SMT should expand awareness of

IE policy (EWP6), support and sustain functional SBSTs in schools, 'institute a Parent Education Programme' aimed at SGB meetings, parents' meetings, and community meetings to inform parents and other collaborators about the education of their children.

However, it emerged from the participants that an efficient support system is the SMT members with relevant qualifications in education support services. According to them, inappropriate qualifications from SMT members impede the provision of support services in the school because such members normally put weight on where they believe they have expertise. These disturb the SBST, and to some extent, prevent learners from learning effectively. This matter was highlighted when P5 from DS 1.3 remarked:

"While discussing the roles and responsibilities of SBSTs and various portfolios of members, some SMT members struggle to accept the hierarchy and order of report, because they are led by a younger teacher who has special education qualifications and they do not have even though they are SMT members. They were appointed long time ago and do not have the appropriate qualification. So, every point brought forward in terms of support is dragged by these SMT members, with questions and suggestions, trying to prove a point that they know better and that delays the support process but ultimately we manage."

The significant resources for employment of the policy are the SMT and the SBST, and they should afford leadership and support based on knowledge and expertise (Ladbrook, 2009:115). Members of the SMT should have the required qualifications and experience, meticulous comprehension of the education policy, execution strategies and guidelines documents, and their role in curriculum management and support (DoE, 2014:12). According to Ntseto (2015:331), SMTs ought "to empower SBSTs and teachers so that they are capable of handling challenges they are faced with. She further suggests that SMTs of the same cluster, together with their SBSTs, should have meetings where they plan together, where they talk about common challenges and suggest solutions to overcome these problems".

P4 from DS 1.1 also supported his colleague on this point and expanded that the SMT members should be capacitated to provide effective support to the SBST. Their capacitation should not only be on the subject they teach, but they should avail themselves to all the SBST training offered by the districts. P1 from DS 2 emphasises that:

"Also, by providing them (SMTs) with professional development opportunities because now they need to help the teachers to deal with barriers to learning to make sure that they have the necessary resources and knowledge and experience to do. The principal, the deputy principal or the HOD, to say, okay, can you tell me

what happened with your SBST this week? What support did you give and what cases were taken? If they know what should have happened then they will be able to support and advice.”

4.2.1.1.3 Support from other teachers within the school

It is indispensable to realise the support from teachers within the school as they possess skills and knowledge to respond to the wants of learners facing challenges to learning within their own classrooms. Some of the participants mentioned the support they get from other teachers as significant and at times such teachers are invited to support the SBST in addressing some of the barriers that seems challenging to the team. P3 from DS 3 alluded to this and said:

“As a member of the SBST from the psychosocial side, I need teachers to give me information about the learners. This shows that teachers within our school are able to support the SBST. Moreover, in many referrals done, teachers are always willing to assist me as the school nurse. I really have no doubt about the support from teachers.”

Tebid (2017:120) agrees with the above and further says that “the reciprocal action in between teachers and learners throughout these support procedures go a long way to add to the academic, social, and emotional development of every learner”. Other teachers are able to “give encouragement and guidance as well as helping the SBST to plan suitable interventions, counsel learners and their parents, and refer to external professionals when necessary” (Fourie, 2016:15).

Moreover, it is the opinion of one of the participants that it is the obligation of the SBST to encourage teachers to work hand in hand with the team. Most importantly, teachers are willing to support the SBST in order to functional more and support learners, teachers, and the entire school. P2 from DS 1.1 and P1 from DS 3 respectively declared:

“There are many teachers who are willing to support the SBST but I have mentioned just a few. However, the SBST must facilitate a working environment between them and us. They must hold meetings with staff and encourage us to support them. They need to arrange workshops for teachers.”

“As my colleague has mentioned, we know that SBST needs us and we need them for support to take place. During meetings, feedbacks and way-forward must be part of the agenda and in this way, we are able to work cooperatively.”

Zwane and Malale (2018:5) note that, from interviews done in Gauteng province, South Africa, SBSTs do not have the courage to involve teachers who are not serving in this team.

Mfuthwana and Dreyer (2018:3) assert that involving teachers to assist the SBST to address its challenges could be one way to strengthen the delivery of support services in schools.

4.2.1.1.4 Support from parents to the SBST

The “support from parents to schools, explicitly parents of learners who have go through hitches to learning, is not compromised by the South African Constitution” (Makhalemele, 2011:26). The participants in this study agreed that the undivided support from parents, specifically parents of learners who have struggle to achieve in learning, do exist and ought to be recognised accordingly. Parents of learners from this school frequently contact the SBST and in some instances, they involve community members to support the school. P1 from DS 1.3 said the following:

“We offer our learners vocational skills and some parents come our school to offer their skills and knowledge regarding some skills, for example, gardening, the parents will even bring seeds of the relevant season and share with the teachers and learners and show them how to plant and care for them. We also take our learners to some private and neighbouring businesses to do practical of what they were taught at school and at the end these businesses offer jobs to some of our learners.”

P5 from DS 2 also emphasised the fact that parents often participate in activities of the school:

“Our parents mostly take part in activities of the school. Some of our learners who need support in class perform better in the sports - art and culture, and some parents join teachers during training and this boosts the moral of the teachers and learners.”

Lebona (2013:6) emphasises that “it is believed that primary caregivers are the parents, and diminutive will be accomplished in the preclusion of health-related causes and rudimentary social and emotional causes of disabilities and hitches in learning, lest parents are openly engaged”.

Some participants raised the issue that not all parents are supportive. There are some who do not respond to calls from the school. These participants mentioned:

“It is unfortunate that some parents do not come when called to school, however I have experienced as a member of SBST cases where the parents struggle to support or to be involved in the child’s education because they are also challenged” (P6 from DS 1.3).

“Some it is because of the social state which is the disadvantaged background, therefore they have no means to come to school but some it is just the negative attitude where they just do not care. All these pose a challenge to the SBST and it is worrisome, declared participant” (P3 from DS 1.2).

Maphumulo (2019:70) and Ndinisa (2016:59) maintain that some ‘parents are uncooperative’, they entirely abandon their children; some are domestic workers and are not able to help with homework; while some are alleged to have no interest in the education and learning of their children. All these pose challenges and create aloofness among parents and the school.

In contrast, DoE (2014:7) reports that ‘research in South Africa proposes that it is mostly not due to absence of passion’ on the side of parents that hampers parental support, but rather other causes, such as “poverty and its effects, single-parenthood, low literacy levels, language barriers, job and time pressures, the effects of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, poor parenting skills, cultural and socio-economic isolation, uncertainty about the nature of their role, negative, arrogant, hostile and/or unwelcoming attitudes by the school and teachers toward them and poor skills on the part of the school on how to communicate and collaborate effectively”.

4.2.1.1.5 Support from district officials and specialists

It is clear that the participants in this study understand the role that must be played by the DBST in supporting the SBST in special schools. They mentioned that the DBST is directed by EWP6 to make sure that the practice of IE is implemented in the classrooms by being supportive of SBST. P4 from DS 3 emphasised that:

“It must be the DBST that have to support and empower the SBST. They are mandated by the policy and it is part of their duties to support the SBST. I believe that we (SBST) cannot be effective without their support. They (DBST) must train and workshop us, then consistently monitor and advice but not police us. We must be happy to see them at our school because we know their purpose.”

P6 from DS 2 added that:

“SBSTs need the support of the DBST concerning resources. They also need physical and human resources and professional support.”

The participants further illustrated with a drawing (see Figure 4.2) the connection between the SBST and other role-players who are supposed to be mobilised by the DBST to support the SBST. According to the participants who drew the figure, the DBST is eligible to draw human and physical resources from different government departments to support the SBST and work jointly to provide support as stated in the inclusion policy. The drawings illustrate different

stakeholders who work together with DBST to support the SBST depending on the area of need, to share their expertise and collaborate to help SBSTs support teachers and reduce barriers to learning.

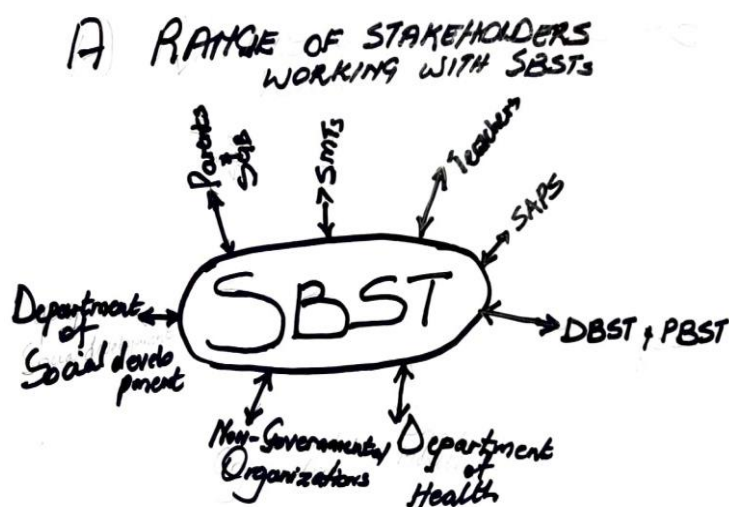


Figure 4.2: Stakeholders working with SBSTs

Source: Drawing by P5 and P4 from DS 2

However, participants further mentioned that it is a challenge to have full involvement of the DBST at school level. They believe that without the support of DBST, learners who have challenges to learning will be not be able to 'gain from the adapted curriculum' presented to them. P3 from DS 1.1 shared the following challenges:

"We hardly see DBST members at our school not unless it is for their benefit. For instance, they have brought referred learners for admissions. After placement of the new learner, we will never see them again."

P1 from DS 1.3 concurs with the above-mentioned and said:

"DBST refers learners to special school and then they leave everything, all the duties to the SBST without continuous supporting them. I also think that for SBST, it is a lot of admin which they are pressured by the DBST to do."

Similarly, P5 from DS 3 mentioned;

"I know District did give support initially but now they say that schools are trained. So, the support from the district is also not really there. Personally, I don't think they are doing enough, they did the training, but for me, for instance, the ISPs, is still a problem and ISP is a very complex thing to understand. So, I don't think they are doing enough to actually help and they do not have enough time to support."

In conclusion, as said by Makhalemele and Payne-van Staden (2017:3) the main duties of the DBST are to arrange, coach, and support teachers to perform in inclusive schools when teachers still feel powerless and ineffective. The participants felt incapable of supporting the teachers due to insufficient knowledge and skills, time, resources, team members not fully understanding their roles, as well as limited support and intervention from the DBST and school managers; all these pose a challenge. Hay *et al.* (2021:86) and Maphumulo (2019:30) report that the challenge with the SBST is that, whilst they are striving to provide educational support to learners, teachers and institutions exceed the ideal, foreseen support services as decided upon by policies. Similarly, Zwane and Malale (2018:4) report that in Gauteng Province in Southern Africa, interviews exposed that the SBST has limited understanding and strategies to help learners and teachers, though developing SBSTs might be the best way of improving the application of IE.

4.2.2 Theme 2: Obstruction of support-provision

The second theme puts more attention on components that obstruct the delivery of support for the SBST and therefore hindering support-provision to teachers in reducing barriers to learning. The focus group clarified what the causes of obstruction of support-provision are (Sub-theme 2.1). Most of the responses were generated from answering open-ended questions (DS 3), which helped clarify concepts such as “what hinders support-provision” in details.

Table 4.3: Theme 2 and the generated sub-theme

Theme 2: Obstruction of support provision
Sub-theme 2.1: Causes of obstruction of support provision

Source: Author's own construct

4.2.2.1 Sub-theme 2.1: The causes of obstruction of support provision

In this study, the focus group further deliberated on sources that hamper the provision of support for SBSTs. They agreed that they are capable of flourishing into productive teams with the needed guidance and support, but the following factors are hindering support provision: the negative attitude of some members of the school community, insufficient resources, over-populated classes, and psycho-social factors.

4.2.2.1.1 Negative attitudes of some members of the school community

The partakers indicated that if other role-players within the school communities do not support them adequately in inclusion of LSEN, this affects the SBST negatively and ultimately the support process will fail. P5 from DS 1.3 shared their dissatisfaction:

“It makes it hard to do your job diligently when you see other people with authority not showing passion doing their work. Even lack of support from other committees such as disciplinary committee really makes our job difficult.”

It has emerged that lack of support from other members within the school created negativity in those who are serving in the SBST. P2 from DS 1.1 and P4 from DS 1.3 respectively mentioned the following difficulties:

“Not knowing exactly what you need to do as an SBST member in order to assist teachers, parents or learners results in negative attitude towards your role.”

“Not given the required resources, information, attention, time and acknowledgement also demoralises a person.”

Moreover, P6 and P3 from DS 3 alluded that the pressure under which the SMT put them to cover the syllabus/curriculum and achieve better results from the learners, especially in senior classes, demoralised them. P4 from DS 1.3 said:

“The teachers and SMTs who push for curriculum coverage leaving behind learners who are struggling, it impacts negatively on SBSTs.”

It is also stated by Rulwa-Mnatwana (2014:31) that “insufficient support to successfully incorporate learners with disabilities into general classes brings about undesirable attitudes which hamper the execution of IE, and the latter cannot be realised by individuals, but by a group of teachers, parents, and professionals”.

4.2.2.1.2 Insufficient resources and over-populated classrooms

It is apparent to the participants of this study that resources as well as overcrowding in classrooms are the biggest challenge to IE. The reality is that this participating special school is ‘barely armed’ with the ‘essential resources and amenities’ to implement inclusion. However, though participants acknowledged the disposal of assets in their school, they exclaimed that they were insufficient and occasionally unsuitable for the learners in their contexts. They stated a scarcity of suitable teaching supplies necessary for teaching learners who have debilities. In this regard, P5 from DS 3 mentioned:

“Even though we have resources on our disposal, we really struggle to perform our roles as these resources are inadequate. We have a serious shortage of appropriate teaching materials.”

P3 from DS 1.3 added:

“We really have a challenge of shortage of both human and physical resources. This hampers the provision of support services in our school. Our hands as the SBST are tight and cannot be able to function as expected.”

P3 from DS 3 cited the challenges they experience due to inadequate support resources from the relevant stakeholders and said:

“SBSTs at special schools do not get the necessary support in order to be effective at performing their duties because the supporting structures are not based at the schools. It takes long for learners to be assisted even a year without assistance. This experience causes barriers to us providing support to teachers.”

Some of the participants associated lack of resources with overcrowding in the classroom. It emerged from participants that many of their classes are overcrowded, and this jeopardises provision of support services by the SBST. P2 from DS 3 alluded:

“We feel over-whelmed by over-crowded classes and not being able to reach each child and not being able to work as a supporting structure to the child, and this results in ineffective SBST. Some of the learners are left behind due to over-crowding and this courses more barriers to teaching and learning.”

Furthermore, P5 and P6 from DS 2 used the drawing below (Figure 4.3) to emphasise the difficulty of working and supporting teachers and learners in overcrowded classrooms.

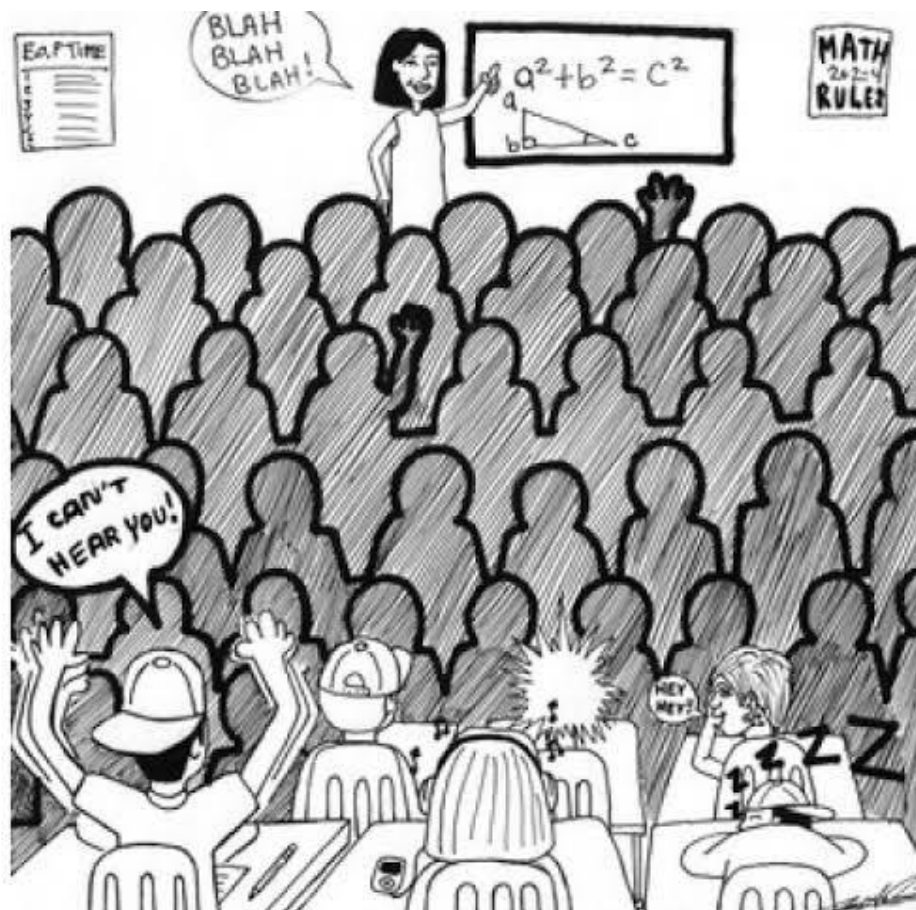


Figure 4.3: Over-crowding in classrooms

Source: Drawing from Big Cat Kitty Shed (2016) used by P5 and P6 from DS 2

They narrated the drawing in the following manner:

“Learners with barriers to learning cannot be reached in such classrooms and they will be left behind. There is definitely a problem with discipline in such classrooms and time for actual teaching and learning is compromised, as a result, support-provision will be hindered.”

In addition, Mphahlele (2017:9) explains that “resources that are not sufficient in terms of teacher and learner support services, plus learner support materials; large class sizes; punitive difficulties; and deprived teacher-learner relationships that lessen time for real learning and teaching, hinder support process”.

4.2.3 Theme 3: Available programmes to support SBST

The third theme focuses on programmes that are in place that support SBST. The participants mentioned programmes that are available and how they are benefiting from them. They also mentioned the challenges and shortcomings of these programmes.

Table 4.4: Theme 3 and the generated sub-theme

Theme 3: Available programmes to support SBST
Sub-theme 3.1: The implementation of the available support programmes for SBST

Source: Author's own construct

4.2.3.1 Sub-theme 3.1: Implementation of the available support programmes for SBST

While the participants were still gathered in their focus group, they looked at one of the subsequent questions that was asked so as to explore the main research question:

“Which programmes are in place to assist SBSTs in special schools in performing their role?”

After deliberation they came up with the following available programmes:

4.2.3.1.1 Professional development

The participants believe that professional development, specifically to the SBST members, should be an on-going process. It helps to keep the participants up to date with the new developments in support services and consequently they gain confidence in giving support to the teachers and the learners. P6 from DS 1.3 and P4 from DS 1.2 respectively explained that:

“One of the duties of SBST is to explore the developmental needs of the school and to source service providers to meet those needs. This mammoth task needs us to be developed continuously by the district officials. The principal ought to make opportunities for SBST to undergo such workshops by allowing time and resources.”

“We attend some of the professional development as organised by the district. These workshops sharpened us to perform our role effectively. We are up to date with any developments in education support services. We confidently provide services without fear.”

Masango (2013:13) consent that “a professional support programme motivates SBSTs to learn new things and implement them differently”. However, Landbrook (2009:39) mentioned that “the DBST ought to afford complete education support services, which comprise not only, but also, human resources like para-professionals, but professional development for SBST as well”. Barratt (2016b:45) concurs that “there might be some teachers and other role-players

who appear to naturally know how to implement “inclusiveness”, but continuous professional development is necessary for all role-players who are part of applying the IE system”.

4.2.3.1.2 Curricular, assessment, and instructional programmes

This programme is the cornerstone of teaching and learning and as a result many teachers rely on the SBST to support them in this area. In this regard, when the support structure has inadequate skill and understanding to support teachers in this respect then the performance of learners will be severely affected. In this study, it becomes evident that the SBST of the participating school benefitted from this programme as they are conversant to support teachers on assessment and instructional matters. The participants applauded the team in this regard and some of the participants said:

“I never recall us failing to support teachers in assessment and instructional matters. I dedicated this achievement to the district that always engage us in the curricular, assessment and instructional programmes. We as the SBST gained a lot of knowledge through this programme” (P6 from DS 1.1).

“Our team always attend the training on assessment and instructional programmes once a term. We benefitted a lot from this kind of the programme. Our teachers now trust us on the support we give them on curriculum differentiation” (P3 from DS 1.2).

According to Makhalemele (2011:43), “curriculum can be one of the major causes of barriers to learning for many learners at schools when it is improperly executed”. He also explains that curriculum includes the following aspects: “language or medium of instruction, classroom organization, teaching methods, the duration/period to take for teaching an aspect, teaching aids and assessment” (Makhalemele, 2011:43). Furthermore, Ladbrook (2009:38) pronounces that “the DBST and SBST are tasked to come up with curriculum, assessment, and instructional support through exemplifying learning programmes, learner support materials and equipment, assessment instructions and professional support for teachers at special schools”.

Mphahlele (2017:39) agrees that “the DBST will create curriculum, assessment, and instructional programmes, plus programmes on contagious diseases such as HIV/AIDS, and then empower the SBST to facilitate the programmes at school level”.

4.2.3.1.3 The SIAS policy

The DBE introduced the above-mentioned policy which must be used to implement IE. It is about ‘supporting teaching and learning for learners with challenges to learning’. There are

forms within that needs to be completed at school level when referring learners and some forms are for the referring teachers and the SBST. The participants felt that as the SBST, training on SIAS is done by the DBST with the expectation that they will disseminate information to teachers and other stakeholders at school level. However, participants thought it would be easier if the DBST continuously train the SBST in implementing SIAS processes. Training and workshops happen only once a year and they are expected to master it all in limited time.

P4 from DS 3 and P2 from DS 1.2 further said:

“We feel over-worked sometimes because of the paperwork we must do for learners with barriers to learning. We are trying but it gets tough because we are also expected to do our daily teaching duties and do submissions on time. Teachers complain and we understand their challenge and that’s when we should support but our work becomes too much as we have similar number of periods.”

“SIAS is another programme that we benefited from. We have been trained on SIAS strategies and now we are able to support both learners and teachers.”

Lebona (2013:115) clearly explains that “for SBSTs to perform their functions accurately, they require relentless monitoring and support from the DBSTs. In one of his research projects, the respondents complained that the DBST take a long time to visit and monitor progress and offer support to both SBST and referred learners”. Additionally, Barratt (2016b:45) maintains that “another focal point in an ongoing professional development programme involves a deeper understanding of what SIAS means and needs”.

4.2.3.1.4 Accommodations and Concessions programme

Another programme from the DBE which is meant to support the SBST is Accommodations and Concessions. This plan aims to capacitate the SBST to be capable of supporting learners with barriers; for instance, a learner struggles to read, and the School-Based Accommodation and Concession (SBAC) committee will apply to the District Based Accommodations and Concession (DBAC) for such a learner to get a reader, who will read for them during assessments. In this respect, the participants indicated the success of this programme, but it sounds like additional work to them. Certain participants quickly added that:

“Yes, it is true it is a programme of support but another extra job for us, because the SBAC works together with SBST” (P2 from DS 1.2).

DoE (2014:16) describes another process or strategy which strengthens the SBST plans and programmes of differentiation for specialised settings and is called Accommodations and

Concessions. It describes accommodation as “unavoidable and suitable modification of, and adapting to, the environment, assessment format and/or curriculum format as well as permitting the use of assistive and technology to allow learners with barriers to learning, access to teaching and learning like other learners in classroom setting, while concession is consenting learners with barriers such as deafness, aphasia, dyslexia, and mathematical disorder to be discharged from certain subjects or curriculum content”.

According to Alant and Casey (2005:186), if rational accommodations are afforded during daily activities, they should be allowed in the assessment situation. They also point out that this is a compound process because it might temper with the validity of the assessment task.

4.2.3.1.5 Teacher Assistant Teams (TATs)

The above-mentioned programme is also available to schools for support, and it was mentioned by the participants. This team which is described as a “sub-team” of the ILST is called Teacher Assistant Team (TAT) and their performance is regarded as crucial in IE (Suleymanov, 2016:93; Sharma & Salend, 2016:122). They maintain that TATs do not only support students with special needs, but classroom teachers too.

P1 from DS 3.2 had to say this about the TAT programme:

“It is true we have such a team but the problem is that not all of them know the content of their work, some have negative attitude to the teacher and learners, they increase the problem instead of decreasing it. They fail to commit to confidentiality and end up talking about the challenges of learners outside the classes. It becomes a challenge instead of a support and not all schools have them. So SBST must still perform amidst these challenges and that why it is imperative for them to be supported.”

Suleymanov (2016:97) and Sharma and Salend (2016:118) add that TAT is a pivotal figure of support in teaching and learning of learners who have challenges to learning. They say; TAT enables teachers more time to interact with learners with challenges learning and to work- with additional professionals. Masango (2013:8) concurs that “teaching in inclusive classrooms may necessitate collaborative teaching with the TA. He further says, in inclusive schools, co-teachers (TATs) are regarded as support facilitators and they are responsible for presenting some learners instructions, problem-solving with teachers, and coordinating the services the learners get so that their needs are catered for”..

The participants agreed with the above, and P1 from DS 1.1 reported that:

“TAT are needed at special schools because they help and support SBST with support. They reduce pressure of managing classes with learners with barriers as well as over-crowded classes. They provide SBST the opportunity to develop different strategies of meeting diverse needs of the teachers. For instance, they form part of ISP development and implementation and that is important in support-processes.”

P6 from DS 1.2 pointed out that:

“TAT also helps in affording one-on-one time between the teacher and the learner with barriers to learning, as a strategy recommended by SBST.”

This is unfortunate, because TAs can be useful if incorporated well in the system. Teachers with learners at “high level of need” can benefit from such services, however, they should be monitored to not end up doing the teacher’s work or replacing the teacher.

4.2.3.1.6 Collaboration with NGOs

Another programme mentioned by the participants was that of working with NGOs. These organisations support SBSTs by rendering free services to the learners, to empower them. The participants reported during DS 1.2 that one of the ‘duties’ of the SBST is to network with other collaborators to meet the needs of the institution.

P3 from DS 1.3 further explained that:

“For instance, if there are learners who abuse substance, SBST will contact and refer those learners to organisations such as NICRO, SANCA or Lifeline for help and support. A report should accompany them when they return back to school or during the process of rehabilitation.”

For example, an Integrated School Health Team (ISHT) assess and screen learners and advises referrals for those with grave health challenges, as well as having talks on teenage pregnancy and cancer, and pastors who conduct school prayers. Reza (2022:33) alludes to the aforementioned and maintains that NGOs are endorsing education and breaking cycles of poverty.

4.3 Conclusion

This chapter deliberated on the findings of this research study. The responses of participants were analysed and summarised according to three main themes: (1) empowering SBSTs, (2) obstruction of support-provision, and (3) programmes available for supporting SBST.

Furthermore, the themes were discussed considering the relevant literature reviewed. An integrative discussion of the findings is presented. The next chapter will present the conclusion and recommendations from the data analysis process.

Chapter 5: Summary, Findings, and Recommendations

5.1 Introductions

The purpose of this study is to explore how SBSTs can be equipped to 'support teachers in special schools best in lessening barriers to learning'. The preceding chapter presented the analysis of the findings. This chapter presents the summary of findings reached and, finally, the recommendations that will enable SBSTs in special schools to support teachers in reducing barriers to learning. The findings are related to the literature, theoretical frameworks, and most importantly, the three research questions. The last section is a deliberation of the limitations of the study. The conclusion to the chapter draws the study together.

5.2 Summary of the Study

In Chapter one, a general idea of the study was presented. The chapter presented a concise picture of the core elements of this study. Critical questions, which were in line with the study's objectives, were formulated. The 'background' to the study, the research problem, the aim of the study, research objectives, and research questions were presented. There was also a presentation of a 'general idea' of the research design and methodology, methods of gathering data and analysis, trustworthiness of the study, lastly, the ethical considerations.

Chapter two reviewed the literature on the historical background of IE, and the conceptualisation and establishment of IE in South Africa. The chapter also discussed the levels of educational support and the current situation of support provisioning at special schools. Finally, the theory that underpins the study was presented.

Chapter three presented the methodology that was espoused to riposte the research questions. The qualitative PALAR approach was used, and observation, group discussions, drawing, and reflective journals were used to acquire data. The research instruments which were carefully chosen for this study were apposite for the context and they provided the wanted data that permitted me to achieve the study's research objectives. Chapter three further contained the study's research questions, research paradigm, research approach, research design, participants' selection, data generation strategies, data analysis technique, role of the researcher, trustworthiness, and ethical considerations of the study.

Chapter four presented the data analysis and interpretation of the results based on the data collected from the co-researchers. The participants discussed and planned strategies to empower SBSTs at special schools through the discussions which were presented in the form of themes and sub-themes. The chapter ended with the conclusion.

Chapter five provides a summary of all the chapters in the study. This chapter further contains the summary of the findings from literature and imperial research, the recommendations of the study, limitations of the study, recommendations for supplementary research, and the overall conclusions.

5.3 Findings reflecting on support required by SBSTs of special schools to help teachers reduce barriers to learning

This research study aims to explore how the SBSTs can be equipped to support special schools' teachers best in reducing barriers to learning. The findings are related to the theoretical frameworks, literature, and, most importantly, the research questions. Findings are presented as indicative/suggestive/conclusive statements.

5.3.1 Theme 1: Empowering SBSTs

The goal of the above-mentioned theme is to explore and discover information about the need for other role-players to empower SBSTs in special schools. The theme pays attention to the significance of empowering SBSTs at special schools 'with a view to help' teachers reduce barriers to learning. The information about the need to capacitate SBSTs by other role-players was obtained in cycle 2, during group discussion (DS 1) and answering open-ended questionnaires (DS 3) where participants shared their experiences.

5.3.1.1 Sub-theme 1.1: Forms of support to SBSTs by other role-players

The discoveries revealed that the SBSTs at special schools need their own support that will enable them to support teachers effectively. The following forms of support were identified: support from the principal in heading various stakeholders, support from the SMT, support from other teachers within the school, support of the parents to the SBST, and support from the district officials and specialists.

5.3.1.1.1 Support from the principal in heading various stakeholder support efforts

Literature indicates that the inclusion policy mandates principals to be the fundamental role-players in the successful execution of IE and the processes of support provision to lessen challenges to learning in the institution setting (Salisbury & McGregor, 2005:2). Notwithstanding, the findings caution that supporting structures can either properly function or become barriers to support-provision if not well directed.

In this empirical study the participants were aware of the responsibilities of principals in supporting SBST: when the principal is keenly engaged in supporting the SBST, then it will be operative; as a result, principals should establish and mobilise collaborative support-teams

outside school premises and organise and distribute resources. However, the participants reported that principals do not have sufficient knowledge regarding IE and the implementation of its processes; they do not have time to participate in SBSTs matters; and there are no support resources acquired. Some principals are provided with funds, but they are not trained in how to use those funds to improve and make the school environment supportive and accessible to the community, nor do they get support from the district level.

5.3.1.1.2 Support from the SMT

The literature confirms that SMT support of the SBST is a policy requirement, and they are expected to increase awareness of the EWP6 policy and maintain functional SBSTs in schools through the engagement of SGBs, parents, and other stakeholders (Mphahlele, 2017:200; Ladbrook, 2009:115). Furthermore, the SMT should be in the position to lead and guide SBSTs based on their knowledge, thorough comprehension of education policy, implementation of strategies in curriculum management and support, as well as having the required qualifications.

The participants pointed out that the deputy-principal or the HOD could form part of the SBST in order to relieve the workload of the principal. They also indicated that they depend on the SMT and they are loyal to them because they represent the principal. They reported that, according to policy, SMTs are the experts in curriculum and curriculum deliverance as per their post level and they should offer guidance and support to their subordinates. They are also expected to engage with SGBs/parents about their children's education, as well as engage with other stakeholders.

However, the study also showed that some of the SMT members do not have relevant qualifications and therefore little knowledge about IE. The participants stated that this impedes the support processes. In addition, some of the SMT members were appointed years ago and they struggle to be led by young, informed members with the relevant qualifications.

5.3.1.1.3 Support from other teachers within the school

According to Tebid (2017:120), the "mutual action between teachers and learners during support processes is imperative and it contributes to the academic, social, and emotional development of each learner". Some "teachers are able to motivate, guide, and assist the SBST with intervention processes for learners; counsel learners and their parents; and refer learners externally for help" (Fourie, 2016:15).

For SBST to plan effectively they need background information on learners, which they can get from the teachers. The school nurse, who is a member of the SBST, pronounces that she

gets support from the teachers when they refer learners with health issues to her for assistance and support. SBST holds meetings with teachers to encourage support, they arrange workshops, and give feedback on intervention programmes.

5.3.1.1.4 Support from parents to the SBST

It is reported in the literature that some parents are not helpful of their children, not because they are not interested, but because there are domestic factors hindering them (DoE, 2014:7). Makhalemele (2011:26) explains that “some parents, especially of learners with learning barriers, are actively participating in the education of their children. Additionally, it is believed that parents know better about their children as they are their main caregivers”.

Participants reported that it is unfortunate that some parents are not responsive when called to school because they face their own challenges. This is a hindrance to effective support since the learner’s background should be known to the school, and also impedes external and continuous support at home. Participants also discovered that some parents do not cooperate with the teachers about their children with barriers to learning because they have lost hope and interest. These hinder the processes of effective support.

5.3.1.1.5 Support from district officials and specialists

The DBST is mandated by EWP6 to support SBSTs at school level. Masango (2013:14) explains that it is also expected to train teachers to perform in inclusive schools. It has power to appoint human resources and secure physical resources from various government departments to support the SBST as per the requirement of IE. There are other stakeholders who work with DBST to support and collaborate with SBST.

The participants in this research evidently understand the role of DBST towards supporting SBST. They reported that it is the duty of DBST to train, workshop, and consistently monitor and advise the SBST. They are expected to provide SBST the necessary resources so that it is effective in supporting teachers. Participants also mentioned challenges they encountered hindering full engagement of the DBST at school level, for example, the DBST comes to schools only for their own benefit, or they bring referred learners for admissions and after placement they provide no support.

5.3.2 Theme 2: Obstruction of support-provision

The second theme focuses on elements that obstruct the delivery of support for the SBST and, as a result, hamper support-provision to teachers in reducing barriers to learning. Through answering open-ended questions (DS 3) the focus group shed light on what causes obstruction of support provision.

5.3.2.1 Sub-theme 2.1: The causes of obstruction of support-provision

The study found that, although the SBST in special school are capable of flourishing into productive teams with the needed guidance and support, their provision of support is hindered by the following factors: the negative attitudes of some members of the school-community, and insufficient resources and over-populated classrooms.

5.3.2.1.1 Negative attitudes of some members of the school-community

According to Rulwa-Mnatwana (2014:31), “if support is inadequate, incorporating learners with disabilities successfully into general classes becomes a challenge and creates negative attitudes, and this hinders the implementation of IE. It has emerged that lack of support from others within the school created negative attitudes towards those who are serving in the SBST”.

Problems are created when people with authority do not do their work meticulously. Not knowing precisely what you should do to support teachers as a member of the SBST, causes one to have negative attitude towards IE and being part of the SBST. Teachers that push to cover the curriculum leaves behind learners with barriers to learning and that impacts negatively upon SBSTs.

5.3.2.1.2 Insufficient resources and over-populated classrooms

According to literature, “insufficient resources needed for teacher and learner support services, as well as learner support supplies, and large class sizes, which results in chaotic classes with deprived teacher-learner relationships, lessens time for real teaching and learning, and this hampers the support process” (Mphahlele, 2017:9).

Overcrowding and insufficient resources are the biggest challenge according to the participants. There is also a scarcity of appropriate teaching resources for teaching learners with learning debilities. Furthermore, there is scarcity of human and physical resources which hinders support provision. Supporting structures are not based at schools and therefore the SBST struggles to perform. SBST and teachers feel overwhelmed by over-crowded classes and insufficient one-on-one time with LSEN.

5.3.3 Theme 3: Available programmes to support the SBST

The third theme deals with programmes that are in place and are utilised to support SBSTs to reduce barriers to learning. The focus group made mention of these programmes during the discussions (DS 1) and also alluded to how effective these programmes are with regards to support-provision.

5.3.3.1 Sub-theme 3.1: Implementation of the available support-programmes for SBST

During the FGDs participants identified the following accessible programmes: professional development; curricular, assessment, and instructional programmes; SIAS policy; accommodations and concessions programme; TATs; and collaboration with NGOs.

5.3.3.1.1 Professional development

Literature confirms that “SBSTs are motivated by having professional development programmes because they learn new things and apply acquired skills differently” (Masango (2013:13). Similarly, Barratt (2016b:45) says “some teachers seem to know how to implement IE; however, ongoing professional development is necessary”.

Continuous professional development for SBST is necessary according to the participants. SBST ought to explore the developmental needs of their school and come up with service providers to meet those needs. When SBST members attend professional workshops, they become motivated, confident, knowledgeable, and sharpened to provide support and they stay up to date with new developments in IE.

5.3.3.1.2 Curricular, assessment, and instructional programmes

Makhalemele (2011:43) points out that “one of the major causes of barriers to learning is erroneously implemented curriculum”. Ladbrook (2009:38) adds that “both DBST and SBST should devise adapted curriculum and assessment, learner support material, and equipment. It is also the duty of DBST to train SBST on how to facilitate the adapted curriculum, assessment, and instructional programmes, including programmes on contagious diseases such as HIV/AIDS”.

Participants in this study mentioned that they attend beneficial workshops provided by DBST; however, not all topics/programmes offered at those workshops are relevant and applicable to them.

5.3.3.1.3 The SIAS policy

The SIAS policy for IE is a mandate from the DoE. “It includes different forms that need to be completed by teachers, SBST, and then the DBST. For SBST to function efficiently with SIAS policy they need ongoing professional development for a deeper understanding of this policy” (Lebona, 2013:115).

Partakers in this study reported that they feel overwhelmed by paperwork for learners with barriers to learning. They add that teachers also report that they feel swamped by the paperwork they must complete for learners with barriers to learners in addition to their regular

teaching load. Training of SBST about SIAS takes place only once per year and there is no follow-up monitoring, and this poses a challenge for SBST.

5.3.3.1.4 Accommodations and concessions programme

This is another programme from the DoE that is meant for supporting the SBST, for example, when a learner who struggles with reading is provided with a reader (DoE, 2014). This is a good programme but causes extra work for the SBST because they collaborate with SBAC.

5.3.3.1.5 TATs

The TAT is described as “a sub-team of the SBST, and they support learners with disabilities as well as classroom teachers. They allow teachers more time with learners with barriers and that provides essential support” (Suleymanov, 2016:93).

The TATs are vital structures of support at special schools for learners with special needs. They lessen the pressures of managing over-crowded classrooms while the SBST applies various strategies of teaching and learning for teachers and LSEN.

5.3.3.1.6 Collaboration with NGOs

According to Reza (2022:33), “NGOs support education and breaks poverty-cycles. NGOs support SBSTs by offering free services to empower learners. SBST networks with such stakeholders so as to realise the school’s developmental needs. Learners with challenges of substance abuse can be referred by SBST to NGOs like the National Institute of Crime Prevention and the Reintegration of Offenders (NICRO), South African Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (SANCA), or Lifeline, and learners with behavioural problems can be referred to pastors who can pray for and counsel them”.

5.4 Recommendations of the Study

This section presents recommendations toward enabling SBSTs in special schools to support teachers in reducing barriers to learning. These practically implementable suggestions are based on the findings that emerged in this study.

- Because principals must ensure that all policies are employed correctly at school level and that critical support is given to learners, teachers, and parents, they need up to date knowledge and must therefore be re-trained on the implementation of EWP6 and how to best support SBST. The training of principals should be explicit and practical so that they know exactly how to support SBSTs at special schools. This will create a conducive environment to offer assistance to teachers and learners with barriers to learning, to

mobilise appropriate human resources, to procure the required physical resources, and to know what is happening in the SBSTs of their schools.

- SMTs need to understand their role as representatives of the principal and to represent the principal well in the SBST. In this respect, they should ensure that policies on support services are implemented in their schools and should guide support based on knowledge and expertise. Furthermore, SMTs must deliver reports to the principal and back to the SBST on time, and urgent and confidential matters must be treated as such. SMTs should also advise the SBST members regarding decision making. SMTs of special schools from the same cluster should come together with their SBSTs and have meetings where they plan together, share good practices, and discuss challenges in order to find solutions. They must involve the district in those meetings, and this will empower them.
- Teachers within the special school should be motivated to support the learners and the SBST. They should realise they are needed by the SBST and that they are part of the team. They should be involved and be given feedback on time because their cooperation will help SBST to be effective.
- The support of parents in special schools is significant. Parents ought to be capacitated with knowledge about barriers to learning and support provision. It should be apparent to them that teachers need them to work with the SBST to provide the required support.
- DBST ought to continuously and consistently support the SBST, by training, monitoring, and guiding them. They should not police the SBST but create a good working relationship with them. They should mobilise resources to enable SBST to work effectively in supporting teachers in lessening barriers to learning at special schools.
- To address the problem of insufficient resources and over-populated classrooms, it is commended that the DoE on national level should prioritise and acknowledge that learning disabilities prevail, and they should provide a budget to provincial DoE, so that it can grant districts to mobilise, hire, and procure appropriate and necessary physical and human resources to help supporting structures at school level. The DoE created policies that accommodate learners with disabilities; they should facilitate the implementation thereof so that they can monitor implementation and if not, what the challenges are.
- Professional development is vital for SBSTs in special schools and ongoing training will reduce and alleviate insecurities they may have. SBSTs from special schools should submit their needs to the DBST. Therefore, the DBST should plan accordingly and provide the required support and training. After the completion of training, the SBST should be awarded with certificates to acknowledge completion.

- For curricular, assessment, and instructional programmes the DBST must create a common programme for different types of special schools, so that if a learner is transferred to another special school, it is possible for him/her to fit in and just continue without more barriers. This will help SBSTs to provide fitting support.
- SBST members are to be given fewer teaching periods to perform their duties of support, which includes completing paperwork and forms, developing and monitoring ISPs, contacting service providers as per the needs of the school, controlling learner profiles, assisting with admissions, and aiding the accommodation and concession processes.
- TATs are significant structures of support, and they must be included as permanent support structures at special schools. Position requirements must be set, and TATs should be appointed only if they meet those. They must be appointed and supervised by the SMT. TATs should sign confidentiality forms and they must adhere to these, or strict measures would be taken against them. Clear job descriptions must be provided so that they do not see themselves taking a teacher position.
- As for NGOs these structures should be acknowledged by the DoE so that they feel needed in teaching and learning of learners with special needs. Annually, they should be celebrated by SBST and the SMT in formal or informal meetings and funds must be allocated for acknowledgement gifts or certificates.

5.5 Limitations of the Study

According to Gray (2018), “whichever study will have limitations, therefore, researchers should state significant limitations that may well affect the credibility of their findings”. This study was piloted in ‘one special school in Gauteng province’. As a result, the discoveries of this study will not be in a position to be applied to every special school in South Africa. Participants in this study are SBST members in a special school situated in ‘Sedibeng East’ (D7) district. Therefore, their perspectives and understanding in this study are based on their own experiences. It is possible that other SBST members in different contexts, such as urban and rural, might have different narratives on the same topic.

The study concentrated on the support needed by SBST to help teachers at special schools to reduce barriers to learning. The participants were focused on their current situation and the study did not consider other special schools, which might have uncooperative leadership or dysfunctional SBSTs.

5.6 Recommendations for Further Research

Bearing in mind the current situation of support provisioning at special schools and discoveries of the empirical study, it may be significant and fascinating to conduct research into the following:

- To investigate the collaboration of SBST from different special schools within the district on delivery of support services.
- To investigate the effective role of SBSTs from special schools to support the neighbouring schools.
- To investigate the collaboration of SBSTs with teachers within the same special school to lessen barriers to learning.
- To investigate the role of other entities at district level that should support SBSTs at special schools to reduce barriers to learning.
- To explore ways to reduce the workload of SBST members to perform their duties of support to reduce barriers to learning.

5.7 Conclusion

This chapter offered a précis of the whole study in terms of findings and recommendations, limitations of the study, together with recommendations for further research. The study investigated 'how SBSTs can be better equipped to support teachers in special schools in reducing barriers to learning'. The research findings prove that SBSTs at special schools need extra support from all stakeholders in order for them to be effective in their roles of supporting fellow teachers. A lot of research has been done on SBSTs at mainstream schools; attention should be given to SBSTs in special schools.

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ADDENDUM 1: APPROVAL FOR RESEARCH BY GAUTENG DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



GAUTENG PROVINCE

Department: Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

8/4/4/1/2

GDE RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER

Date:	18 August 2021
Validity of Research Approval:	08 February 2021– 30 September 2021 2021/194
Name of Researcher:	Manana JM
Address of Researcher:	54 Plowman Street Central East 3 Vanderbijlpark
Telephone Number:	0781879243
Email address:	manaadon@gmail.com
Research Topic:	Support required by schools-based support teams of special schools to help teachers reduce barriers to learning
Type of qualification	B Ed Hons
Number and type of schools:	5 LSEN Schools
District/s/HO	Sedibeng East

Re: Approval in Respect of Request to Conduct Research

This letter serves to indicate that approval is hereby granted to the above-mentioned researcher to proceed with research in respect of the study indicated above. The onus rests with the researcher to negotiate appropriate and relevant time schedules with the school/s and/or offices involved to conduct the research. A separate copy of this letter must be presented to both the School (both Principal and SGB) and the District/Head Office Senior Manager confirming that permission has been granted for the research to be conducted.

[Signature] 18/08/2021
The following conditions apply to GDE research. The researcher may proceed with the above study subject to the conditions listed below being met. Approval may be withdrawn should any of the conditions listed below be flouted:

1. Letter that would indicate that the said researcher/s has/have been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.

1

Making education a societal priority

Office of the Director: Education Research and Knowledge Management

7th Floor, 17 Simmonds Street, Johannesburg, 2001

Tel: (011) 355 0488

Email: Faith.Tshabalala@gauteng.gov.za

Website: www.education.gpg.gov.za

2. The District/Head Office Senior Manager/s must be approached separately, and in writing, for permission to involve District/Head Office Officials in the project.
3. Because of COVID 19 pandemic researchers can ONLY collect data online, telephonically or may make arrangements for Zoom with the school Principal. Requests for such arrangements should be submitted to the GDE Education Research and Knowledge Management directorate. The approval letter will then indicate the type of arrangements that have been made with the school.
4. The Researchers are advised to make arrangements with the schools via Fax, email or telephonically with the Principal.
5. A copy of this letter must be forwarded to the school principal and the chairperson of the School Governing Body (SGB) that would indicate that the researcher/s have been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.
6. A letter / document that outline the purpose of the research and the anticipated outcomes of such research must be made available to the principals, SGBs and District/Head Office Senior Managers of the schools and districts/offices concerned, respectively.
7. The Researcher will make every effort obtain the goodwill and co-operation of all the GDE officials, principals, and chairpersons of the SGBs, teachers and learners involved. Persons who offer their co-operation will not receive additional remuneration from the Department while those that opt not to participate will not be penalised in any way.
8. Research may only be conducted after school hours so that the normal school programme is not interrupted. The Principal (if at a school) and/or Director (if at a district/head office) must be consulted about an appropriate time when the researcher/s may carry out their research at the sites that they manage.
9. Research may only commence from the second week of February and must be concluded before the beginning of the last quarter of the academic year. If incomplete, an amended Research Approval letter may be requested to conduct research in the following year.
10. Items 6 and 7 will not apply to any research effort being undertaken on behalf of the GDE. Such research will have been commissioned and be paid for by the Gauteng Department of Education.
11. It is the researcher's responsibility to obtain written parental consent of all learners that are expected to participate in the study.
12. The researcher is responsible for supplying and utilising his/her own research resources, such as stationery, photocopies, transport, faxes and telephones and should not depend on the goodwill of the institutions and/or the offices visited for supplying such resources.
13. The names of the GDE officials, schools, principals, parents, teachers and learners that participate in the study may not appear in the research report without the written consent of each of these individuals and/or organisations.
14. On completion of the study the researcher/s must supply the Director: Knowledge Management & Research with one Hard Cover bound and an electronic copy of the research.
15. The researcher may be expected to provide short presentations on the purpose, findings and recommendations of his/her research to both GDE officials and the schools concerned.
16. Should the researcher have been involved with research at a school and/or a district/head office level, the Director concerned must also be supplied with a brief summary of the purpose, findings and recommendations of the research study.

The Gauteng Department of Education wishes you well in this important undertaking and looks forward to examining the findings of your research study.

Kind regards

Mr Gumanj Mukatuni
Acting CES: Education Research and Knowledge Management

DATE: 18/08/2021

ADDENDUM 2: GOODWILL PERMISSION: SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY



Springfield Special School
77 Wielut Street
Kookfontein
Redan
1931

PrivateBagX6001, Potchefstroom
South Africa 2520

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

Faculty of Education

(Research entity details)

Tel: 018 1111111
Email: Thabo.Makhalemele@nwu.ac.za

Date: 11.10.2021

GOODWILL PERMISSION: SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY

I herewith wish to request your permission for Ms Manana JM to participate in this research, which involves the School Based Support Team at your school. Prior to granting permission, please acquaint yourself with the information below.

The details of the research are as follows:

TITLE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT:

Support required by School – Based Support Teams of special schools to help teachers reduce barriers to learning

ETHICS APPLICATION NUMBER

NWU-01266-20-S2

PROJECT SUPERVISOR: Dr Makhalemele T.

CO-SUPERVISOR: Prof. Hay J.

ADDRESS: NWU Vaal Campus P O BOX 1175 Vanderbijlpark 1911

CONTACT NUMBER: 016 910 3075

MEMBER OF PROJECT TEAM MEd-Student: Jacobeth Makoloko Manana

ADDRESS: 54 Plowman Street Central East 3 Vanderbijlpark 1911

CONTACT NUMBER: 078 187 9243 / 061 750 1300

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.

- To investigate what support is needed by school-based support teams (SBST) to help teachers in special schools reduce barriers to learning.

The aim of this study will be brought about by these objectives:

- Identifying existing forms of support given to SBSTs in special schools by role players.
- Identifying programmes that are in place to assist SBSTs in special schools in performing their roles.
- Discovering elements that hamper the provision of support by SBSTs to teachers in special schools.
- Making recommendations towards enabling SBSTs in special schools to support teachers in reducing barriers to learning.

Participants

- The teachers in the SBST at your school.

What is expected of the participants?

The first meeting, the participant will be addressed by the researcher, welcoming them and explaining the aims and purpose of the research. In this case all the participants know one another as colleagues and team members at the same school.

Prior to the first meeting, an independent person will manage the process of signing of forms, which will be read and discussed thoroughly so that we understand our purpose in this study. It is expected of us to attend all the meetings and to be on time for every meeting scheduled, and if we do not attend, we should send a report in advance if possible. We are expected to participate willingly during contacts and respect others including their views/opinions, whether we agree with them or not.

There will be semi-structured questionnaires to be completed and semi-structured individual interviews to be done. These semi-structured interviews will take place at the times that are convenient to the participants and they will take an hour per session. All these will take place not during school hours.

All the data/lesson learnt previously or during the last session will be reviewed and I will co-analyse it on a practical level

Benefits to the participants

Benefits to the participants

The researchers (the researcher and the participants) are going to be empowered and enlightened about the support they need as a members of SBST in a special school. They will also be able to use the strategies, recommendations and programmes from the study to equip themselves and assist teachers to reduce barriers to learning.

Risks involved for participants

The risks anticipated are minimal:

Physical – fatigue, headaches.

Psychological – emotional discomfort, anger, however, there will be breaks in between. The researcher will provide snacks and drinks for the participants as well as petrol money to relief financial stress.

Confidentiality and protection of identity

Information given will be kept confidentially. The right to remain anonymous will be respected and no personal information will be revealed without consent. The questionnaires will be completed anonymously and it will be indicated to them that they participate voluntarily and if they wish to withdraw from the research they may do so, freely.

To ensure confidentiality, the details of the semi-structured individual interviews will only be discussed for the purposes relating to this study. Confidentiality will be ensured as only the researcher, the supervisor and the co-supervisor will have access to the data obtained and a confidentiality agreement will be signed at the onset of the study.

Dissemination of findings

The findings will be continually co- analysed and disseminated on a level that is practical. The researcher will analyse the findings through the theoretical lens. The acquired information and recommendations will be made available and will be submitted to the District- Based Support Team (DBST) in the form of an article or manuscript which will help and support SBSTs at special schools. The SBSTs will in turn support teachers and reduce barriers to learning.

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 Nthabiseng Tsotetsi agree to give permission for the research to take place with the identified participants in the study entitled:

Support required by School – Based Support Teams of special schools to help teachers reduce barriers to learning

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) Springfield School on (date) 18 / 10 / 20 21

Tsotetsi

Signature of SGB Chairperson/Relevant responsible person

ADDENDUM 3: PERMISSION LETTER: SCHOOL PRINCIPAL



Springfield Special School
77 Wielut Street
Kookfontein
Redan
1931

PrivateBagX6001, Potchefstroom
South Africa 2520

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

Faculty of Education

(Research entity details)

Tel: 018 1111111
Email: Thabo.Makhalemele@nwu.ac.za

Date: 11.10.2021

PERMISSION LETTER: SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

I herewith wish to request your permission for Ms Manana JM to participate in this research, which involves teachers in the School – Based Support Team at your school. Prior to granting permission, please acquaint yourself with the information below.

The details of the research are as follows:

TITLE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT:

Support required by School – Based Support Teams of special schools to help teachers reduce barriers to learning

ETHICS APPLICATION NUMBER

NWU-01266-20-S2

PROJECT SUPERVISOR: Dr Makhalemele T.
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ADDRESS: NWU Vaal Campus P O BOX 1175 Vanderbijlpark 1911
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MEMBER OF PROJECT TEAM MEd-Student: Jacobeth Makoloko Manana
ADDRESS: 54 Plowman Street Central East 3 Vanderbijlpark 1911
CONTACT NUMBER: 078 187 9243 / 061 750 1300

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/other relevant body.

What is this research about?

The aim of this research is:

- To investigate what support is needed by school-based support teams (SBST) to help teachers in special schools reduce barriers to learning.

The aim of this study will be brought about by these objectives:

- Identifying existing forms of support given to SBSTs in special schools by role players.
- Identifying programmes that are in place to assist SBSTs in special schools in performing their roles.
- Discovering elements that hamper the provision of support by SBSTs to teachers in special schools.
- Making recommendations towards enabling SBSTs in special schools to support teachers in reducing barriers to learning.

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- The teachers in the SBST at your school.

What is expected of the participants?

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Prior to the first meeting, an independent person will manage the process of signing of forms, which will be read and discussed thoroughly so that we understand our purpose in this study. It is expected of us to attend all the meetings and to be on time for every meeting scheduled, and if we do not attend, we should send a report in advance if possible. We are expected to participate willingly during contacts and respect others including their views/opinions, whether we agree with them or not.

There will be semi-structured questionnaires to be completed and semi-structured individual interviews to be done. These semi-structured interviews will take place at the times that are convenient to the participants and they will take an hour per session. All these will take place not during school hours.

All the data/lesson learnt previously or during the last session will be reviewed and I will co-analyse it on a practical level

Benefits to the participants

The researchers (the researcher and the participants) are going to be empowered and enlightened about the support they need as a member of SBST in a special school. They will also be able to use the strategies, recommendations and programmes from the study to equip themselves and assist teachers to reduce barriers to learning.

Risks involved for participants

The risks anticipated are minimal:

Physical – fatigue, headaches.

Psychological – emotional discomfort, anger, however, there will be breaks in between. The researcher will provide snacks and drinks for the participants as well as petrol money to relieve financial stress.

Confidentiality and protection of identity

Information given will be kept confidentially. The right to remain anonymous will be respected and no personal information will be revealed without consent. The questionnaires will be completed anonymously and it will be indicated to them that they participate voluntarily and if they wish to withdraw from the research they may do so, freely.

To ensure confidentiality, the details of the semi-structured individual interviews will only be discussed for the purposes relating to this study. Confidentiality will be ensured as only the researcher, the supervisor and the co-supervisor will have access to the data obtained and a confidentiality agreement will be signed at the onset of the study.

Dissemination of findings

The findings will be continually co- analysed and disseminated on a level that is practical. The researcher will analyse the findings through a theoretical lens. The acquired information and recommendations will be made available, and will be submitted to the District- Based Support Team (DBST) in the form of an article or manuscript which will help and support SBSTs at special schools. The SBSTs will in turn support teachers and reduce barriers to learning.

If you have any further questions or enquiries regarding your participation in this research, please contact the researchers for more information.

DECLARATION BY PRINCIPAL/OTHER RELEVANT PERSON:

By signing below, I Nokuthula Z. Ntshumayeto agree to give permission for the research to take place with the identified participants in the study entitled:

Support required by School – Based Support Teams of special schools to help teachers reduce barriers to learning

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) Springfield School on (date) 18 / 10 / 20 21



Signature of School Principal/Relevant person

ADDENDUM 4: PARTICIPATION INFORMED CONSENT



(Mr Maseko)
(Springfield School)
(77 Wielut Street)
(Kookrus)
(Redan)

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 1111111
Email: Thabo.Makhalemele@nwu.ac.za

Date: 25 October 2021

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM

I herewith wish to request your permission as teachers of the Sedibeng East District (D7) of Gauteng Province to participate in this research, to determine the support needed by SBSTs at special schools to help teachers to reduce barriers to learning. Before you give permission, please acquaint yourself with the information below.

The details of the research are as follows:

TITLE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT:

Support required by School-Based Support Teams of special schools to help teachers reduce barriers to learning

ETHICS APPLICATION NUMBER

NWU-01266-20-S2

PROJECT SUPERVISOR: Dr Makhalemele T.

CO-SUPERVISOR: Prof. Hay J.

ADDRESS: NWU Vaal Campus P O BOX 1175 Vanderbijlpark 1911

CONTACT NUMBER: 016 910 3075

MEMBER OF PROJECT TEAM MEd-Student: Jacobeth Makoloko Manana

ADDRESS: 54 Plowman Street Central East 3 Vanderbijlpark 1911

CONTACT NUMBER: 078 1879243/061 7501300

FACULTY OF EDUCATION RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

Contact person: Ms Erna Greyling, E-mail: Erna.Greyling@nwu.ac.za, Tel. (018) 299 4656

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?

The aim of this research is:

The aim of this study is to investigate the support is needed by school-based support teams (SBST) to help teachers in special schools reduce barriers to learning.

The aim of this study will be brought about by the following objectives:

- Identifying forms of support given to SBSTs in special schools by role players.
- Identify programmes that are in place to assist SBSTs in special schools in performing their roles.
- Discover elements hampering the provision of support by the SBSTs to support teachers in special schools.
- To come up with recommendations to capacitate the SBSTs in special schools to support teachers to reduce barriers to learning.

Participants

Teachers who are SBST members, working at special school, in Sedibeng East District (D7), Gauteng Province.

What is expected of you as participant?

The meetings will be one hour long. Due to Covid 19 regulations, no contact research may be conducted on the site of government institutions such as schools, therefore the sessions will be online. This will be done in order to adhere to the regulations of Covid 19. During the first meeting, the participants will be addressed by the researcher, welcoming them to the study. In this case, all the participants know one another because they are colleagues at the same

special school and in the SBST committee of that school. Prior to the first meeting, an independent person will explain to the participants that their involvement in this research is voluntary and they are at liberty to withdraw at any stage of the process.

This independent person will also manage the process of signing the forms, which will be read and discussed thoroughly so that everyone understands their purpose in this study. It is expected of every participant to attend and be on time for every meeting scheduled, and if not attending, there should be a report in advance, if possible. Participants are expected to participate willingly during contacts and respect others, including their views/opinions, whether they agree with them or not.

Interviews will be conducted and the audios will be recorded. The participants will be required to complete questionnaires comprised of open-ended questions. The questions will be based on the present situation and how this situation affects them in performing their duties as members of SBST at a special school. They will also discuss various strategies to facilitate the support needed by SBSTs to be able to assist and support teachers and to reduce barriers to learning.

The sensitive questions will not be dealt with in the early stages of the research and not at the end too, but in the middle of the study so that the participants are not intimidated and not affected negatively. As a co-researcher, I will be actively participating and maintaining order throughout the study. All the data/lessons learnt previously or during the last session will be reviewed and co-analysed on a practical level.

All the data/lesson learnt previously or during the last session will be reviewed and I will co-analyse it on a practical level

Benefits to you as participant

The participants will benefit from this study by gaining important information and tools on how to effectively perform their roles as School-Based Support Team in special schools. This will enable them to reduce barriers to learning and to support teaching and learning at school.

Teachers and learners at special schools will be effectively supported. There will be cooperation amongst the members and between the team and the teachers. Other stakeholders, internally and externally, who are needed to support the SBSTs will be involved as a result the required

support will be given. Other stakeholders include SMTs, DBST, Provincial and National Educational Support Units as well as the Health, Social and Police Departments. When cases are referred to them for support they will be given the required urgent attention.

Risks involved for participants

The risks anticipated are minimal:

Physical – fatigue, headaches.

Psychological – emotional discomfort, anger, however, there will be breaks in between. The researcher will provide snacks and drinks for the participants as well as petrol money to relief financial stress.

Confidentiality and protection of identity

Information given will be kept confidentially. The right to remain anonymous will be respected and no personal information will be revealed without consent. The questionnaires will be completed anonymously and it will be indicated to them that they participate voluntarily and if they wish to withdraw from the research they may do so, freely.

To ensure confidentiality, the identity of the participants will not be used but pseudo-names will be utilized. The details of these semi-structured individual interviews will only be discussed for the purposes relating to this study. Confidentiality will be guaranteed because it will only be the researcher, the supervisor and the co-supervisor who will have access to the data and a confidentiality agreement will be signed at the onset of the study.

Dissemination of findings

The findings will be continually co- analysed and disseminated on a level that is practical. Through the acquired information, recommendations will be made available and it will be submitted to the District- Based Support Team (DBST) in the form of an article or manuscript which will help and support SBSTs at special schools. SBSTs will in turn support teachers and reduce barriers to learning.

If you have any further questions or enquiries regarding your participation in this research, please contact the researchers for more information.

Yours sincerely
Ms Manana JM

DECLARATION BY PARTICIPANT:

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

Equipping school-based support teams of special schools to support teachers to reduce 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

ADDENDUM 5: DATA COLLECTION METHOD (SET MEETING)



AGENDA

Workshop: Special Meeting Workshop

Date: 15 January 2022

Location: Participating Special school

Time: 02:00 pm

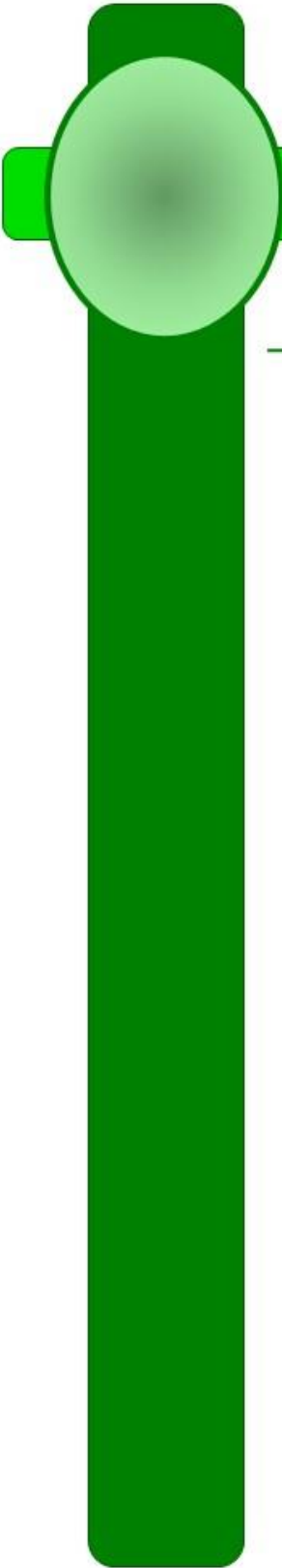
Project supervisor: Dr T. Makhalemele

Facilitator: J.M. Manana

Activities

1. Welcome and introduction
2. Meet and greet session for participants
3. Vision of the research team
4. Introducing participants to the PALAR project (Project design, management and evaluation)
5. Closure

ADDENDUM 6: DECLARATION OF LANGUAGE AND TECHNICAL EDITING



JdS Language Services

☎: 076 241 3579 ✉: jadeswardt@hotmail.co.uk
Address: Plot 701, Vyfhoek, Potchefstroom, 2531, South Africa

*This is to certify that this thesis
in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree
Master of Education in Special Needs Education
at the North-West University*

of

JM Manana

*has been edited by
Jeanette de Swardt
JdS Language Services*

*The complete thesis has been edited and includes the
following:*

Language editing of Chapter 1 – Chapter 5

Technical Editing

Date: 5 July 2023

SAFREA
Southern African Freelancers' Association
Membership Number: SAF05668

ADDENDUM 7: TURNITIN REPORT

Turnitin Originality Report

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[Mpu, Nondumiso Yolanda. "Educators' perceptions of inclusive education for learners with physical disabilities", 'Necatibey Faculty of Education Electronics Journal of Science and Mathematics Education', 2018](#)

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[Atukunda, Jackline. "Computer practice module lecturers' experiences of internal continuous assessment at technical vocational education and training colleges", 2022](#)

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[Wevers, Nicolaas Ebenhaezer Jacobus. "The Management of learners who experience barriers to learning in mainstream Primary Schools in the Eastern Cape", 'Necatibey Faculty of Education Electronics Journal of Science and Mathematics Education', 2012](#)

ADDENDUM 8: ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

Private Bag X1290, Potchefstroom

South Africa 2520

Fax: 018 299-4910



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

Senate Committee for Research Ethics

Tel: 018 299-4849

Email: nkosinathi.machine@nwu.ac.za

ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER OF STUDY

Based on approval by the **Faculty of Education Research Ethics Committee (EduREC)** on 29 April 2021, this committee hereby **approves** your study as indicated below. This implies that the North-West University Senate Committee for Research Ethics (NWU-SCRE) grants its permission that, provided the special conditions specified below are met and pending any other authorisation that may be necessary, the study may be initiated, using the ethics number below.

Study title: Support required by School-Based Support Teams of special schools to help teachers reduce barriers to learning

Study Leader/Supervisor (Principal Investigator)/Researcher: Dr T Makhalemele

Student / Team: JM Manana (MEd student – 10994262), Prof J Hay Ethics

number:

N	W	U	-	0	1	2	6	6	-	2	0	-	A	2
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Institution

Study Number

Year

Status

Status: S = Submission; R = Re-Submission; P = Provisional Authorisation; A = Authorisation

Application Type: Project

Commencement date: 29/04/2021

Risk:

Low risk

Expiry date: 29/04/2022

Approval of the study is initially provided for a year, after which continuation of the study is dependent on receipt and review of the annual (or as otherwise stipulated) monitoring report and the concomitant issuing of a letter of continuation.

Special in process conditions of the research for approval (if applicable):

General conditions:

While this ethics approval is subject to all declarations, undertakings and agreements incorporated and signed in the application form, the following general terms and conditions will apply:

- *The study leader/supervisor/principal investigator/researcher must report in the prescribed format to the EduREC:*
 - *annually (or as otherwise requested) on the monitoring of the study, whereby a letter of continuation will be provided, and upon completion of the study; and*
 - *without any delay in case of any adverse event or incident (or any matter that interrupts sound ethical principles) during the course of the study.*
- *The approval applies strictly to the proposal as stipulated in the application form. Should any amendments to the proposal be deemed necessary during the course of the study, the study leader/researcher must apply for approval of these amendments at the EduREC, prior to implementation. Should there be any deviations from the study proposal without the necessary approval of such amendments, the ethics approval is immediately and automatically forfeited.*
- *Annually a number of studies may be randomly selected for an external audit.*
- *The date of approval indicates the first date that the study may be started.*
- *In the interest of ethical responsibility, the NWU-SCRC and EduREC reserves the right to:*
 - *request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the study;*

1

– to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modification or monitor the conduct of your research or the informed consent process; – withdraw or postpone approval if:

- *any unethical principles or practices of the study are revealed or suspected;*
- *it becomes apparent that any relevant information was withheld from the EduREC or that information has been false or misrepresented;*
- *submission of the annual (or otherwise stipulated) monitoring report, the required amendments, or reporting of adverse events or incidents was not done in a timely manner and accurately; and / or*
 - *new institutional rules, national legislation or international conventions deem it necessary.*

The EduREC would like to remain at your service as scientist and researcher, and wishes you well with your study. Please do not hesitate to contact the EduREC or the NWU-SCRE for any further enquiries or requests for assistance.

Yours sincerely



Prof JAK Olivier

Chairperson NWU Faculty of Education Research Ethics Committee

Original details: (22351930) C:\Users\22351930\Desktop\ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER OF STUDY.docm

8 November 2018

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5 December 2018

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